



June 2005
Number 471



The youngest WMx member, Molly White with proud parents Steven and Denise...



...and one of the more senior members(!) receiving an award for 40 years of CB participation from Tony Davies, Chairman of the csma!

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

Contents

Your Editor Speaking.....	2
Ladies and Gentlemen, This is your Captain Speaking.....	2
Mack's Mutterings.....	2
A Long (and Winding) Road - Venetian Style.....	3
Brands Hatch Classic Festival.....	4
A Virgins Guide to the Curtis Bennett Weekend.....	6
Centre Outing to the Fawley Railway Museum.....	9
Motor Sport Coordinators' Bulletin - June 2005.....	10
The csma Curtis Bennett Rally.....	12
WMx Committee Member Contact Details.....	16

Your Editor Speaking...

Summer appears to be here... And things are busy-ing up! The csma Classic Festival at Brands Hatch (well worth a visit!), the CB weekend (good fun, with weather just about as varied as is possible - no snow though...) as well as a few GP's and a rally to cram in!

Firstly, some apologies... In last month's edition I made some errors - please note that John Wright's phone number is 01923 689152, and that Goddard's Globe was indeed presented, and was won by Mr Allan Goddard himself, ably aided by Mr John Wright. I hereby apologise to all those I inadvertently wronged.

A packed issue this month - loads of articles submitted - thank you to all involved,

Chairman's Scribblings...

Our Chairman didn't see fit to submit anything this month.

Mack's Mutterings

The tale of my Westfield engine rebuild is ongoing - having rebuilt it as a short engine I got a new head and decided the pistons needed modifying. However, by then the CB weekend, and the chance at a grass autotest, was getting close so I decided to put the engine on hold and put my efforts into fitting a Quaife torque biasing diff I have had sitting on my shelf for the last 12 months (oops..). Amazingly enough, this was one job I didn't mess up! Despite a few little niggles (nothing an angle grinder could not solve!) it all went together ok and into the car. If anyone tells

and to everyone else - see? You too can be a published author!

Thanks to those who enquired about the lathe - it's now sold but irritatingly still in my garage as the new owner struggles to agree a date with the machine mover!

Progress has been made on the Westfield engine transplant - I've made a note of the engine number so I can order some parts! Oh, and I've just acquired a new bonnet from a fellow Westfield owner and Cross-flow - 2l 16v Vauxhall converter who had his new toy on the road for a total of 7 days before White Van Man wrote it off.

Makes yer think, dunnit...

Have fun!

Jeز Boakes (Editor)

Jeز Boakes (Editor)

pp John Wright (Chairman)

you an LSD is a waste of time for road driving they are wrong! The Westfield's handling is transformed: sharper turn-in, much less steering input needed and, if I am too exuberant with the right foot, all very much more controllable. All lots of fun and leading to noticeably faster corner exit speeds. Why didn't I fit it 12 months ago?

So, on to WMx events. If memory serves me right (it was a month ago...) I actually made it to a Noggin and Natter! Shame that I then blotted my copybook by missing both the clubnight (Hollstar) and our first committee meeting of the year. Sorry all but I was a long way away (in Japan) at the time!

csma West Middlesex Group

The next big event was the classic festival at Brands Hatch. Again, I could not make it, this time the excuse was needing to catch up on jetlag after being in Japan. I think I am getting a bit old to be trying to survive on 12 hours sleep in a week! Hopefully there will be other reports of the weekend but I gathered it was an excellent event as usual. The final big event of the month was the Curtis Bennet weekend. I won't go on about it here as there should be a report elsewhere in the sump. Suffice to say that it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend and rumour has it that WMx group did pretty well!

Looking to the future, we have our Noggin and Natter (complete with Bike Ride out) on the 31st May. Of course, by the time you read this it will have happened and I will have missed it yet again. This time my

The Sump June 2005

excuse being a family holiday! Then there is our clubnight on the 9th of June. This will be a walk starting at Knowle Hill - not too strenuous and I am sure it will stop at a pub halfway so no excuses not to get some fresh air. AG's Lifeboat Challenge is on the weekend of the 12th-13th, if you haven't yet made your mind up about this one then talk to AG quickly! Then there is the group Golf Day on the 16th - unfortunately it's now too late for this event - it's sold out!

Last but not least, is the June Noggin and Natter and motorcycle ride out on the 28th. Hmm... looking at my diary that date is suspiciously empty - although it will have been a good few weeks after I was last force fed raw fish so that might change.....

Have fun!

Toby Mack (Secretary)

A Long (and Winding) Road – Venetian Style!

I have just taken part in an event called the 'Voga Longa', which in Italian means 'Long Road', but as it takes place in Venice – there are no roads! Confused? Me too.

It's actually an event for manually propelled (rowing) boats of all types, size and shape (that description goes for the crews as well). Everything from kayaks to eighteen oared 'Gondolas' (called Disdotonas) and crews from 'kick-ass serious' to 'only here for the beer'; guess which category I was in. I'm disappointed that you doubt my intentions!

Sixteen Hundred and Fifteen (yes 1,615) boats took part this year in the event (I won't call it a race) which winds its way for 31 km through the Lagoon and outlying Islands before funnelling down into a small canal (if you think the M25 is bad you should see this) from which you emerge onto the Grand Canal itself for the 'Grand Finish'.

I did wonder how the Italians organised 1,600+ boats, the answer of course is, they don't! A cannon is fired at 9am to announce the start but by this time several hundred boats are across the start line, despite it being guarded by a Fire Department Ship spraying water hoses to deter jump starts. Perhaps I should have said several hundred WET crews are across the line before the start. This is why I won't call it a race – the result is academic, it's the taking part that counts.

A great deal of the fun in this event is the couple of days practice beforehand. This generally consists of press ganging wives, girlfriends and lovers to cox the boats for us (it's essential that you get your wife, girlfriend and lover in separate boats so that they NEVER meet!!). We then row across to the nearest Island and



A Disdotona

have a rather large (mainly liquid) lunch and then row back. It's usually at this point we have a go at changing the shape of Venice by rowing into something hard, usually to the boats' detriment – Venice is still the same shape as we found it.

There is a serious side to all this, the group that I am involved with took eight crews to Venice this year, with helpers and 'ground crew' numbering close to 100 people, one of whom was Ed Coode (who



The Venecian 'M25' on a bad day...!

along with Mat Pinsent, Steve Williams and James Cracknell won a GOLD medal at the Olympics) and we raise the profile of and money for the Venice in Peril Fund.

So, good work and good fun, here's looking forward to next year. Now where did I put that wet suit?

Derrick Holden

Brands Hatch Classic Festival

This event, organised by HQ, has become an annual fixture in the calendar but Jez and I have not been able to attend in the past. However, this year we put it in the diary early.

AG was putting together a display of **csma** members' cars which may be of interest and asked Jez whether he'd lend the Westfield for a day or two. We had planned to attend on the Saturday so offered the car for that day.

Unfortunately, Brands Hatch rules (I believe enforced by the local police) stipulate that display vehicles have to be on site by 7:30am on the day. We didn't fancy leaving Hook at 5am to get there in time so invited ourselves to stay with friends, Andy and Ann, in Gillingham. The Lexus doesn't have a tow bar yet so we couldn't trail the car down and I didn't fancy travelling all that way in the Westfield so we decided to travel in convoy after work on the Friday evening.

A nice route using only A-roads was plotted and then extended to take us down to Pease Pottage services so that Jez could collect an eBay purchase. We met a man in the car park, he handed over a set of collets, we exchanged pleasantries and, after a sandwich,

we were on our way again.



Jean Alesi's 1993 Ferrari!

A few days earlier, Jez's new toy – a PDA based sat nav system – had arrived and we thought that this trip would be an ideal time to test it. We were on unfamiliar roads and as we were both driving, it made wielding a map tricky so we let "Jane" tell

us where to go. Overall, it was very good but we did have to pull over once when the system crashed and refused to recognise any maps. But once fixed, it worked again and got us to our destination by a good choice of route.

Jeز was up bright and early to set off to take the Westfield to the circuit and I followed an hour later (well, I need my beauty sleep) with our friends. The deal being that if they put us up for the night, we'd take them to the meeting.

I can't remember the last time I was at Brands Hatch, I think I was quite young, but I really enjoyed the day. We found the **csma** stand, which wasn't far from the main entrance, with Jez and the others and took in the interesting mix of cars ranging from a rare Volvo to a lovely Ferrari as well as some old motorcycles.

We found a good vantage point on the grass, overlooking McLaren, Surtees and Clearways bends at one end of the short circuit where we could also see down the start-finish straight. We set up camp on blankets with the picnic box of goodies and settled down for the qualifying sessions.

There didn't appear to be too much drama during qualifying so Ann and I went for a walk to warm up a bit. The threatened rain had held off but there was a bitter wind blowing. There was a good mix of entertainment, air displays by the Aerostars aerobatic team, activities for children, exhibitions and trade stands making it a popular family day out. A particular favourite of ours was the crepe stand which supplied brunch.



Cheryl Baker's Rescue Bid...

During the lunch break, there was a display run by Jean Alesi's 1993 Ferrari F1 car, owned and driven by Paul Osbourne, who was quoted as saying "Even with earplugs it gives me a headache!".

There was also an exercise by the Royal Marines who staged a hostage rescue after "terrorists" kidnapped Cheryl Baker. The rescue was a success, including abseiling down the hospitality building, smoke bombs on the circuit and a lot of gun fire.

The afternoon's racing began with classic motor cycles. These riders clearly have a screw loose. Very competitive racing on old machines with narrow little tyres. A fair few bounced into the gravel but all seemed to be unhurt. Following on from the bikes, there were single seaters, touring cars and some gorgeous Austin Healeys.

Everybody really threw themselves into the racing and it is good to see that old cars can still be enjoyed. There were a couple of red flagged sessions following incidents but these were quickly cleared and the on-track action resumed. Some very close and exciting races kept us engrossed until the end of the day.

I grew up with rallying and have to confess that I tend to find this "going round in circles racing" a bit boring at times. But that wasn't the case at the Classic Festival. The races aren't too long and there is plenty of excitement to keep the attention. I'm glad we finally managed to make it to one of these meetings and I'm sure we will go again.

I grew up with rallying and have to confess that I tend to find this "going round in circles racing" a bit boring at times. But that wasn't the case at the Classic Festival. The races aren't too long and there is plenty of excitement to keep the attention. I'm glad we finally managed to make it to one of these meetings and I'm sure we will go again.

Nikki Wild

A Virgins Guide to the Curtis Bennett Weekend

Before.....

I'd heard good things about the CB weekend and fancied seeing what it was like for myself. I'd planned to go last year but the main event got cancelled and other pressures on my time meant I decided to miss the rest so this year I was pretty keen to see what it was really like.

Fairly early on accommodation was sorted (sharing with Jez, Nikki and Keith, a mate of Jez's) so I put it in my diary and promptly forgot about it. However, as it got nearer conversations turned to what we would actually do at the weekend. Marshalling on the CB itself was an obvious option but there was also the Metropole on Saturday evening (a regularity run) and the Dunlop (autotest) on the Sunday. Well, the Westfield is fun in an autotest so entering the Dunlop was an easy decision. However, one week before the event I realised I had forgotten about minor things like getting the regs and actually entering. No problem, a bit of a panic later and I had an entry form filled in and a cheque written. Then I read the regs properly... So it was a *Production Car* Autotest then. What is one of those then? Ok, a quick email to Bernard Ward (the Clark of the Course) found that the car had to be in production and available from dealers. Open cars were allowed but had to compete with soft-tops fitted. How on earth can a kit car qualify? Well, the Westfield factory and agents do sell complete cars (albeit in pretty low volumes) so Bernard confirmed it qualified. phew! All this last minute confusion over cars, and the prospect of a long drive down the M4 and back, had put Jez off entering his own Westfield. No problem I said, you can double drive mine- so off went two entries to the Dunlop.

So that just left the Metropole. Jez was talking about entering it with his mate Keith navigating. Now, as far as I know, Keith has never entered any sort of navigational event before so I thought this was pretty brave. After all, a regulation rally involves navigating and timing to the second to controls when you don't even know where those controls are. As well as that, lots of mental arithmetic is needed to correct for time errors from previous controls. Oh well, good luck to them!! However, as the day approached it became obvious that Nikki did not have a navigator so was talking about not entering. Now my stomach has a real problem with reading anything in a car, let alone a map (I once tried a 12 car and managed about 10 minutes before we had to abort) so there was no chance I could cope. Oh, and the closest I have come to navigation is touring assemblies and the one abortive attempt at a 12 car. So I must have been very drunk when I volunteered to navigate for Nikki!!! Later I realised what I had done. Nikki had previously done very well in the Metropole so I knew I had a good driver. I also knew that she is a very smooth driver so maybe that would help my stomach. Still, the chances of me lasting 30 miles without being ill were about zero. Oh, and Nikki's previous success in this event meant that we would be in the expert class and made me think there might be some expectation she would do well this time. Fat chance with me in the left hand seat!

Getting there....

I had the Friday afternoon off so back home and load the Westfield on the trailer. Then pack everything else I needed and set off to pick up Jez and Nikki. First problem was a call from Nikki. She was stuck on the M4 (on the way home from work) because of a serious accident needing an air ambulance. Reports were that she had not moved for an hour and it could take a LOT longer. Oh, well, no hurry getting to their house then! So, later than planned I set off - got half way there and remembered I needed my car documents. D'oh! So back home I went to pick up my MOT and insurance certificates!

Embarrassingly this meant that, when I finally got the Jez and Nikki's house, she had been home for ages and it was actually me holding them up. Even worse, I still forgot to take car log book (no mention on that in the regs!) and my **csmawm** membership card! Oh well, we were off at last and I am pleased to report that we finally got to Whitemead with no more drama. (ignoring minor rush hour hold-ups and the boredom of towing a trailer at 60mph on a motorway for 2 hours!).

Relax and have some fun....

Friday evening and Saturday morning were a good chance to unwind. Chatting to a few people, out for a curry in nearby Lydney (thanks to AG for organising that!) and a few beers in the bar before closing time then a few more beers back in our unit with AG and Alan Smith. Hmm... maybe it was more than a few because my head felt a bit sore the next day! Oh well, a good cooked breakfast and a couple of aspirin cleared my head a bit so Jez and I took the Westfield over to the Gymkhana to have a bit of fun. Not surprisingly this raised a few eyebrows. For those that do not know, a gymkhana is a test of accuracy, not speed. how close can you get to a post without touching it, reverse parking as close to a tape as possible, parallel parking etc. Not many cars have as good all round visibility as a Westfield so maybe we had a bit of an unfair advantage! Oh well, it was all just a bit of fun so we were allowed to enter. Watching other cars having a go I got a bit concerned, not about the precision driving bit (I don't mind making a fool of myself!) but about the conditions. The ground was waterlogged and all the cars were getting bogged down, some needing a push out. How would I cope with a very light car and relatively little tread on my tyres? Well, I had fitted a torque biasing limited slip diff a couple of weeks ago so this would be a good test of it. The result was that the LSD worked very well. I slid around a lot but never got stuck and it was all really controllable. I never did find out what the results were but it gave me confidence that the car would be ok on the Dunlop the next day. Unfortunately for Jez we ran out of time before his run (they had to start scrutineering for the CB), which was a shame as he could have done with some practice in my car before the Dunlop - especially as he had never actually driven it before!

Entering the Metropole....

This was the event I was most nervous about. I had pretty low expectations but did not want to let Nikki down despite her re-assurances that she was happy just to give it a try. I was also very concerned about motion sickness although Nikki took this as a challenge, declaring that she guaranteed that, with her driving, I would not be ill! I wish I were able to believe her! From my sailing days I knew that the only thing that would stop me being ill was Stugeron tablets. These work pretty well if taken well before travel but have the disadvantage of making me lethargic and ruining my concentration. Not ideal so I compromised on the dose, taking 1 tablet about 8 hours early and 1 about an hour before the event. Would it work?

Scrutineering was combined with the CB scrutineering so there was quite a queue. After about 30 minutes waiting we decided we were unlikely to have time to eat so takeaway pizza was chosen. Not the best thing to settle my stomach but needs must and all that! Anyway, scrutineering over (after taping over the front fog lights and resolving the issue of the missing log book) we queued up for the start.

This is where my nerves really kicked in! Luckily Nikki did a great job of calming me down, answering all my questions for the nth time and generally making sure we were all set. Once we were off I had no time for nerves! The Metropole is a "Jogularity" type event. This means that the route was supplied as a series of instructions (miss a left by a phone box, past the church etc etc) with distances, average speed and times to all the

points of interest shown. So, in theory at least, all I had to do was read the roadbook, check the times against my stopwatch and let Nikki get on with it. Easier said than done! For the few minutes it was all I could do to keep up, let alone work out how we were doing. Again, I was very fortunate having an experienced (and tolerant!) driver who somehow managed to sort me out while doing an excellent job of keeping our average speed right. By the time we got to the first passage check I had just about got the hang of giving the right info to Nikki and giving feedback on our times. Apart that is from forgetting to tell her when the average speed changed and mixing up early / late with over / under in an attempt to confuse her!

At the first passage check I thought we were doing OK. According to my watch we were on time. However, this is when I realised it was not that simple. The time I was given was in clock time that, of course, did not match my stopwatch (elapsed time) so I had to work it out from our start time. I then realised something was wrong. According to my sums we had arrived at this point before we actually set off! That can't be right surely?? Now maybe it was the pressure or maybe it was the Stugeron but I couldn't make my sums work. Meantime I was trying to keep up with the navigation and it was all getting a bit too much for me. Yet again, Nikki came to the rescue giving calm advice to trust my watch, ignore the minutes and only worry about the seconds. Very good advice as it turned out! Checking my roadbook after the event I think I must have been transposing the two times - not surprising then that I thought we had taken minus 3 minutes rather than plus 3 minutes! After this things settled down a bit. I was adding our lateness to our due times on the fly and correcting at each passage check. We were keeping pretty good time and communication between Nikki and I was going fairly well, apart from me continuing to forget to tell her about speed changes! The only real problem was that but about half way my brain was not quite keeping up and I was having difficulty remembering which way I should correct things at each successive passage check. Oh, and my counting down to zero at checks became a bit erratic. "10.....5,4, s&*t!, now!!" happened a few times. Oh well, keep going and hope!

It was a great relief to arrive at the final check to be greeted by Alan Smith (Clark of the Course) and then to hand in our timecard and relax! So how did I think we had done? Well, on the positive side we had made it. Nikki was right, I had not been ill; in fact I had only had one short spell of slight queasiness that was probably more to do with nerves. This was nothing short of a miracle! How about our times then? From what I could work out we had not been more than a few seconds out at any check and our arrival at the finish was on the dot. That was just the seconds though - hours and minutes I had not got a clue!! If I had got it right we were ok, if I had got it wrong then we could be anywhere! Still, not much we could do about it now so it was off for a few beers get some sleep and await the results. Oh, except we still had a rally to marshal!

To be continued...

Toby Mack

The deadline for articles for the *July Sump* is June 22nd!

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.

CENTRE OUTING TO FAWLEY RAILWAY MUSEUM



Sunday 10th July 2005

This museum, in a picturesque part of Oxfordshire, is maintained and run on behalf of its owner, Sir William McAlpine, by the Fawley Museum Society.

The museum is not open to the public but, three or four times a year, Sir William opens the grounds of his home and allows pre-arranged visits to invited groups.

The **csma** has been invited along, with a group limited to 30 persons maximum, to Fawley and the grounds open at 12.30 pm. It is best to take a picnic and enjoy the view of the valley and surrounding hills while the first rides of the day take place on the steam railway.

The picture above shows the saddle tank, drawing an open wagon and brake van, steaming up the line which runs into the valley. From the wagon – all rides are free - it's possible to see free roaming wallaby, emu, and even an Indian Stork patrolling the lake. The winners of a lucky draw get to ride on the footplate during the day (very hot) which is as near as you'll ever want to get to a furnace!

In the museum there are loads of railway memorabilia from various railways of bygone days, a large OO gauge model railway with the engine fitted with a small camera, and a car museum with a collection of Rolls Royce and other classic cars.

We have been encouraged to arrive in our classic cars, should we have any, in which case we will be directed to a special parking area across the level crossing and next to the station. Adequate parking for others nearby.

A charge is made of £4 per head and I would ask that anyone who wishes to go sends me a cheque, made out to **csma** North London Centre. First come first served.

Bernard Ward

Tel; 01992 582323 or E; Bernard.ward3@btinternet.com

To Bernard Ward, 2 Royston Close, Hertford SG14 1NJ

Please reserve me, places for Fawley on 10 July 2005 and find enclosed my cheque for £..... payable to csma North London Centre.

I shall / shall not be arriving in a classic car

Names attending.....

e-mail.....

Address.....

.....

Post codeTelephone



Motor Sport Coordinators' Bulletin

Dates	Event (Status)	Club	Type of Event	Champ
Jun Sun 5	* Juniper (Nat B)	NEL	Tarmac Autotest	BTRDA
11/12	* RNL Challenge ()	HQ	Treasure Hunt	
18/19	* Britvic Enduro (Cm)	Chelmsford MC	Endurance Rally	
Mon 20	* csma Karting Day ()	HQ	Kart Racing at Rye House	
Sun 26	* Greenacres (C)	NWL	Grass Autotest	Centre
Jul Sun 24	Grasshopper (Nat B/C)	NEL	Grass Autotest	Centre
Aug Sun 21	Holly (C)	NEL	Grass Autotest	Centre

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

Past Events

Hollstar Inter-Group Table Top Rally This year saw NWL retain the team trophy, mainly because they were the only group to really support the event. It seems odd that WMx go to the trouble of organising the event on their own clubnight and hardly any of their own members turn up. On the other hand it was also organised on the NEL noggin night and so some of their members stuck with that evening. AG managed to put on a very good event (despite the hassle we gave him) and having different editions of maps with different answers depending on which version you had, it must have been a bit of a headache to prepare. The food arrived before the start, which consisted of fish, half chickens and chips was far too much for the few people there, but plenty of them went home with lunch for the next day. Next year it will be the turn on NWL to host the event.

1 st	Dave Smith / Cath Woodman	NWL	58 points
2 nd	Bernard Ward / Mike Biss	NEL	53 points
3 rd	Alan Thurbon / Lee Craker	NWL	32 points
4 th	Alan Robins / Dave Robins	NWL	31 points
5 th	Tony Brooks / Simon Mummery	WMx	27 points
6 th	Mike Scott / Ken Warburton	WMx	Retired

Curtis Bennett Motorsport Weekend This is the csma annual motorsport weekend which is based at the Whitemead Forest Park, down in the Forest of Dean. A good turn out for the Metropole and CB, but half the entry for the Dunlop disappeared. Although this meant those that did compete had a more compact event. The weekend saw other activities taking place and lots of families seemed to take part in the treasure hunt, scalextric and radio controlled cars. The weather during the weekend was atrocious at times and the marshals on the CB rally bore the brunt of it. The Metropole regularity run had 24 starters and a lot of them hadn't twigged that the competition numbers were from the CB rally but the Metropole didn't start them in numerical order. Quite a few crews started very late, although penalties were not counted. A 30 mile run round the local roads brought us back to Whitemead for a 90 minute rest before the CB rally started. The torrential rain came down shortly before the start and a mad dash had to be made to get to the cars. The timecards got wet straightaway and you knew you just didn't want to break down in this weather. The CB rally had 31 starters and the aim of getting the majority of novices and beginners around the route was certainly met. The downside of this was that the expert crews had no difficulty with the first half and it was going to be down to just 40 miles of serious route. With lots of short sections, speed and accuracy were essential and it soon started to separate the crews. It was a shame that the marshalling turn out was so poor, that several controls had to be unmanned. This is the

major **csma** motorsport weekend of the year and the majority of the marshalling team members were conspicuous by their absence. The use of high quality marked photocopied maps made sure everyone knew where they were going (if not necessarily able to follow it) and there were some very good roads used during the event. The slippery uphill track caught a lot of people out due to the rain, even the course car didn't make it up in one go and the experienced triallist also failed! The Dunlop had over 30 entries



before the weekend, but by the start this had dropped to just 17. It usually goes up on the day! We had a shower just after lunch but the field just about held up, meaning you didn't get stuck. It's a shame the test areas used are so small, as the tests seem a bit slow and tight at times. A problem with the terrain is the cause of this and there is very little the organisers can do about it. After six tests, there was a tie for first place, before the 1/10ths were counted and then by only 0.9s. In the end it was a NWL whitewash (or should that be blackwash, see photo of presentation) with them winning the individual and team awards on all three events.

Juniper Autotest This will have taken place by the time the newsletter comes out, so report next month.

Future Events

RNLI Challenge Allan Goddard is organising this event which aims to raise money for the RNLI and to give crews a competitive run around the south coast area. The aim of the event is to raise money for the RNLI training fund and awards over the basic finishers awards are based on the amount of sponsorship you raise. Entry fee is £20 and although there is no specific starting point or time on the Saturday, everyone has to get to the finish at the Lifeboat College in Poole between 1pm and 3pm on the Sunday. You have to work out your own route between the nominated lifeboat stations and visit as many as you can. The entry fee even includes a road atlas to plot the route on. Allan Goddard is the clerk of the course and Alan Smith the entries secretary. Contact Alan Smith for regs on 01491 628379.

Greenacres Autotest This will be the first of the series of grass autotests organised during the year and will be held at the usual Studd Farm site near Leighton Buzzard. Drive around a set route on smooth grass against the clock. Standard cars most suitable and non damaging. Why not come along and learn what it is all about. Entry fee is £15 and more details are available from Pete Gregory on 01525 403405.

csma Karting Day This will be held on Monday 20th June and will take place at the Rye House circuit at Hoddesdon. The cost of the event is £65 per person and there will be qualifying rounds and several races during the day.

Grasshopper Autotest This will be held at the Studd Farm venue near Leighton Buzzard and will have two parts. The national B event will be a round of the Southern grass autotest championship and the Clubmans event will be the Centre championship round and also open to invited clubs.

Other News

Land Use Problems Good news on the problem with DEFRA as after much lobbying from the MSA and clubs, they have moved motor sports out of the banned classification and into the allowed category. This should mean that farmers will allow events to carry on taking place on their land.

Mike Biss: NLC Motor Sports Coordinator **Tel:** 01525 720299 **E-mail:** mike.biss@bt.com
www.csmawmx.com

The csma Curtis Bennett Rally...

A very personal glance back over 'my' forty years ...1964 ~2005; a somewhat disjointed and rather self-indulgent reminiscence..... for which I apologise !

On Sunday afternoon following this year's Curtis Bennett weekend at Whitemead Park, I was surprised and very privileged to receive a magnificent cut glass trophy to acknowledge my participation in forty consecutive CB rallies, and...err, yes, I was lost for words for a moment or two, but normal service was resumed very quickly !

I'm very grateful to those who saw fit to present me with this honour – thank you very much indeed.

This also set me thinking (!) and I found myself unexpectedly riding on something resembling an emotional roller-coaster. Hence, I offer the following few brief and very personal thoughts, totally un-researched, just memories really. So please forgive any inaccuracies or gross omissions because I can't ever explain in mere words what the Curtis Bennett Rally, the Adventure, the camaraderie and THE weekend came to mean to me over the last forty-two years that I've been a part of it.

Having joined **csma** expressly to go rallying (everybody did in those days), I entered half a dozen events with my best mate Len Hillier before we first 'went International' and entered the 1964 Curtis Bennett Rally about a six-hour drive away. Based in a place that had far too many consonants & far too few vowels in its name to be good for it we set off for the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells, which we understood was somewhere in Wales. Can you imagine arriving at the Metropole for the first time? A couple of lads aged 18, in the middle of the swinging '60's ? Wow!

The CB Rally itself began life as the 'All Centres Rally' in 1935 and up until the Second World War went round most of the UK with routes averaging more than 500 miles. In 1938 the csma President Noel Curtis-Bennett presented the event with the well known & much loved Curtis-Bennett trophy (aka : the Golden Gargoyle!) and the Rally was re-named in his honour with the famous Trophy being presented to the winning Club Team.

The CB was suspended throughout the war years but was resurrected in 1951 and based at Stone in Staffordshire (a few GPO/BT memories there I'll wager!) for four years before moving to a North Wales location. In 1959 the Event moved again and that year was the first time it ran from a base in Llandrindod Wells. Apart from 1974 when there was a Foot & Mouth epidemic in Wales and the Rally was temporarily run in Lincolnshire, the Curtis Bennett Weekend stayed firmly based at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells until 2004 when it moved to Whitemead Park.

In those earlier days, West Middlesex Group participants either drove home immediately after the Rally and the Dunlop Auto tests were over or, those that could afford to, stayed in various B&B's scattered all over the town. The Rally entry fee was something like 4/6d (22½p) and the B&B was shillings rather than pounds per night - doubtless someone will remember more accurately and will suggest that I was paying far too much !

In the late seventies I first took responsibility for organising the WMx accommodation arrangements and we subsequently stayed at several different 'Digs' in and around the town before finally making the Mostyn Hotel our regular base for the CB weekend. We fondly referred to the place as the Mouldy Mostyn as the state of decoration was, err, well a bit casual! However, the beds were comfy, breakfast was good and it was but a short walk to both the Metropole (where all the 'posh' people stayed) and the Llanarch Inn where we either ate or retired to for a beer after a one of the many visits the Group made en-masse to the Dil-Raj restaurant in town!

The Rally itself took place on the Friday night after a full day's work and a long drive down to Wales for most of us - single or part days 'Annual Leave' were a rarity then, it was a week off or nothing! Rally Routes approaching 200miles in length were offered and were usually finished, for those of us near the back of the field anyway, well after the sun had got up. Strangely, I seem to remember the sun did put in an appearance on most mornings as we were finishing the CB's of old but the final two or three hours of day-light dicing with only the very occasional farm worker, milkman or postie to worry about didn't seem to bother us then. Nowadays 50% of the population it seems are only just thinking about going to bed as we finish the modern day Events and we have to be much more mindful !

Now I don't know how many 'Old-Timers' are likely to read this so, to put the record straight, I should mention we also had some appalling weather on CB's of the 60's and 70's too. It is well known that Wales can produce all four seasons weather-wise in just an hour and a half and many CB's were run in exactly those mixed and sometimes extreme conditions. All the Mini and Mini-Cooper pilots usually carried two spare wheels and more often than not those spares were shod with Town & Country treaded Dunlop SP44's, just in case! I recall competing on several Events when the snow caused a few problems, sometimes snow that had fallen weeks earlier and hadn't yet melted. Dealing with water (rather like the 2005 Event!) in one form or another was commonplace – but I liked it. I loved the conditions to be as awful as possible (and still do!) 'cos it made it tougher for everyone, and we just seemed to go a little better when the weather was doing it's best to make things difficult. Unfortunately, this made things very uncomfortable for those oft un-sung heroes in Motorsport – the Marshals, and over the years, West Middlesex provided lots of them for the CB weekends too.

WMx Group representatives as Organisers, Officials, Competitors and Marshals on the Curtis Bennett Rally over the past four decades have included Board members, csma Officers, and just about everyone who's ever considered themselves to be an active WMx Group member. It's a fact that in the Eighties and early Nineties our Group regularly provided more than a third of the rally entries and many of the Marshalling crews too. All proudly displayed the familiar red, white & blue 'WMx Group logo' designed and produced many, many years ago by Keith Lay. Keith was also a long-time participant on CB's of old, and, with a better memory than mine, I fully expect he'll be able to add (hopefully via the pages of the Sump?) a great deal of detail and quite a few anecdotes regarding our collective activities on the CB's of the last forty years.

Over 'my' forty years I've been accompanied by no less than fourteen different Navigators (yes, yes, some of them did come with me more than once!) and I'm pleased to say that with just one exception I'm still in touch and on good terms with them all today.

I've also used a variety of different cars – and before anyone says anything, yes, I did actually own some of them myself ! They included the humble Triumph Herald Estate, two Saabs (a two stroke and a V4), a Mk 1 Healey Sprite, a Hillman Minx series 111a convertible, two Mini-Coopers, an 1800 Landcrab (great on the Dunlop!), two Escort Mk 1's, an Avenger GT, a Talbot Sunbeam Ti , a Mazda 626 Coupe, a couple of Triumph 2.5's, a Toyota Corolla liftback, various Peugeot's in 106 form, several 306's both petrol & diesel flavours, and I once turned up in a 406 automatic (oh no, don't!); several types of Nova's and Astra's were pressed into service, and latterly I've used a brace of Honda Civic VTI's !

The first of those Honda's was offered to me to use on the CB by Dave Wiles. He'd bought it new just a couple of weeks previously and it had barely covered a few hundred miles!!! DW kindly allowed me to use it again the following year and I enjoyed the car so

much I bought one for myself. I still think it's a great driver's car and it's still my current road-rally car today.

Throughout the sixties, seventies and into the eighties Curtis Bennett rallies ran with full entries and such was the standard that the high-spec competing cars were often bought to the event on trailers. These were very quick events and attracted top class crews and cars. Plot 'n' bash navigation &, pre-plotted timed to the second Selectives were used – accidents could & did happen in the challenging, sometimes unforgiving, Welsh lanes and inevitably some competitors needed trailers to get their cars home. But all in all, this was the heyday of the CB and for the most part the finishing rate was very high. I recorded three non-finishes in my forty events, only one of those due to the scenery stepping out in front of me !

To some extent road rallying was 'softened' by the Authorities in 1987 and even more emphasis was placed on the Navigation – the rally became more appealing to those with less specialist cars but, as a consequence, a number of competitors with 'proper' rally cars moved on to other, more hard-core competitive events. And there were plenty of them !

Personally, I've enjoyed all the different mixes of CB's. In the seventies the event settled on a Bank-Holiday weekend in May with the rally run on the Saturday night and the Dunlop starting late the next morning. Thus, as the Monday was a day off for most of us, the social side of the weekend grew and one of the weekend highlights became the Sunday Presentation & Awards evening. These evenings overseen by the inimitable Geoff Eteson and included various forms of 'entertainment' as well as incorporating the serious business of giving out the Awards and Trophies earned over the weekend. I took over the M/C job in the early nineties (?) and continued to offer all sorts of games, quizzes, guest speakers and general silliness. Simon Lowe, Ray Kressinger and Mel Watt, all of Frizzell fame, singing a ten minute version of "New York, New York" was absolute proof of the latter and unforgettable stuff! All this and more was served up as entertainment for sometimes a few dozen people and sometimes a couple of hundred members, their families and friends, to round off what was always a jolly good weekend.

As for the Rally itself, I, with various navigators, enjoyed a modicum of success with many Class awards and overall placings but failed to actually win the Event outright! Marilyn Tricker, David Head, Chas Davies, Stephen White, Martin Saunders and Rob Richardson all took me tantalisingly close a number of times but, for one reason or another, outright Victory eluded us!

One of those 'near-misses' with Dave Head was almost a 'non-finish'... it was the early-eighties, nip & tuck with a star driver from NEL Group, Phil Spurge, and nearing the end of the event the sun was just coming up. Our big Triumph 2500TC had lost its reverse gear a hundred miles before when we'd had to turn around rather quicker than the gearbox wanted to. We were now approaching a ninety left with a gate straight ahead. Can't remember why the old girl wouldn't go round the corner – trying a bit too hard I expect - but we overshot into the slightly downhill gateway, just a few yards - that's all. No reverse, so out jumps David, pushing and shoving with all the energy that adrenalin, Pro-Plus, Lucozade and all the grunt his nine stones weight could muster. That old Triumph was a heavy old bus... no way was young David going to push us up that slope. So, on with the tow rope and we waited for the next car... it was another WMx crew, Darryl Armstrong and Keith Lay in their big V6 Capri! Now they were also having a good run, probably their best ever, but they stopped, pulled us back to the tarmac and, after unhitching the rope from the Ford, we careered off into the sun-rise with our Saviours struggling in the dust raised by our SPR3's (who in their right mind would use

those on a tarmac rally????). We lost a few minutes, and with not enough miles left in the Event, the damage was done. Worse still, in helping us Darryl and Keith had also dropped a place and a Class win too I think. I suspect they've both long since forgotten that few moments but I haven't... thanks again guys, we nearly did it.

The present Curtis Bennett Motorsport Weekend format includes a variety of motoring & motorsport related activity apart from the CB and the Dunlop. The Metropole Run is very enjoyable and proves a perfect 'warm-up' for the main event; the Motoring Gymkhana is great fun as is the Slot car racing, two Treasure Hunts, a Scenic Drive and everything else that goes into making a 21st century CB weekend. We end up with an Awards Presentation on the Sunday afternoon to finish things off so that those that have to can return home and back to the real World in time for work on Monday!

In the last forty years the West Middlesex Group has won the CB Trophy many times and has finished Runner-up Team on even more occasions, 2005 being the latest! Our Group have enjoyed tremendous success with lots of different crews spread across all the Classes on both the Rally and on the Dunlop. The Event is now 70 years old and a thought occurs to me – ***perhaps the 2006 weekend might be a good time to have a West Middlesex Group reunion at Whitemead Park so we can all have a chance to share our CB memories – and I know there's a lot of 'em out there too!*** A lot of our Group's successful competitors have 'retired' now or gone on to other things, but wouldn't it be great to get some of the old names together just one more time? I've probably just completed my last CB too, so I'd be happy to 'host' such an occasion ***if there's enough support*** – would YOU consider coming along to join me in telling all these youngsters how good it really used to be? Could be quite a special weekend.

The date is 19th - 22nd of May 2006 and accommodation from Friday night until Monday morning will cost £153 for a four-bedded apartment (1 x double, 1 x twin-bedded rooms). That's less than £40 each for the weekend and includes full facilities for self-catering and the on-site facilities. Alternatively, if you don't fancy making breakfast, you could enjoy the culinary expertise of the Whitemead Park staff in the on-site restaurant. But early booking will be essential - now is not too soon! So please get in touch. I can be contacted on: agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk or try calling me on 01189 345 726 – ***I do get home occasionally !***

Those that I particularly want to thank & acknowledge include:

... everyone who's navigated for me over the past forty CB's;

... all my West Middlesex Team mates, past and present;

... former WMx Chairman & Association Chairman, Barbara Sabey who, along with the late Searle Seimonson inspired me with their efforts from the late fifties to the mid-seventies, proving that 'ordinary' csma Club people could actually go on the big events above the CB if the desire was strong enough....;

... and my Mum who died on the Saturday of the 1988 CB Rally but told me the day before, that whatever happened, I was to do the Event, but 'be careful' ! She knew me very well...Dave Head in particular was a great support to me that weekend too ~ thanks mate.

That's the past - what of the 2005 event?

Well, the mighty North West London group triumphed once again and lifted the **Curtis Bennett Trophy** for being **Top Club Team**, albeit with the assistance of one member from North East London ! ; West Middlesex were the **Runner-Up Team** for the umpteenth time....

The Sump June 2005

csma West Middlesex Group

On the **CB rally** Drew Goodspeed/Tony Brooks were our top crew at 5th overall and were 3rd in Class A.

Jerry Ludlow/Anthony Onley won Class C and the Paul Brown Memorial Trophy.

The **Dunlop** was also won by NWL although Malcolm Grubb & Steven Grubb finish First & Third in Class 'A' respectively and Doug Powell proved to be the Best Novice too.

The **Metropole Run** saw Nikki Wild/Toby Mack (on his first event) finish Third overall – an excellent result!

The **Motoring Gymkhana** produced a win for Malcolm Grubb with Toby Mack and yours truly in joint Third place.

Other things of note from the weekend included :

Mike Scott finding his Marshalling point without any outside assistance...

Alan Smith getting wetter than any Start Marshal should ever expect...

AG's central looking failed as he tried to get into the car at the Start – jacketless!

Oh, and Derrick Holden won on the Raffle !!!!

Congratulations to all our successful competitors and all the above. Thank you all for continuing the traditional support that has become a trade mark of West Middlesex over the years maintaining our status as one of THE Motorsporting and Social Groups of **csma**.

I'll be back at the Curtis Bennett Weekend next year too and I hope you'll all put the date in your 2006 diaries and join me at Whitemead – there's too much history in the Association's premier event to let it fail. Nigel Nelson and his Team did a great job this year, let's all help him to build on that and ensure that the CB has at last turned the corner (on the handbrake?) and is pulling hard on the way back to the status it once enjoyed.

Long live the Curtis Bennett Rally and I hope we bring the Golden Gargoyle back to West Middlesex very, very soon !

Allan Goddard

West Middlesex Group Committee Member Contact Details		
Chairman John Wright 01923 689152 (Home) 07831 687113 (Mobile) bigj@redmail.com	Secretary Toby Mack 07770 365797 wmx@ghatzco.co.uk	Treasurer Nikki Wild 07778 161572 (Mobile) 01256 762865 (Home) nikki@jez-nikki.net
Committee: Jez Boakes (Sump Editor) 07748 766409 jez@jez-nikki.net	Allan Goddard 07785 903000 agoddard@csma-netlink.co.uk	Malcolm Grubb 01784 435447 malcolm.grubb@btconnect.com
Bob Head 0207 8341367	Derrick Holden 01628 440807 Derrickholden@yahoo.co.uk	