

MARSHALS POST



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ADVENTURE IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

As this was my first trip to the Channel Isles with the Rescue Unit, I was informed that it was my duty to copy not less than 1000 words on our island odyssey for the next edition of MARSHALS POST. As I want to be asked again, I suppose I'd better give it a go . . .

The week started uneventfully as Frazer, Rod, Peter and myself travelled down from Edinburgh to Poole in order to catch the ferry at 6.45 the next morning.

As we sat on board the Condor Vitesse enjoying our all-day breakfasts (all paid for this year!) and enduring the spectacle of Rob Turnbull's mechanic considering regurgitating his, Frazer was prompted to recall the tale of Tam Williamson's similar problems the previous year. To spare Tam's blushes, this seems to be a very regular occurrence as we found out later in the week that the ferry's nickname with the locals (and staff) is 'The Vomit Comet'.

Upon arrival in Jersey we checked into our accommodation at the Highfield House Hotel which is only about half a mile from the hill at Bouley Bay. We took a walk along to take a look at the track and also to inspect the scene of the accident which occurred last year. I had previously heard

accounts of what had happened, but standing looking at the damage to the tree which the car hit and also seeing the steepness of the bank down which the spectators fell, brought home the realisation that the incident could so easily have been much much worse than it was.

The rest of our first day was taken up with such strenuous activities as swimming in the hotel pool and lounging about in the sun followed by dinner and drinks in the bar . . . marshalling can be very tough

sometimes — give me a wet weekend at Knockhill any day!

Wednesday morning was spent sightseeing and shopping in St. Helier. My Aberdonian instincts ensured that a good part of my morning was spent tracking down a bottle of Drambuie for 40p cheaper than the Duty Free on the ferry; my parents would be so proud. Meeting up with the others for lunch we conducted an in depth study of the merits of the local

brew — Mary Anne 'Special' which would have tasted good even if it hadn't been only £1.27 a pint. However, there was for me one major disappointment in that the top totty promised by Paul Woods failed to materialise. Perhaps the overcast weather kept

Anniversary logo (only £6.00 plus £1.50 postage — see Rod Howat) for the evening reception held by the Jersey Motor Cycle and Light Car Club. The club had on display their collection of files containing information and newspaper cuttings on

everything to do with motorsport on the island stretching back more than 50 years. This covered everything from photos of the accident at Bouley Bay last year to the signatures of famous drivers from the past such as Prince B. Bira, when the superstars of the time competed in front of thousands



Looking down to the mid-point of Bouley Bay hill climb from the finish line.

of spectators along the seafront at St. Helier. After the reception we made our way to the La Tourelle restaurant situated spectacularly on a hilltop overlooking the Channel with the coast of France in the distance. When we got there we discovered that all the waitresses were Irish and were promptly christened the Nolan Sisters. It was also rapidly discovered that one of them didn't appear to be wearing any underwear. As further investigation was required we made a booking for the following night. Quite

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them away or maybe Paul is less fussy and more desperate than I am!
In the afternoon we took a small excursion to investigate what had happened to the hotel at Bonne Nuit Bay where the Rescue Crew members had stayed in previous years. We found that not only had it been closed down but it had been razed to the ground — 'Best thing that could have happened to it' said Frazer, so be very careful of incurring the wrath of Madder if this is the type of fate in store for you.

Rod, Peter and I got toggged up in our newly delivered Club polo shirts with the 25th

of spectators along the seafront at St. Helier. After the reception we made our way to the La Tourelle restaurant situated spectacularly on a hilltop overlooking the Channel with the coast of France in the distance. When we got there we discovered that all the waitresses were Irish and were promptly christened the Nolan Sisters. It was also rapidly discovered that one of them didn't appear to be wearing any underwear. As further investigation was required we made a booking for the following night. Quite

Reminder — 25th Anniversary Dinner Dance is on 17 October 1998 at the RSAC in Glasgow.

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ADVENTURE IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

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apart from that the food was excellent.

Thursday morning — Raceday at last, but rain and heavy drizzle meant that times were slow in the morning and constant interruptions to allow public cars up and down the hill were a source of major frustration and delay. Tim Mason had a heavy shunt on his second timed run which ripped a corner off his car and also bent the tub so that was his weekend over on the spot. Thankfully though, he was unhurt and this was the most serious incident of the day.

By the time of the top twelve runs the track had dried out to such an extent that times were in the region of ten seconds quicker than during practice/qualifying. David Grace was in a class of his own as he set the best time of the day on his final run, AFTER he had already won the event on the basis of his previous run. Roger Moran did his championship hopes no good by being beaten into third place by an impressive performance by Rob Turnbull.

Our evening trip to La Tourelle was spiced up not only by the fact that we were indeed able to confirm that there were 'nae knickers' but also by the monthly meeting and karaoke singalong prayer meeting of the Ministry of Gypsies For Christ who had turned out in their scores to hear The Good Word. We were placed in a separate room from all of this to have our meal which was just as well as the dividing partition muffled the sniggers of the waitresses and the cries of 'It is a miracle'.

On the Friday morning we left the hotel early in order to catch the 9am ferry to Guernsey but needn't have bothered as it was an hour late in leaving due to difficulties in loading all the trailers. Bill Bristow was the last aboard with the tail of his van only a

couple of feet from the stern doors.

After the short crossing we made our way to our hotel at La Villette by way of the hill at Le Val des Terres which is an impressive track with lots of things to crash into if the drivers are not very careful. The track is also very wide in comparison to most other venues and with very low kerbs the pavement is also normally used by competitors to take the tightest possible lines through the corners. On the way to the hotel Frazer recognised a familiar back-side sticking out from under the bonnet of an Alfa Romeo and stopped to have a chat to Graham Priaulx.

The afternoon was spent sightseeing and shopping in St. Peter Port followed by a dip in the hotel pool prior to heading off for a Chinese meal. This was the restaurant which was closed last year and judging by the level of custom it will probably be closed again when next year's crew go back. In the hotel bar later that evening, SMMC member Peter Curtis entertained us with his tales of horror about the standard of the marshalling at Bouley Bay. This included the marshal who tried to keep his backside dry by sitting on his red flag and the group of marshals who untied straw bales from the trees lining the course in order to have a more comfy seat!

On Saturday morning we signed on at 9am. The weather was overcast but brightening and certain of the locals were, as forewarned, hostile. Nevertheless, this did not spoil an extremely good day's sport and our position in the holding area at the top of the hill gave us the opportunity to examine the cars and chat to the drivers between runs. My personal favourite was the bright red Fiat 126 of local competitor Rick Blatchford who had installed a twin turbocharged

1100cc Yamaha motor bike engine in the cabin alongside him. The car looked like Postman Pat's van on steroids and had incredible acceleration, but was not so nimble through the corners resulting in times some way off the pace.

During the day conditions improved greatly so that the top twelve run off was carried out in near perfect conditions. This was shown to be the case when David Grace shattered the hill record with a time of 30.13 seconds. I was convinced that a time in the 29 seconds bracket was achievable but unfortunately, a detached radiator on one of the local competitors' cars left water all over the lower stretches of the track just prior to the final runs of the 'big boys' and put another new record out of the question. It says a lot for the sportsmanship of Roger Moran that after his final run was ruined he made sure that David Grace knew that he didn't have to risk himself or his car by pushing too hard. However, David roared up the hill in fine style, setting a slower time but spinning his car out of the last corner and crossing the line backwards much to the delight

of the spectators. It seems that this is becoming a trademark of his at events in Guernsey!

A quick meal and shower at our hotel preceded another dash to the ferry where once again we found it was running very late: Frazer delicately enquiring 'what the hell is wrong with the bloody wreck this time?' but he did spend the time profitably by persuading one of the local drivers to come to Doune in September. We eventually got under way at 10.30pm and arrived back on the mainland at 1.30am, sharing the driving through the night in order to get back to Edinburgh for 9am Sunday morning.

All in all this was an excellent week of motorsport on two magnificent tracks in spite of the efforts of the local event officials. This was my first experience of racing south of Croft and naturally I had expected the standards to be the same as those applied at Doune. Unfortunately this proved to be far from the truth and I think they could all benefit greatly by travelling up north to let Frazer crack the whip over them for a weekend!

David Geddes



Three generations of the Aitken Family, Jim, Stewart and Niall, inspect Jimmy McRae's Lotus Cortina before the start of the historic competitors at the S.M.M.C. Stage, Cardrona, on this year's R.S.A.C. Scottish Rally.

FRENCH LETTER

As many members prefer to have stories rather than boring information about Proban rescue suits and ripping racing drivers out of crashed cars I thought I would tell the odd story against myself.

During my Hong Kong period I was able to travel round a number of circuits in that neck of the woods one of which was Shah Allam in Malaysia. I believe the circuit I visited has been closed down and a new one built but the enthusiasm of the Malays is unbounded. Indeed everyone in that neck of the woods is friendly. They are so friendly that a Thai I met with the unlikely name of Prasert Aphiphunya, even arranged for me to do track tests of a GTC Mercedes and Alfa Romeo and Honda Civic Group N car. Sadly, the first two did not come about as both the Mercedes and Alfa — the only ones of their type in Asia — had had mechanical problems and they had cost a small fortune to repair and so I was asked if I would wait to the end of the season before testing them. The Honda was made available on the day after the race meeting and I have rarely had so much fun.

My hotel, the Holiday Inn in Shah Allam just outside Kuala Lumpur, proved to be about 300 yards from the largest mosque in South East Asia so there was no need for an alarm call. At 7.00 every morning, some guy using about 2000 watts amplification began calling the World to prayer. The circuit was built on a hill with fast bends and uphill twists and turns and really taxed you. If you were taking pictures, as I was, it was also tough and I eventually fought my way to the top of the circuit then returned to the pits. One of the Malaysian photographers asked where I had been taking pictures and I pointed up the hill. He then remarked that it was a hell of a walk back round the circuit again. With the confidence bred by a life of "smart arsery" I remarked that I had taken a short cut down through the bushes and trees. At this the guy blanched and he said in a strangled voice ". . . do you know that whole area is full of cobras?" It was then my turn to blanch because I had forgotten that this was not Knockhill where the only snakes in the grass are likely to be SMMC members. (*we'll let that one go for old times' sake—Ed*)

Clearly it was not my day because it was finalised in the afternoon when the sun was at its highest and the heat was almost unbearable. I can usually stand a bit of sun but hiking between corners on this circuit was murder as the humidity was about 80%. However, a race was coming up so I started to hike to one of the corners on the inside of the course where there were

virtually no spectators. Then I heard some voices shouting and assuming it was some marshal wanting to know what the hell I was doing I glanced to my left and saw a lone tree with about six Indians in turbans standing under it. They were calling to me so I wandered over. "Good golly. . ." said one of them ". . . what are you doing walking about in all this heat. You should be under a tree like us." I told them I was going to take pictures at one of the corners and they looked at me as though I was mad. Then one of them completely floored me by saying "Who are you? Mr Bean?" There was no answer to that.

Graham Gauld

PS: There was a follow up to that race meeting as I had got to know the Director of the circuit Yin Fah Yoong who was promoting Formula Asia. His 16 year old son Alex was a very promising racing driver, so much so that I passed on his name to Paul Stewart and when he came to England to race Alex almost went to PSR. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I came to Knockhill last year and bumped into Alex Yoong who was racing in Formula Renault. Poor Alex couldn't believe it for the last time we had talked was on the Ferry from Zhuhai in China to Hong Kong after he had been racing in Formula Asia.

DIDN'T THEY DO WELL?

Congratulations are in order to two Club members - and their partners, of course — on the birth of their daughters.

First was the arrival of Daniella to Fraser and Isobel Cowell. Fraser is a new member this season and a very active one at that, which will not be affected at all by his new responsibilities.

Next is the recent birth of Kirsty to Iain and Fiona McGillivray. Iain has been a Club member for many years, with a strong record particularly of race and rescue attendances. Now a strong record for increasing family size!

Well done to all. These are the recent arrivals that we know about; are there any more out there that you would like to share with the Club? If so, write and tell us at Club HQ or e-mail to the editor at rodhowat@sol.co.uk. That address applies to any correspondence which can be sent by e-mail.

Marshals' Training

The Committee has been discussing the question of training for marshals next season and also we are at the time of year that we have to make our intentions known to the

RACMSA. Members will know that the Club has organised training sessions every year for some time, usually alternating rally with speed events for members and for

marshals from other organising clubs, at Doune. The attendances have varied from year to year but have been disappointing recently due to invitations to other clubs not being taken up as fully as they might be or ignored altogether. It is particularly frustrating to expect a group to turn up as promised only to have them not show on the day. It takes as much effort to run a day for ten as it does for a hundred, after all. That said, we know from responses that the sessions have provided useful content for those attending, whether novice or more experienced marshals.

Next year should be rally training, however it has been decided provisionally that this will not take place in 1999. We are still keen to provide any training which members might wish if there is a need and we are overlooking it and it is not provided by others. Please contact the Club in the normal way or ask any other member to point you in the direction of somebody from the Committee who can take this further for you.

However, the SMMC Radio Group will be holding specialist radio training on 17 January 1999 at Knockhill

Circuit. This is designed principally for 'unlicensed' radio operators within the Group, other regular operators from different parts of the country who turn out alongside SMMC crews and perhaps organising officials from events which are controlled by the Group, but who only might have occasional reason to use a radio. The format of the training session has been established and further details will be available to all concerned not long after you read this.

We are pleased also to give good advance notice of the Race Marshals' Training Session which is to be organised as before by Scottish Motor Racing Club at Knockhill next year. The date is the morning of Sunday 14 March 1999 and the format will be the well proven one of workshops for the different disciplines, trackside work with fire fighting training and an open forum to finish. Attendance at this training is a prerequisite of upgrading and for the chance to be invited to attend the BTCC weekend in August. Full details will be sent out at the start of next season by SMRC Chief Marshal Nick Clarke.

THE JIM CLARK MARSHALLING AWARD 1997



We were not able to catch the last copy date, but to make amends here is the photograph to accompany the front page story in MARSHALS POST No. 87. Jim Robertson receives the Jim Clark Marshalling Award 1997 from Walter Robertson at the SMRC Race Training day at Knockhill, 22 March 1998.

SINGLE VENUE SOCIAL MEETINGS

Two sets of photographs with large differences in time, fashion, hairstyles and probably waistband in the case of the member common to both occasions, the Club Chairman Frazer Madder.

Firstly, the latest in the intermittent series of meals enjoyed by many of the current rescue crew members in late June 1998 at Giuliano's in Edinburgh. Pity about the give-away of the few bottles of light ale on the table. Clearly, it has to be a motor sport crowd, as the televisions in the background were carrying one of the important World Cup matches — and were being ignored by the avid SMMC fans! Thanks as always to Yvonne Lamb for organising the evening when the blokes fail to get their act together and a welcome (just in shot) to new trainee crew member Karen Ditch.

Now to way back then. A selection of shots taken around 1979 or 1980 at the (then named) Woodside in Doune. Always will be the Woodside for so many competitors and marshals alike. Some faces will be familiar to many, others will be known to only a few. As for Andrew Main, it is open to speculation as to whether he is showing off his pet stick insect in a small box, or is it a presentation of some kind? We hope that these jog some memories, or consciences and that you might be tempted to write with any recollections, either of this time at Doune or other past social events or why not send any photos which might be tucked away for future publication? Address of Club HQ is on the back page.





Club Embroidery

There has been a tremendous response to the special embroidery design to mark the Club's Silver Anniversary. It is especially good to see the range of places to which the garments have been sent, which means that they will not exactly be seen just in central Scotland. We have already had compliments from the Channel Islands and we know that virtually all of the rounds of the British Hillclimb Championship will see the Club badge proudly displayed by at least one member.

A reminder then, that this design is available to members for the rest of this year at the same price of £6.00 as the regular Club badge shown here. Orders are handled by Rod Howat [tel. 01324 638889 (b), 01620 823565 (h)] or e-mail to rodhowat@sol.co.uk for further details. Briefly, garments must be navy blue, supplied by you, cash with order and £1.50 extra per item if return postage is needed. Wool melton baseball caps are also available with a small version of the standard badge for the inclusive supply price of £9.00 with 35p for return postage.

We are looking again at being able to supply other items to Club members along the lines of the successful Proban overalls and body warmers. Waterproofs is one idea, a good, comfortable set of orange wets which are becoming more difficult to source as high-vis yellow becomes the norm. OK, so this season has focussed on the need for having wet weather gear in your bag but this might help anyway in 'normal' circumstances. Any other ideas which could be investigated? — contact as above.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following people who have joined the Club in the last few months —

PETER CURTIS, Oxford
KIM BRADFORD SMITH, Glasgow
ALLAN ISDALE, Livingston
PETE GRIFFITHS, Lossiemouth
WILLIAM VINE, Aberdeen
FRASER COWELL, Largs
SCOTT McCREADIE, Hamilton
DOUGLAS KENNEDY, Bridge of Earn
JON KENNEDY, Bridge of Earn

JOHN McFARLANE, Monikie
BARBARA LAIDLAW, Haddington
BRIAN MACKAY, Methil
DEREK MORRISON, Falkirk
RICHARD WELSH, Edinburgh
JOHN TAINSH, Arbroath
LORRAINE GILLIES, Kirknewton
IAN WALLACE, Fintry

We hope that all of these new members enjoy their time with the Club. It is worth mentioning also that Barbara Laidlaw and Brian Mackay have the notoriety of being fallen members who, having been so long in the wilderness, have rejoined the flock. Or something like that.

The opinions stated are the contributors' own and not necessarily those of the Scottish Motorsport Marshals Club.

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