



# RUGBY MOTOR CLUB

## NEWSLETTER

**FEBRUARY 2012**



Blimey, it doesn't seem like a month has already passed since the January issue of the newsletter, but here we are again with the February edition.

Once again, you've all been very good at sending in material – keep up the good work, as it makes for a much more interesting newsletter for everybody to read.

If you have any dates for inclusion in the What's On section, or if you've been out on any events recently, a few lines of copy would be very much appreciated.

Hope you enjoy reading the newsletter.

Cheers, Steve.

email: [stevecroucher@btopenworld.com](mailto:stevecroucher@btopenworld.com)

### 12 CAR SERIES DATES

**February 8th:** D & R 12 Car

Filongley / Corley

Rob Walter (07792 521024) & Dave Jones

**February 29th:** MiniBagger

Graham Dance (07749 969779)

Barford, Warwick

Map 151

**March 14th:** The Flat Knacker

Will Malkin & Chris Valentine

North Warwickshire

Click here for more details including regs and entry forms: [12 CAR SERIES](#)

### RMC FACEBOOK PAGE & WEBSITE

Rugby Motor Club now has a Facebook page which you can visit by clicking here: [RMC FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

Also, the events calendar can be accessed on Google calendars by clicking here: [RMC EVENTS CALENDER](#)

You can visit the Rugby Motor Club website by clicking here: [RMC WEBSITE](#)

### WHAT'S ON IN FEBRUARY...

#### WYEDEAN RALLY

**Saturday 10th February**

Traditional opening round of the BTRDA series.

More info available at: [WYEDEAN RALLY](#)

#### MSA ORGANISERS' SEMINARS

**Sunday 11th February**

Those of you who have already signed up especially the 12-car organisers should have received details from the MSA. If not, please let Chris Valentine know.

#### RACE RETRO – INTERNATIONAL HISTORIC MOTORSPORT SHOW

**Sat & Sun 24th/25th February**

Stoneleigh Park, Coventry

### TALES FROM THE EAST

Work started on the car a couple of weeks before the event deciding what tyres to use and lifting the suspension up to give some extra ground clearance. The Kumho R700s we used last year seemed to work OK but took some advice and decided Hankook R201s were a better option so I purchased those instead. We also decided to keep a close eye on wear at the two petrols and swap the tyres around accordingly.

Pretty pleased with our seeding (car 25), so we expected to get held up less than we did last year.

We left Northampton at about 17:00 aiming to get to Barton Mills at 18:45 for scrutineering. Took it fairly steady down the A14 as the tyres were pretty noisy on tarmac and arrived about 18:40 which was good going really.

Noise and scrutineering passed without incident so we just had to hang around for the briefing at 21:00. With a couple of hours to kill we decided to have a coffee and something to eat. I thought James was pushing his luck a bit with the cheese burger and I

was hoping not to see it again later on. As 22:25 was our start time James went to have a chat with some of the other crews while I tried to relax and keep warm.

Cherry Hill was the first section and although we didn't know it at the time we dropped down to 34th because we'd managed to drop a whole second.

Things gradually got better over the next 3 sections generally dropping 1 minute per section over the leaders.

Berners saw us post our first top ten time dropping 58 seconds overall. Things slipped slightly on Kings East where our time of 55 seconds put us 14th on that section. Confidence in the tyres was growing with only Ingham and Fox Pin 1 seeing us out of the top 10 times. Petrol 2 showed us 9th overall with a time of 14:21. James decided we ought to put the spares on the front as he thought we were losing some grip at that end.

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Just six sections left to go and we started setting consistent top ten times with Fox Pin 2 seeing us fifth fastest just 25 seconds behind the leader. All went pretty well up to the last section. This was split into 2 parts with a short DSO section in the middle. The first part went pretty well until we entered the slow DSO observed section through some crops. Halfway across the field the car suddenly shot right and stopped. We'd just driven through the most innocuous dip and the offside ball-joint housing decided it didn't like the hub anymore and they parted company. With no chance of fixing it we waited for the recovery crews to arrive.

After some discussion between the recovery boys it was decided to drag the car out backwards. With a Landrover 110 at the front, the Corsa in the middle and a Disco bringing up the rear to keep the Corsa vaguely in a straight line.

When we eventually got to a metalled road I was amazed to hear the Disco driver say he'd only used his brakes on the drive through the forest and the 110 had towed both vehicles the whole way!

New hubs are on order and we've got a bit of work to do now to get the car ready for the Carpetbagger.

**Derek Newbould**

## CRA INTERNATIONAL WINTER CHALLENGE 2011

The Classic Rally Association organise an annual road rally which takes crews from the UK to Monte Carlo. 2011 was the 18th running of the event and featured dual starts from Chester and Holland on Sunday 19 November, finishing in Monaco on the following Thursday. The format followed a traditional format of timed and regularity road sections, and special tests, totalling 2800 kms via overnight halts in Beaune, Aix-les-Bains and Digne-les-Bains.

The majority of the competing cars date from the 1950's and early 60's, although there are classes for pre 1950's models, plus several classes for post 1962 cars. The event attracted a mix of saloons and sports cars, the oldest being an open 1936 Alvis 4.3 litre and the most recent an Escort RS2000 and a Porsche 911, both from 1974.

The 40 or so UK competitors made their way south from Chester to a lunch halt at the Angel Hotel in Market Harborough, where town centre parking had been arranged for them, marshalled by a very debonair looking gentleman who bore more than a passing resemblance to a certain Mr Holmes, resplendent in period sheepskin.

Having crossed the Channel and joined the continental starters in northern France, there was a night run (via a series of passage checks) to a breakfast stop in Tonnere, before continuing on to the first overnight rest halt in Beaune. Days 2 and 3 (from Beaune to Aix and Aix to Gap) comprised a series of Regularity and Time Controls. This was followed by a Wednesday night section from Gap to Digne.

The final day took the crews from Digne to Monte Carlo over the



Col de Turini. The weather for the event was unseasonably mild this year, without the ice and snow that had been anticipated.

The overall winners were Eamonn Byrne and Ian Tullie in a 1962 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint, who accumulated the grand total of 5 mins 1 secs penalties in 4 days of rallying. Indeed, they were not alone in doing very well, as the top 4 finishers (3 Alfas and a Porsche 956) managed less than 10 minutes penalties. The last finisher received a total of 5 hours 19 mins. Only 7 of the 71 starters failed to finish.

The photographs are of the competitors and assembled thron at the Market Harborough lunch halt on Day 1.

**Dave Barratt**



## ABINGDON CARNIVAL 2011 PART 2 – by Dan Hart

After prolonged preparation the day had finally come, packing was easier than ever before as most of my equipment is now in plastic shipping boxes courtesy of my former employees and Tesco. I borrowed a trailer from work and now that I have a proper car (a Discovery), plenty of space and a relaxed towing experience. As I now work for Land Rover this could be considered a 'plug' but I've always wanted a Discovery and I've just ordered another one in preference to a Range Rover Sport.

For those who haven't been to Abingdon it is a huge working RAF base where Hercules C130s land and take off and there are great big metal containers everywhere. The RAF has been very cooperative in the past and they move huge concrete blast barriers into place to remind us to go in the right direction. I guess it has comparison with Manby in that there is a complex area attached to the main runways but it is much, much bigger. Being in June this is normally a lovely sunny weekend.

Looking at the weather this weekend, sunny didn't look too likely, I packed a set of slicks (optimistically) but fitted the car with Yokohama Parada road tyres (wets) and put an extra pair of Avon wets in just in case.

On arrival I met John Rutter who was to be my co-driver. We'd never met before but being petrol heads there is always plenty of common ground. John co-drives for John O'Gorman in a BMW 325i, has built a Stratos replica and has competed in it at Abingdon in the Sprint on a number of occasions.

Perhaps this is a good time to mention that the Abingdon CARNIVAL is not just the rally. On Saturday there is the Sprint and a grass Autotest and there is also an off-road event.

Having met John we had a quick look at the complex and at the giant concrete blocks. I have competed on this event twice before but never finished, I ran out of petrol on SS9 the first time and took off the exhaust on the way to SS1 on a runway landing light the second time. The complex hasn't changed so everything looked pretty familiar.

There is free camping at the event as well as a beer tent, a Hog roast (which I missed) and pretty good catering. We headed to the beer tent after sailing through Scrutineering and noise (94 dB).

John and I had a pint of very good local ale while looking over the maps. At this point the rain started, it really came down with floods of water an inch deep sweeping across the floor of the tent. The maps looked OK, the rain stopped and John headed for home and a good night's kip.

I pitched my tent and was disappointed to find it had got a hole in it but although it tipped down all night I stayed dry. After pitching up I went back to the beer tent for another pint and to see the comedian, who was perhaps the bluest I've ever seen.

Up at seven and raring to go, I grabbed a bacon butty and met John. I was then surprised to see a work colleague who lives round the corner from me and who had brought his son Alex to watch the rally. Apparently he is quite

inspired by the whole rallying thing and they'd got up early to brave the torrential rain and come to watch.

We got ourselves ready and had a chance to watch the first cars come round. Car 1, Steve & Yvonne Furzeland in an Impreza WRC was first (of course) and as it headed into the complex, next to where we were servicing, its front O/S wheel came off. It thunderbolted forwards and hit a marshal's car breaking off the number plate, it bounced back and whacked the car it had come off as it ground to a halt – not a good start for them, in fact they went no further.

As is the way, the co-driver gets to keep the road book so I can't say for sure how the stages div'd up but this rally was 80 miles. Each of stages 1-6 was approximately 11 miles. SS7 & 8 were ~7 miles.

I'd warned John that I would take things fairly easy with my concerns over the torque tube

so I revved to 4000rpm and slipped the clutch off the line. By the first corner though all was forgotten, me and the Manta were best friends again as I gave it plenty of welly and I started to get to know my co-driver – he chuckled happily as the back wheels continually broke traction in the wet and we slip-slid everywhere.

SS 1 was pretty straightforward although we were passed by a higher seeded RS2000 whilst we were feeling our way around fairly steadily. Despite this pragmatic approach our efforts had got us straight into the Top 30.



The Manta, ready for action!



Me checking oil and Alex – happy to be in the rain.  
I forgot my coat so had to buy this one,  
which I've now lost!

On SS2 I began to attack a bit more, the downside of this was that I clipped a kerb on the outside, I was filled with dread as the ATS Cup wheels I was using are essentially for road use so maybe not robust enough to withstand a kerb strike. We pressed on, the tyre stayed up and fortunately the rim was undamaged. At the end of SS2 the brakes started to fade and this was due to plague us right through until SS6, the fading coming on progressively earlier throughout. SS2 was in the end 46 seconds quicker (15:12) than SS1, our position was now into the Top 25.

Me checking oil and Alex – happy to be in the rain. I forgot my coat so had to buy this one, which I've now lost!

SS3 & 4 repeated the clockwise direction of SS1 & 2 but introduced two grass sections at Junctions 13 & 12. I thought I'd committed the stage maps to memory but obviously not as I turned the wrong way off grass on SS3 at 13 despite John's correct call. Video evidence confirms that I wasn't the only one. Later on SS3 we were unable to stop in time for the bus stop at junction 21 but stopped just short of the barrier and were able to make it round without losing more than a second or two. This stage must have been one of the wettest of the lot, as we were accelerating away from junction 28 and spun out striking a flag post, fortunately no damage sustained and very few seconds lost.

My friends/colleagues Xavier Vinamata and Tony Jones had arrived by SS2 and were perfectly positioned (as was Ian Maddison) to capture the excitement of SS4.

Approaching the complex we caught an Evo 6 on the straight, we passed it between junctions 4 and 5 but before junction 6 I overcooked it.



Just a half spin, but enough for the EVO to sneak past (image is a DVD screen grab courtesy of MAD Videos)

SS5 & 6 were a reversal of 3 & 4. The brakes were still boiling and at one point we lost front brakes altogether. Attempting to stop we spun 180 and headed backwards towards the dreaded blast barriers. Fortunately we stopped just in time. Heading off again we progressed gingerly but all of a sudden the brakes came back. This reassured me that it was an overheating problem rather than a leak.

There weren't too many traffic problems throughout the rally but once or twice we got the chance to test ourselves against other machinery. On SS6 we found ourselves in front of an Aston Martin DB7. This appears an expensive way to go rallying but I suppose you could get the car completed for less than about £30k which is cheaper than a lot of Mk2s and has an awful lot of power. It couldn't be logbooked now as it's over 4 litres (or could it – as a GT).

On the straight from jnc 26 down to jnc 20, it couldn't catch us, perhaps it was keeping its distance or perhaps it was just aquaplaning or being limited by traction control. At junction 17 we aquaplaned so much we couldn't stop

for the chicane, we looped round to the left in order to take the chicane correctly and the Aston Martin aquaplaned right through and carried on. Neither of us were penalised. Later we overshot at Jnc 27 scattering the marshalls who were replacing cones from a previous surfer.

At the end of SS5 we'd changed the brake pads which improved things. At the end of SS6 I discovered that all the cross drillings in the discs were blocked with friction material, I poked them through with a screwdriver but in doing so also found that one of the discs was cracked. They worked perfectly from then on but I was worried about a disc exploding so continued braking early and more gently.

After SS7 I found that there was not one but 2 big cracks in the discs and on examination after removal of the discs there were 3. These discs had been highly stressed and probably suffered from the heat cycling too.

Stages 7 & 8 were the shortest of the day, the rain didn't let up and we continued on the wets, they lasted all day without a problem and wore so little I would confidently use them for more wet rallies.

Other niggles throughout the day had included dropping oil pressure at stage end, eventually the main cause was found to be a loose wire on the sender but there were a few little leaks which will lead to a maintenance campaign before the next event.

On Stages 6, 7 & 8 we managed to get stuck behind the same orange/green Escort (car 66) and he was unable to let us through on the narrow roads. Eventually he was able to let us past and on SS8 we

left him way behind. Eventually he finished 26 seconds ahead of us which is less than we were delayed by being stuck behind him, however there was nothing he could do and this is part and parcel of the sport.

After arriving at the lofty position of 17th (from 100 starters) after SS6 I was hopeful to hold onto this but thought it likely we'd dropped a place or two and maybe into the early 20s. It was with absolute delight then that John revealed to me that we'd finally finished 13th overall.

On SS8 we were 6th overall – only the Top 5 had beaten us.

A great day's rallying, the rain made it rather than spoiling it. Maybe I am a bit Button-esque in that I can perform well when the conditions are bad. Maybe Manby taught me a lesson.

I will definitely try to get an entry next year and I heartily recommend that several more of you should come down to compete, marshal or just join in the fun.