



WINDSCREEN

The Magazine of Swansea Motor Club



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Editors Intro

Welcome to another edition of Windscreen. I must apologise for the long delay since our last edition – suffice to say the excuses are long and varied.

We have run our two hillclimbs and both were blessed with decent weather but sadly were not blessed with large numbers of competitors. However that does not mean the competition was not good. Our May event attracted the usual horde of Caterhams who put on a great show vying for FTD, Simon Rogers taking the win from Paul Forster by the massive margin of 0.02 of a second.

For the July event we attracted a number of Mk2 Escorts including Dai and Ben Llewellyn sharing the Diesels car, Graham and Sue Hollis, in their respective machines, and our own Michael Williams (photo on front cover). Suffice to say the battle between these drivers resulted in some of the most sideways motoring ever seen, long time marshal Brian Jenkins commenting that he would have paid very good money for the privilege of watching. All the action slightly overshadowed Adam Phelps' delight at taking FTD in his Locost in a time quicker than the May FTD.

Our next 'event' is the Christmas Party, which will take place at Dunvant RFC on 5th December, so make a space in your diary and I will see you there.

Cheers for now

Neil

Cornish Farmtrack to Racetrack – Part Two

From the end of my first article, fast forward three weeks and the debut of my race prepared 924 came at the 750 Motor Club's popular Birkett 6 hour team relay as part of a six-car team with the unlikely sobriquet of Ecurie Porumphorganda (EP) and here I was sitting in the assembly area on Silverstone's Wellington Straight waiting for the first practice session to start.

There was however one nagging doubt in my mind. Was a 6-hour race with 61 teams and 300 drivers in a selection of the quickest club racing cars the most appropriate place to be in an untried race car?

In the event, my practice session went better than I'd expected and I settled into a good rhythm as soon as I'd learned which way the corners went, one eye constantly on my mirrors to keep out of the way of the swarms of indecently quick Caterhams & Radicals, all moving faster than a journalist at a free buffet. The good news was that the 924 showed no evil handling vices, with all temperatures normal and the 2 litre Audi 100/VW LT 35 engine running smoothly.

Just one glitch spoilt a relatively stress free 30 minutes. After only two laps my exhaust fractured just under my feet where two manifold pipes run into one. I soldiered-on and completed the session to get as much practice as possible on Silverstone's magnificent 3.64 mile historic grand prix circuit.

Once back at the team's pit, I crawled underneath to survey the damage and cannibalised two lager cans to roll flat and curve around the damaged area of the exhaust, fixed at each end with jubilee clips. That would have to do until I could remove the system and do a permanent repair.

The 61st Birkett started promptly at 11:15, only to be red-flagged immediately for a start-line incident which eliminated 8 cars but fortunately not Matt Hammond, EP's star driver in his 2 litre Focus! The restart was 27 minutes later, this time without incident, the 6-hour's clock now running to 17:42 and dusk.

As well as a team driver I was also team manager so I spent most of my time on the pit wall timing and hanging out the pit-board. Generally, EP's team of 6 ran reliably, with just one stop-go penalty for a yellow flag infringement interrupting the flow and a visit to the gravel - by the same car, forcing me to scramble another car onto the circuit out of my planned sequence.

Key to winning the Birkett is a favourable number of credit laps from the handicapper, who bases his calculations on the declared lap times of the individual team members. EP had secured 40 credit laps which seemed 4 or 5 too few and this proved accurate as one by one the 6 hours ticked by with EP steadily heading south in the result sheets, 15th at the end of 90 minutes, eventually finishing 55th on 118 scratch laps, 158 on corrected handicap.

I had successfully fitted in a 40 minute stint at two thirds distance, my hastily repaired exhaust still very noisy, reducing the power and giving me tinnitus but, all in all, a satisfactory first event and I eventually left a cold and dark Silverstone with a long list of improvements for the car before the HSCC season opener in April 2012.

Ken Davies

Denzil Price – 1929-2012

On 30th July Swansea Motor Club lost one of its longest standing members when Denzil Price, life member, died at Morriston hospital following complications developed after a minor domestic accident.

Denzil, also known to friends as DTP, joined SMC in the fifties when the club was at its peak with over 200 members and organising events almost every weekend; rallies, autocross, hill climb, sprint, auto-test and trials. DTP soon became an active member, competitor and official throughout the fifties, sixties and seventies before focussing his attention on his younger brother John's successful national and international rallying career, winning multiple Motoring News Rally Championships.

One of four children, Denzil Thomas Price was born to farming stock in Howie near Llandrindod Wells on 22nd October 1931; the same date as his younger sibling John several years later. Denzil gravitated to Swansea where one of his early occupations was as a member of the constabulary in Ystradgynlais in the Swansea valley, where his enthusiasm for motorsport saw him join Swansea motor club and begin his competition career.

Early in his rallying career Denzil navigated for Ron Rumble, a prominent Swansea businessman, in Ron's Jaguar XK 140 registered NWN 8. The event was one of Swansea Motor Clubs premier rallies of the era, the Reynolds Cup Rally. The XK 140 was just two weeks old and a potent sports car complete with optional 'C' type engine & running gear, a special order from the Jaguar works in Browns Drive Coventry.

Early in the rally whilst negotiating a particularly notorious right hand bend in Carmel, just outside Cross Hands, the XK ran wide and rolled off the road into the field below. The intrepid crew were able to drive out of the field and continue the rally, which they won, only to be excluded at post event scrutineering for excessive body damage. Looking at the photograph that seems an understatement and somewhat ironic as Denzil would soon become an accredited RAC scrutineer! The accompanying picture shows the Jaguar at Devil's Bridge later in the rally.



In the sixties DTP competed in the Monte Carlo Rally twice. First in 1966 with local co-driver Howard Power driving a 1275 cc Morris Cooper 'S' ATX 797B start number 98. The story goes that the crew finished the rally well-placed but were later excluded, victims of the great 1966 BMC works mini lighting debacle, orchestrated by the French scrutineering corps.



XXXIV^e Rallye Automobile Monte Carlo 1966

Denzil's second foray on the Monte was in 1968 with Stuart Collins, again in a 1275 cc Mini Cooper 'S' EJH 776B start number 180. On this occasion the Cooper hit a solid milestone in the snow and could not continue but, following the car's retirement, the stories of Denzil's adventures when he finally reached the principality are the stuff of legend!

Sometime later we were with Denzil in Monte Carlo for the 1973 rally and he took us into Rosie's café & bar, a well-known watering hole with a motor sport clientele which stood along the Beau Rivage straight. Rosie recognised Denzil immediately and embraced him like a long lost brother. There was already a Swansea Motor Club badge on the wall with many other UK club badges.

By this time he was an accredited RAC Scrutineer, forming one third of a familiar Welsh technical trinity seen at all the best events of the period, the other two-thirds being Wilf Davies and Davy Jones. Race meeting, rally, hill climb or sprint, the friendly trio would be officiating and a number of times I received my ticket before my car had left the trailer on the grounds that he'd seen it the previous weekend and there was a long queue in the bay!

On the international scene, there were rumours that Denzil had crossed swords with Colin Chapman at a grand prix at Silverstone when he had suggested some safety improvements on Lotus's latest world championship contender and I'm not sure if he was on Chapman's Christmas card list after that encounter!

For a large proportion of his life Denzil was a motor trader operating from Forge garage, which he owned, in Vivian Road Swansea. During the sixties Denzil's interest-free easy payment scheme was a popular way for many (including your writer) to compete and I well remember purchasing a multi-owner 997cc Cooper from him with a modest cash deposit and easy monthly payments. Nothing ever existed in writing but all his clients diligently settled their debts.

Through the eighties he assumed the roles of team manager, mechanic, chase car driver and confidante for his brother John's national and international rally campaigns in Europe and Ireland, using a Porsche 911, Renault 5 Turbo 2 and Metro 6R4. During this time DTP formed several lasting overseas friendships, continuing these relationships for business; trading motorcars, spares and ... horses!



Denzil had now developed the sobriquet of 'the bishop' and the story goes that after a particularly successful Irish foray with the John Price rally equipe he was returning on the overnight steam packet from Cork and the celebration party had been in full swing throughout the eventful sea crossing.

On reaching Fishguard the team were assisting their inebriated team manager to disembark when a representative of Her Majesty's Customs thrust a stubby finger at Denzil asking "who is this"? To which DTP promptly sat up and replied "I am the bishop of Llandrindod Wells".

Everyone will doubtless have their own particular 'Denzil' story(s) and there are many; like the sight of him wearing a borrowed pudding basin helmet furiously driving his red 3.8 Jaguar at a Fairwood auto-cross or racing a BMC 1100 taken from his forecourt in an early SWAC production saloon car race at Llandow or as team manager for two eclectic teams from SMC at the Prescott interclub handicap hill climb (we finished 2nd and 4th) or those wacky leather trousers he sometimes wore ...

Denzil was cremated on 7th August at a ceremony in Swansea attended by a 'who's who' of Welsh motor sport including many old friends from SMC, thus bearing testimony to the high regard in which the 'Bishop' was held in racing, rallying and motor club circles. His ashes will later be interred at the family grave at Howie and the sport will be the poorer without his familiar sometime bearded visage and mischievous sense of humour. He is survived by his daughter Rebecca, a grandson and great grandson.

Ken Davies

Christmas Party

Our end of year Social will take place on Wednesday 5th December, starting at 7.30pm at Dunvant RFC. Cost will be £5 per person with under 14's free. Please let Christine Gibbon know if you are coming so that we can plan the catering – 01792 232644 or e-mail chrisjgibbon@btinternet.com
If you have any items for Santa's Sack please bring them along, ready wrapped, on the night or get them to one of the committee members in advance.

Diary Dates 2012

Next event:

December 5th – Xmas Party

Diary Dates 2013

January 9th – Darts night

February 6th – Quiz

March 6th - AGM

Odds and

Congratulations to two of our committee members who have proved there is still some life left in them. Huw and Kirsty Richards have welcomed Madison to their family and James and Katy Phillips have added Noah to theirs.

If you want to see more photos from our hillclimbs you can find some great shots at Steve Coleman's website (<http://steve-c.smugmug.com/Sports/Motorsport>). Many thanks to Steve for making them available to us.

Some exciting news hot off the press:

Rob Allender has been busy trying to get some improvements made to the Llys y Fran track, which is beginning to crumble in a few places. Welsh Water have agreed to put some money in to repair a number of sections and we have just heard that the MSA have approved a grant of £5000 to assist. Well done Rob for pursuing this and hopefully we will have a much smoother track in time for next year's events.

Talking of which, the dates for next year are May 12th and July 28th. Please put them in your diaries now so there are no excuses when I come looking for marshals !!!

..... Ends