

LNCMC newsletter May

Chairman at Full Chat

It seems Spring has fully sprung, so I hope everyone enjoys the welcome longer evenings. As the national classic trials scene heads towards its Summer break, we have a good programme of our own and other local events to look forward to.

No club events of our own in April but several members were either competing or marshalling at various locations on the MCC's 101st Lands End Trial over the Easter weekend. Results have not been finalised yet, so can't give a shout out for club members' performances.

Marshalling on Crackington with a sprinkling of fellow club and committee members, meant an early start, with the first competitors due around 4.50am. Nigel and I had taken a look on the Thursday to see if we could do something a bit different, it was limited what we could do but we formed a bit of a deviation and put a restart on some steps. The prolonged rain on the Friday and a cracked pipe near the top of the section meant we had a constant stream of water washing the section out all day. It was tricky for the bikes though, we saw several caught out on the section. A long morning as it was gone midday by the time the section closed.

Next up is the Northgate Sporting Trial on Saturday 17th May at Ashleigh, Lifton, which for the first time is a BTRDA round so hopefully this will be well supported. Unfortunately we have had no end of issues with our bank recently, so whilst Mike and Jan continue to work hard on the solution - which I'm sure you can imagine is no easy task when it's becoming more and more difficult to speak with someone to sort these kind of things out, we are running this event as 'cash on the day'. Hopefully by the time the summer events are here we will be back online.

All for now
Simon R

Important: Please note our Chairman's comment above regarding cash payment for trials entries. The Executive Committee emphasise that this situation is entirely of the bank's making, and the finances of the club remain as healthy as ever: - Editor

Never say never again!

Simon Oates finds he is doing the Land's End Trial, after all

The Liege was going to be driven by someone else in the Land's End Trial this year, but they decided to do other things over Easter. This resulted in me entering the trial (I'd said no more MCC trials after the 2025 Exeter and my dismal performance on that day) and wondering why I did it!

Paul Price from Gloucester who is an owner of two Lieges and is also a well-known Sporting Trials competitor, offered to be my wing-man. He drove down to Egloskerry on Friday, had a gourmet lunch (stew) lovingly prepared by my wife Alison and got ready for the start of our 24 hour trial. Waterproofs were called for, even with the roof up and we departed north to Rob Haworth's farm near Bude for 8.30pm with Rob and Elizabeth's Liege leading the way, and John and Natasha Early sandwiched in the middle with their car, while Rob and I were back-marker.

The rain was persistent as we trundled towards the start at Bridgwater. Probably the most dangerous part of the trial was when we followed the M5 from Tiverton to Bridgwater, where the three of us had dropped to 42 mph on the motorway and I was tail end Charlie. John Early's car had developed an intermittent engine fault and wouldn't go any faster and every time a lorry went past it provided a lovely cold shower in the cars.

This wasn't a good time for my rear fog light to fail and luckily it didn't. Bridgwater reached, topped up with fuel and through scrutineering at the Rugby Club, we mingled as we waited for the official start 4 hours and 40 minutes behind the first bike.

Whilst surveying the cars in the car park I spotted the closing car of Rex Ward, a nice little white Suzuki Jimny with black door handles. Out with the microfiber cloth to dry the doors and black gaffer tape to cover the door handles both sides to slow them down and give the last cars a bit more time if they broke down. Knowing Rex, he'd recycle the tape on something else!

Competitors had been issued with a lanyard and a too big control card that had to be cut down to fit comfortably (I folded mine in half – Ed) which had to be pierced / stamped at control points, including the start. The rain had eased a little as we approached the handbrake test and control card point at Walfords Gibbet, which caused no issues but a few miles further along and much higher up we ran into a bank of thick fog which slowed progress for a few miles to eventually clear and on to Felons Oak (1) with hardly any queue!

The section had been smoothed, which took the shock out of last year's section and reduced the challenge. Left through Luxborough (why?) and passed a car on fire with attendant fire engine before Wheddon Cross. Onward on the coast road to Lynton and into Barbrook for a splash and dash in the garage, control card stamp and cup of tea before moving on to Beggars Roost (2).

By now the rain was intermittent and John Early's car had a spark plug change as it was still struggling and barely got to the restart. Once exited, we followed the route of lovely driving roads (even better in daylight) through Simonsbath and towards

Barnstable and peeled off the A39 to Riverton (3) for a rough initial part of the section and a restart which was completed.

Unfortunately John and Natasha Early decided their car was too erratic to continue and retired to make their way back to Rotherham . We made the executive decision to remove the hood as daylight broke which inevitably caused a few short sharp showers which we ignored. Just in time for the first Observed Test (OT1) at Yollocombe where I nearly missed the turning off the main road.

More great driving roads interspersed with L, R and SO markers to aid the vehicles on to Sutcombe (4). I was half expecting the river to be badly flooded, but it was only a foot deep. We cleared the section and restart before parking up for a wonderful bacon butty and cup of tea. The next stop was at Wicketts Garage in Bradworthy for another splash and dash and a packet of mini eggs for John on the pumps (his favourites).

Off to the A39 again and Wooley Holding Control before moving on to Darracott. A very long wait which was beginning to take its toll on Paul, so I explained that this was probably the least I had queued on an MCC trial for many years (and there weren't many later either!) With no restarts on the hill, the delays were unexpected. It was at this point that Paul pulled his favourite folder from the floor and found the heat from the exhaust had burnt through one side – sorry Paul! It seems his woolly, thick socks that were worn to keep his feet warm were doing the opposite ie insulating his feet from the exhaust and keeping them cool. As I write this I have just ordered more heat insulation in an attempt to get the heat away from the passenger foot well.

Once the section was completed, all bikes and car classes 6, 7 & 8 were diverted to Cutcliffe Lane (6A) with a restart only for class 8 cars. A bit rough but easier without a restart. Once out of the top we made our way through Bude where we saw the nationally famous kilt wearing litter picker doing his thing with a supermarket trolley nearly full of litter (what's this country becoming with so much litter?).

Route check and stamp at Widemouth Bay and along the coast through Millook and Dizzard to Crackington (7) and a sneaky little restart. The unusual local climatic conditions had appeared again at Easter with a clay slide onto the track that entertained the crowds and another bag of Mini Eggs was sent flying through the air for Nigel Cowling at the restart.

Breakfast stop at the Wilsey Down Hotel was welcome and two large Cornish Breakfasts were consumed and another stamp obtained to prove we were there. A bit of a queue at Ruses Mill (OT2) due to all classes using a single-track lane and zig zag hill for two completely separate tests (why can't they be the same to save on marshals?). From here in gorgeous weather, we toured Bodmin Moor through Minions and on to Warleggan (8) for a restart for 6, 7 & 8. We seemed to hit it correctly and fly up through the section.

Great country roads on through Bodmin and towards Wadebridge for Eddy's Branch Line (9 & 10). Last year there had been an over two-hour queue, but this year there was none and it had been made into two sections with our restart cancelled on section 10.

Both were cleared with ease, so we continued following the excellent route book instructions with a glorious spirited drive through the lanes to Perranporth Holding Control for another stamp in the control card. We were allowed to leave when we wanted and continued towards Blue Hills for the final, possibly hardest, two hills.

There were about 40 cars in front and both hills were in action and taking scalps along the way. Classes O and R were again mixed in with the main trial which slows down the later cars but no matter we had to do what we could to clear the two restarts. The route book showed all the positions of the restarts on the two hills which I can't say I agree with. Part of the fun of trialling is expecting the unexpected on a section!

Paul and I had agreed to count down from three and for him to bounce on zero as I let the clutch out on the first restart. It seemed that the timing was good but Paul later said that my steering was pointing to the left and the car bogged down in the mud in the bottom left and we barely moved. I turned the steering right and left, and gunned it which didn't work so dropped the revs to nearly stalling and gave as much bounce down on my spinning rear wheel as I could. A miracle happened and the car suddenly found traction and powered out of the section and then stopped on the line at the end with marshals attending both sides. Relief swept over us with just Blue Hills 2 (13) left to do.

With virtually no waiting we were attacking the section and turned left into the restart to see two deep holes that previous restarts had dug. I tried to get to the right of them, but the car slid sideways into them – bummer. Into 1st gear and out with the clutch where the car just drove up without any hiccups.

Shocked that it was so easy, I forgot to stop astride the finish line and quickly reversed back over it. There were no marshals on the line which would have reminded me to stop if they were there. Not the best way to muck up a trial but such is life!

We waited to watch a few more finish the section with Rob & Elizabeth Haworth flying the hill in their Liege before we carried on to the finish at the Inn for all Seasons where we signed off and handed our control card and numbers in.

The planets all lined up for a thoroughly enjoyable trial which followed the previous two excellent trials. Well done MCC for the improvements which provide more great memories for us all to cherish of the trials. There were a lot of marshals out in variable weather for long stints at their stations – what heroes, thank you for all your time and effort, you are much appreciated. Thanks also go to all the land-owners and everyone involved in organising and running the trial including the tea and cake ladies and gents.

Land's End Trial marshalling with John and Vivien Turner, and Thorn the collie

Having elected not to compete the Land's End this year, I contacted Tim Flocks and offered to marshal for Classes O, and R at Treworld, Tim came back to me PDQ and said yes please but could I possibly see if anyone else might be available to help: sweet talking to Vivien did the trick and we were a team. A couple of days later the marshals' pack arrives (goodies as well as marshals' kit) for three marshals, so I think there must be someone else that's volunteered.

On arrival at our hill at a very civilised 9.30 am it soon becomes apparent that although there is a need for three marshals, there wasn't actually a third person! What are we to do?

Fortunately we own a Collie dog and everyone knows Collies can organise anything so Thorn was immediately signed on, with one small caveat, he would only do it if he had a comfy chair and a blanket, these were soon provided and he became the start marshal's assistant to Vivien, which meant I had to walk up a very steep hill to run the restart point.

Not long before the first competitor arrives on a motorbike. He's way ahead of his scheduled time, and saying I don't want to do the restart, I'll just ride through, so before things had got going properly we had our first failure, I think the cold night air or sausage and egg overload had got to him.

Shortly after the early class R cars started to arrive, looking rather pristine, a large clutch of Morgans and a beautiful Fiat 125 Spider along with several MGs, it's all going rather well until Vivien announces over the radio that the course-closing car has arrived!

At this point we've only seen one or two class O competitors and it seemed a bit harsh to close the hill so early, fortunately Vivien talked the occupants of the course-closing vehicle into giving it a while, so they came up past me and disappeared and waited around the corner somewhere so as to allow the rest of the competitors through.

From down around the corner I could hear a familiar high revving sound and Mark Gregg's little Austin 7 appeared (looking well loaded) did a perfect restart and disappeared over the hill, soon to be followed by Werner Boeykens and his son in a Citroen 2CV van!

They stopped as required, pulled away a few yards and then the engine cut out, requiring the reverse of shame all the way to the bottom of the hill in order to take a run up, sorted.

We were now running short of competitors so when the closing car made its second appearance we felt obliged to close the section, allowing us to have a very enjoyable picnic at the foot of the hill which raised a few eyebrows with passing dog walkers.

I think Werner was possibly one of the longest distance competitors, coming all the way from Belgium. On Monday he posted on the MCC Facebook page that he had arrived home at 11.00pm on Sunday night having covered 2100 Kilometres in the 2CV, which hadn't missed a beat and at one point had reached 55mph (from

experience it must have been a bit loud in the cabin), The things people do in order to compete.

J.T.



Turner goes to Taunton: the County Classics Motor Museum

John Turner channels his inner Enid Blyton as four go mad in Somerset

Andy Prosser had been to the County Classics Motor Museum a couple of months ago and his enthusiastic reports had triggered a few of us expressed into also going, so Andy , Joe Caudle , Mike Wevill and myself did a little bumble up the M5 to Taunton.

The museum is in the town centre with all the usual shops either side of it: the frontage is not particularly big but once you go through the doors it a bit of a Tardis. A very nice lady on reception wasted no time in relieving us of our entry fee and then gave us a brief explanation of the layout, not that it was necessary after all we had Andy, our personal tour guide.

As we had arrived mid-morning he wasted no time in taking us straight to the café (priorities) whilst waiting to be served our very nice coffee we observed a man clearing the tables, in no time he came and introduced himself, it was Patrick the owner and founder of the museum, there was obviously no hierarchy here just muck in and do whatever needed doing.

Patrick gave us a run down about the museum and his life-long passion for motors which had started when he was in primary school, by the age of eleven he had his own car and was capable of rebuilding an engine.

Once we had topped up on our caffeine we started to explore, in total there are I think four floors of exhibits, not just cars but a very diverse range of motorbikes: scramblers, racers, grass track outfit and of course some of Italy's finest scooters (bonus point).

One car that caught us out was a factory-produced, Alfa Romeo-powered, Nissan Cherry: Andy and I were certainly scratching our heads over that one.

Obviously we were drawn back to the café for lunch and again for afternoon coffee and home-made trifle: sometimes you just have to do it. This was a brilliant day out without having to travel too far, the exhibits were first class, the museum didn't have the sterile atmosphere of some of its bigger competitors, and I can't remember ever seeing so many wall plaques related to just about all things motoring. Well worth a visit.

<https://www.countyclassicsmotormuseum.co.uk/book-tickets/#>

Editor's adventures

Richard Simpson does a round trip to the Land's End Trial

Rode off to the start on my Beta X-Trainer into the face of a 'severe weather warning' for rain. It turned out to be correct.

I took last year's 'assembly' backroads route from Launceston across to the Bridgwater start, passing the aftermath of an horrific car accident. It looked like a small hatchback had gone into full earth/sky mode, and it was on its roof with the doors cut off, and an ambulance parked by the side of the road. Grim!

On to the trial. All the bikes, except two, start in front of me. Got rained on all night, crossing the high ground of Exmoor at a cautious pace. Never ride faster than you can navigate, and you can only navigate slowly when your route-book holder has misted up.

Some sections went better than others. Had vowed to ride more aggressively, and as a result overshot the restart at the very short first section. Did better through the night, but overshot the 'stop' line at the first special test.

The the sky got less dark, and I could hear birds singing over the sound of the Beta's exhaust. The rain stopped. Things were looking up!

Then I got to the 'bikes and top class cars only' Cutcliffe Lane, marshalled by Lisa and family, which I failed, along with most of the rest of the motorcycle entry. I'd left the 'failure' instructions on my edited roadbook: a premonition?

Just as well, as I was able to lead the two guys who failed before me back to the route and into Bude.

Home territory now. I ended up in the bank a bike's length from the section ends at my local hill at Crackington, which was sad. A groan of disappointment from the spectators. I had enjoyed the chicane/restart, but where did that clay at the top of the hill come from?

On to Warleggan. I have only ridden this hill twice, and I've fallen on it three times! I vowed to be more aggressive this year, and it worked, right up to the restart. The obvious route was to the right, but this was occupied by the (elderly) flag marshal, who was sitting on a camping chair right on the desired line! So I went left, spun up on the restart and fell over. The bloke who picked me up helpfully told me "The better line is to the right," got the flag marshal to move, and then I rode out the way he had suggested.

Don't forget to thank the marshals!

Then the sun came out. Eddie's Branch Line had (thankfully) been revised from last year to give a straighter start, and split into two sections. But it was like riding through 100 tonnes of melting coffee ice cream. I footed at the first, and the bike sank to the point where my feet were on the ground for the second. So, that's a double fail!

The bikes do one more section before Blue Hills, while the cars got straight there after the last route control. So, the cars had made the predictable mess of Blue Hills 1 by the time I arrived, and I footed.

On to Blue Hills 2. It was hot now, and I queued for ages on the slope, stewing in my waterproofs and thermals, while the Ford Escort Owners Club took turns to get towed up the hill. I was holding the bike on the back brake (engine compression wouldn't hold it), and my right foot and leg were slowly going numb while I enjoyed the aroma of Ford Pinto exhaust fumes and tyre smoke. At last, the final Dagenham Rust-Bucket was dragged out of the way, and I had my shot at the hill.

All went well until the restart, when I couldn't find the back brake with my numb foot, and the front brake couldn't hold it. So I slid out of the box.

Fought to the top and parked...and a little girl plucked at my hand and said: "I thought you did really well!"

Bless her.

Rode to the finish at Redruth, where an MCC man said that they had been seriously concerned in the weeks before the event that it was so dry that it would be too easy, so had made the sections as hard as possible. Then the weather broke, but the course had been approved so they couldn't change it. Eddies Branch Line 1 & 2 had been closed to most of the car entries as deemed undriveable.

After that, all there was to do was ride home...I arrived almost exactly 24 hours after setting out, having spent about 20 of those hours perched on the X-Trainer's saddle. Strangely, although I was one of the last bikes to leave the start and I don't recall overtaking anyone on the road, it seemed that at least 20 bikes arrived at the finish behind me.

A fantastic event...great support from fellow entrants and spectators, and a big thank you to the marshals and officials. I've even forgiven the bloke on the restart at Warleggan. And I met Chris 'skids and wheelies' Northover from the Bike World YouTube channel. He was doing the event with his wife, brother, and stepfather. What a lovely man, and his family are lovely as well.

Footnote

Congratulations if you've got this far, and sorry it's taken so long to get this larger than usual newsletter out. Next month: We've got another trial report from Simon O, this time from the passenger seat, with Nigel Cowling driving the Flora Trial in the Leige, plus some kit and equipment reviews from me, plus anything else that anyone decides to contribute. More tales from the Land's End welcome, plus reports from other events always wanted, along with technical content, especially car-related: richardsimpson94@yahoo.co.uk