

LNCMC Newsletter Jan 2026

Chairman at full chat!

Happy new year to all! At our recent committee meeting we confirmed the dates for 2026 - so please check out our calendar below for another busy programme over the coming months. With a strong and active committee, as well as very supportive landowners 2026 could be our busiest year yet, so plenty for all tastes over the coming months.

We start with our awards evening in Feb, which again has been brilliantly supported by the membership and friends and we look forward to another good evening.

Then into March and logistically our second most labour-intensive event - The Launceston Trial. We had looked at the option of running this as a mini road trial, visiting 4 or 5 woods that we are lucky enough to be able to access, however for the sake of 10-15 road miles and the insurance costs for car competitors who take out the event-specific policy being the same cost as say the Tamar (over 70-80 miles) we made the decision to stick to the single venue in Lew & Eastcott Woods. Regs & entries should be available very imminently so keep your eyes peeled.

A hectic start to the classic trials calendar in 2026 will see many club members on the hills regularly, with the sporting trials members having their flagship 'Gold Star' this weekend, good luck to all.

Look forward to seeing you all at various events over the coming months.

All for now,
Simon R.

That all-important calendar

Launceston Trial	1 st March
AGM	23 rd March
Northgate Trial	16 th May
Carr Cup	24 th May
Spry Trial	14 th June
Treasure Hunt	28 th June
Motor Traders Trial	5 th July
Evening Trial	15 th July
Invitation Trophy	2 nd Aug
David Ayres Trial (provisional)	20 th Sept
Tamar Trial	11 th Oct
Ron Beer Trial	13 th Dec



This Beezer geezer is eager for the Launceston Trial

And don't forget...

Club awards dinner Friday 6th February at Trethorne Leisure, Kennards House, Launceston PL15 8QE

A 7pm arrival for food at 7.30pm followed by the awards presentation. Places must be booked by Tuesday 20th January. Eighty tickets booked so far, so it looks like being a good night with still a few days to go.

The price is £28.00 per head and includes a carvery and sweet. Under 12s are at the discounted rate of £14.00 each.

PAYMENT IS BY CASH ONLY ON THE NIGHT

Raffle prizes gratefully received.

Dodgems have requested by many, so hopefully this will be possible.

Book your places now by contacting Lisa Gregory via

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1577900209166588/>

Or email info@lncmc.co.uk

Remember. You must PREEBOOK via Lisa, not the venue. Payment is CASH ONLY, and is made on the night.

It's subs time again

Yes, another New Year, and it's time to get the bank card/cheque book out again.

Membership for 2026 is due.

On the club's website please go to Online Entry <https://www.lncmc.co.uk/online-entry/>

Then Membership Application & Renewal Form

Fill in the form and submit on-line.

It should then give the various options to pay.

Full Membership £12.00

Extra family members £2.50 each

Junior membership £2.50 each

Alternatively go to <https://www.lncmc.co.uk/other/>

Then Membership Application Form

Print off and send in a hard copy plus payment

Memberships can also be paid when entering the Single Venue Launceston Trial on Sunday 1st March, either on line or by post.

Anyone seen my hat?

Simon Riddle freezes his nut off in the Liege at The Motor Cycling Club's Exeter Trial



A pre-Exeter Trial run, with a golf cart being used as extra ballast.



Post-Exeter Liege, with a coating of salt and mud

Exeter, the New Year's starter trial arrives all too soon after the festivities and ballast aiding food and drink. The car has been fettled with a replacement steering wheel (last one broke a spoke a month ago on the Camel) that was last used on Torum 12 years ago.

I'm now running the gauntlet without some yellow tape to show me the way! Remind me which way is up and which is down?

The springs at the back (90 lbs) have been replaced with 250 lb ones that I've tried before but the slack is only taken out with three turns of the securing nut. This seems an acceptable balance for driving on the road and trialling. Four clicks of the adjustables for the road and 10 – 14 when trialling, if I remember.

A cursory check of everything and in to town to pick up Paul Bunn for his first ordeal overnighter courtesy of the MCC. With him being a cricketer, I broke the news en route that we weren't going to get any cricket in unless we met Dave Middleditch on the trial! He'd worn his 'bacon and egg' tie too.

The weather was doing the opposite of the forecast: pissing down as we left Cornwall and freezing. The wipers flapped away as much water as they could but the road salt, post frosts, was sticking everywhere else on the windscreen which didn't help visibility. Once we neared Exeter the skies began to clear and the rain stopped but it got colder and I'm sure we saw Gritney Spears and Spready Mercury doing their thing on the roads. We approached the start on the A303 and the half-moon rose out of the clouds on its back. As the night/day went on it became more upright and almost started laying on its front: isn't nature incredible?

A long queue at Haynes Motor Museum start stretched to the main road for the scrutineering crew's inspection. Once we were at the front, it all went without a hitch and our Control Card was signed to prove we were a legit crew.

We then went to the Control Desk for more signatures, showing of licences, a badge and a lanyard to keep around Paul's neck with the control card, don't you dare lose it Paul! An hour's free trip around the museum was wonderful value but I couldn't see the red Gilbern (my father used to have an Estate version in the early 70s) which had gone to local storage when the displays were updated and rearranged last year. Great information and displays for all of the family, thoroughly recommended for everyone, even if you pay.

We left at 2.45am and trundled along the icy lanes to handbrake test at Windwhistle followed 100 yds up the lane to the first Observed Test. Start on A, all through B, reverse all through B and forward astride C. All done in 30 yds, I'd call it a bit of a damp squib.

Surely something better and longer could be done?

As it stands, it's not long enough to generate significantly different times between competitors.

We Continued along the icy roads to the first section Undertown where there were still motorbikes completing the section, and we were already one hour late before completing the first section!

Then to Musbury Garage for a signature on the control card.

Another queue at section two (Gatcombe Lane) and another 30 minutes added to our lateness. A wave to Nigel Cowling near the top of Waterloo and off to Normans Hump where the restart proved doable.

Around the woods and on to Clinton where the bottom bit of the hill was catching a lot of cars out due to severe holes and ruts but we put our foot down and got to the top with headlights flickering and dashboard lights extinguished.

Just up the road was Wiscombe Park and the second Observed Test. Someone had had the great idea of starting with a blind corner to the B line followed by the same to the finishing C line, in the dark. Absolutely brilliant and it woke everyone up but we probably left a bit of time behind.

Continuing icy roads to Rill Path with an easy restart and then on to Stretes where we met a Tesco delivery van on an icy corner! We couldn't touch the brakes, even at 10 mph and managed to avoid his slide. Every little helps, as they say.

Then another substantial queue at Stretes, but when we completed the section we couldn't see what the holdup was.

Back to the thawing roads and a top up of fuel before stopping at Greendale Farm Shop for our breakfast and where I discovered that I had lost my Launceston Motor Club badge adorned beanie hat, bugger. Paul unfolded himself from the passenger seat and hobbled with his ingrown toenail towards the refuge.

Another signature on the control card and as we were two hours behind schedule we were told we didn't have to stop for the full hour if we felt refreshed.

Breakfast was ordered and we gave a table number. Shortly after we had sat down, we were told we shouldn't be sitting where we were and should be outside. Table service to table 22 was my reply (what a rebel!!).

A welcome scoff and drink which took most of the hour and back to the car and on to Tillerton Steep via Exeter (A30 access of M5 was closed) and a bit of local knowledge gained us a bit of time as did the ice near the section start and luckily no queue!

We stopped at the top of the restart and pulled away with no drama, through to both Fingle Hill sections. Next Classes 6, 7 & 8 did Seamans Borough (flat restart for class 8) which, where once completed we drove towards Ilsington and Lenda Lane which goes past the top of Simms and approaches Tiple Hill. No queue again! Straight into the section where the "Remove Dentures" sign must have been forgotten. It was rough but we cleared it to wade through the flooded lanes to Donkey Trot for a blast to the stars at the top.

The welcoming volunteers at Ilsington Parish Hall had prepared a great brew and piece of cake to refresh us before our nemesis from last year: Simms. There were only four cars in front waiting at the section start and they didn't get up! No problem, off to the lower restart, rev the engine (rev it again as it felt sluggish) and off up the left side straight into the sun. Before we had a chance to bounce we were greeted by Nigel Cowling's shadow at the top, waving us to stop.

Well that seemed too easy, what the hell happened?

I must have taken the right line as the car didn't get any air on the way up, I bet it will be different next year.

Twelve miles to the next section Slippery Sam which I have failed the last two years. Luckily no devious flag placements in the restart box this year and a final clear for the day.

Back to the thawed main roads and eventually the finish at the Passage House Hotel where we signed off with another signature. A couple of Guinnesses (or is it Guinness?) to celebrate the last 24 hours including the first alcoholic one for Paul for six months which seemed to hit the spot.

He was quiet on the way home, I think it had got straight to his head until a flashy big BMW drew alongside us at Okehampton, wound his window down and shouted and gesticulated something towards us. I got the message something was wrong and pulled into the next layby.

A different car followed me in and I found my rear lights weren't working (must have been from Clinton). The driver got out and said "Where are you from, I know that car". It turned out it was Martin Smith that I met last Spring who was also from Egloskerry (he's trying to rebuild a Lomax in his garage).

I tried to fix the lights and managed to get the rear fog lamp, to work plus Martin and his wife offered to act as our rear gunners all the way home. That left a warm fuzzy feeling knowing that there are still people that will help and care.

Another emotional Helter-Skelter of a trial with the drama lasting all the way home. Dedicated Marshals and helpers probably did too many hours but are so appreciated by us all, THANK YOU SO, SO MUCH. Thanks also to the organiser, land-owners and associated clubs.

News from the Ed's bike shed

Well, when it comes to trials, if I didn't have bad luck, I'd have no luck at all at the moment.

A bit of chaos with my work meant I didn't start final prep of the Beta quite soon enough, although running-in the rebuilt engine is now pretty much complete, and the lights sorted out.

The Friday before the trial found me about 24 hours behind where I would like to have been, but I figured I still had time to do the final checks, collect the hire van, grab a bit of rest and drive up to meet Rick and his Tiger Cub at the Haynes Museum. Even the weather forecast didn't look quite as bad as it might have done. Mostly dry and above freezing.

The final 'pre-flight' routine is to start at the front of the bike and work to the back, checking all the essential nuts and bolts with tools I carry on the bike, do the tyre

pressures, pack the tools into their bag, strap bag to the back mudguard and the job's a good 'un.

The front tyre security bolt looked a little out of line, so I let the tyre down and put a spanner on it. It snapped like a rotten carrot!

This wasn't in the plan. But, I did have a spare, which is awaiting fitment to the GasGas ES700, so I thought I'd use that instead. Wheel out, tyre off, tube out. Oh, the valve looks rather rusty where it's bonded to the tube. A gentle tug, and, you guessed it, it cracked out of the tube.

This cannot be happening!

A call to Launceston Tyre Company elicits the unwelcome news that Kevin is waiting for delivery of 21 in tubes. Well, none of this was in the script. I want a re-write. Next step: call Camelford Bike Bits.

"Do you have any 21 in tubes."

"Yes, I'm looking at them."

Do you know, I've lived here for the best part of 10 years and never been to Camelford Bike Bits?

Well, I have now. Amazing. It's like a bike shop from the 1970s, freezing cold, oil on the floor, a sweet little dog in the window and an immaculate Triumph Mountain Cub (the trail bike version of the Triumph Tiger Cub from the 1960s) sitting in the showroom.

I hear a voice very like my own ask if it's for sale...must be the devil talking. My lips never moved. Honest!

Luckily, it's a customer's bike. I buy my inner tube and leave.

Back in the garage, I question my sanity. I can do this, but I will be starting the event with my rest tank on empty and my stress tank full. Suddenly, it all seems unwise (but when was entering an all-night trial in the middle of Winter wise?).

That's it, I'm out.

A text to Rick, a call to AAA Van Hire to cancel the van, and that's two trials in a row where I've failed to start, which followed two trials in a row where I've failed to finish! Do I dare even enter Holsworthy Motor Club's Bill Vanstone Chairmans Trial on Sunday 22nd February?

Spectating at Simms



Stepping out on a step-through: heroic Sam Hill tackles Simms Hill on a Honda C90



A study in concentration: Emma Wall balances clutch, throttle, and handbrake for an immaculate restart

With an unexpectedly free Saturday, my thoughts immediately turned to treating Kate to a lovely day out...spectating at Simms!

She agreed with some enthusiasm. I was worried now. She's never actually seen one of these events in the metal...would she be horrified?

Getting to Ilington village was an adventure in itself, with the Focus dashboard lighting up with temperature and skid warnings, and the ABS chiming in. Thank goodness for Bridgestone Weather Control tyres.

We mingled with trials traffic as we entered Ilington village...and the place was rammed.

“Look at all these selfish people parking in the street,” I complained to Kate. But when we got to the designated spectator parking we were turned away. “It’s full, just park where you can.”

So we did.

The spectator areas must have had crowds of hundreds. But there emerging from the crowd were Rob and Liz. I’ve known them for decades since we were all in the Cambridgeshire TRF, and Rob now owns the woodland adjacent to Simms and he and Liz will host me and the other two Simpson brothers on our annual Spring trail-riding tour of South Devon. The old slogan used to say ‘You meet the nicest people on a Honda’...I’d contend you make really good friends on a trail bike.

Greetings exchanged we found somewhere to spectate on the bank, with the ‘dynamic’ crowd all sliding slowly down the hill.

We saw the tail-end of the bike field, including the heroes on step-throughs, and an interesting selection of the cars. A Morris 1000 put many of the other cars to shame with a rapid but controlled ascent (well-driven Martin Chaplin), but the star of the show was undoubtedly Emma Wall who positioned her Troll T6 e perfectly on the Class 8 red restart, then pulled away gently up the hill with low revs and no wheelspin, making the whole section look like an easy drive on a country lane. The spectators were astonished. A joy to watch, and almost worth the lecture I got on the way home about the demonstrable superiority of the female half of the human race when it came to driving cars!

Top tip

Still got a variety box/tin of biscuits left over from the Festering Season? Don’t throw the plastic insert away. The many little sub-divisions make ideal storage compartments for fasteners and small components when you are taking something (a Beta X-Trainer, for instance) to bits.