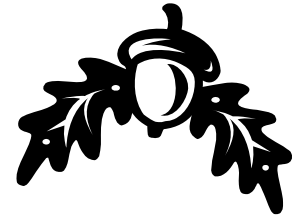




April 2007

The Oakleaf

The Sevenoaks & District Motor Club



CCC (Chairman Chin's Chat)

Sorry folks, my copy is very short. Thanks to those who turned up for the AGM, it seemed to go well and our president was a welcome face with his in-depth knowledge of what's going on at 'Chaos House'. Thanks also to **Colin Billings** for his comprehensive report (the bit I liked best was his summing up of the number and variety of events we're still involved with "...the list is endless." at which point he stopped (sorry Colin, I couldn't resist!)).

The PCT seemed to be enjoyed by all, it's a shame my snotty nose and hacking cough forced me home very early, but well done **Clive Cooke** etc.

North Weald and Cadwell are looming up as I write this and I hope to see lots of you there.

2012 Rally—Postponed

Not a 20/20 this time, just a 20/12, which means that there will be 20 controls and 12 competing crews. Due to illness and other things I am postponing this from April 21st and am currently checking the calendars to see when I can squeeze this in. It will run and I'll need lots of marshals so there's still the chance to earn your qualifying points, either for Speed League or for Rose & Crown. Although it's not a very long effort I'll call it a full event as it will run past most of your bedtimes. Phone me before I phone you! 01732 823132 or email chin@btinternet.com

Chin

Editorial Ramblings

I can feel a soap box moment to start the month with I am afraid so bear with me. I think it has been mentioned before over the years and I have cause to mention it again now.

There have been mutterings about situations recently such as the marshalling qualifications for the Speed League, unwelcome (to some) changes to regs and classes etc. What annoys me most is when these mutterings are accompanied by "no one ever listens to us" type comments. Often these comments are only ever heard by on-line communities in forums or at socials or events, and quite often never pushed forward to the co-ordinators or regional committees, where there are interested parties and volunteer organisers ready to take these suggestions and comments forward to higher powers. That is their job after all. The wheels of these things move quite slowly so a little patience is often needed. Sometimes a follow-up phone call or email to enquire how things are going and what the outcome is can help in a couple of ways. Firstly it can jog the memory of these often busy people who may have fingers in a couple of pies not to mention families and leisure pursuits of their own and are only human after all! Secondly it shows the organiser/coordinator/committee member that you have a real interest in the subject and that it really means something to you.

I have been as guilty as the next person of muttering about things in this way for all sorts of committees, clubs and organisations I have been involved with over the years. Suddenly one day it dawned on me (no pun intended!) that instead of moaning to any one who happened to be passing, I should get involved myself, see how things work and per-

haps find the ear of the organiser concerned.

It opened up a whole new world of understanding and tolerance. People who get involved in making decisions on behalf of other people have a very difficult juggling job to do and it really is impossible to please every one all the time! So true and if only it were always possible to find the happy compromise!! It isn't always and I have experienced the "tried, failed and lost sleep over it" method.

I guess what I am trying to say is don't just sit about bemoaning some new rule that doesn't suit your circumstances or that an event has had to be cancelled leaving reduced marshalling qualification opportunities (*just an example here by the way...*) get involved in helping at an event, email an organiser with your opinion on a rule change that might affect people like you or sit on a committee to see what goes on in the back ground. If you do this you will notice how difficult it is to get the balance right sometimes and how to please the majority you must unfortunately upset a minority. However you will also get an enormous sense of satisfaction when things do go as planned and you get phone call or an email from someone to say thanks, you have made a difference.

Your thoughts and views are always needed and welcomed and show the committee and organisers of events that there is a community out there full of real people and not just numbers on a spreadsheet or names in a list. Soapbox OFF!

Moving on, it was nice to see some different faces, old (no offence!) and new at the AGM in March. Thanks for coming out to support the club. The discussion that took place after the formalities were over, gave us all something to think about, and centred mostly on the decline of rallying in the



South East (a subject close to a lot of our members hearts it seems) and of course the loss of Longcross as venue in this area for both speed and rally events.

At least the grass roots clubby events are still showing a considerable burst of popularity with our March PCT being well attended. Thanks to **Clive Cooke** and all the marshals and helpers who turned out to make a successful day. We look forward to the Autotest season starting next month with the first event on 10th May at Farningham. Further dates are in the calendar opposite and regs and entries will be available from **Stacey Thompson** (email: stacey1965@hotmail.com) or can be downloaded from the website shortly.

The last 12 car is being run on 16th April by Central Sussex MC (CENSUS) and Chin has already made mention of the 20/12 which is to be rescheduled from the 21st.

Finally, you may have noticed this is an Oakleaf not an Acorn this month, but with being involved organising North Weald limited time meant not producing the full magazine, so expect a bumper issue next month. I am sure that there will be lots to write about so perhaps if you have done an event that you have enjoyed, share your experiences with others and send me an article.

New Members

We have seen a number of lapsed members from years gone by coming back to join the club, which is always great to see, as well as several completely new faces. So a warm welcome to you all, sorry I haven't mentioned you by name here, but hopefully we will see you during the year as you come out to play.

Monthly Mug—March

Steve Dann, normally seen sprinting his red Golf Gti,

was nominated and awarded the March monthly mug for his super drive in his first race meeting at Brands Hatch in March. He had two races in which he came 2nd in class in both and was then also complimented by the Clerk of the Course for his sensible driving in avoiding what could have easily turned into a very serious incident. For his efforts Steve was also awarded Driver of the Day by the meeting organisers, a fantastic achievement for his first race meeting. Good luck with the rest of the season, Steve.

BRSCC Quiz Night

A team from 7Oaks entered the Quiz night hosted by the BRSCC at the Kentagon

at Brands Hatch on 22nd March. Questions covered motorsport topics and general knowledge and team members **Chris Dennis, Dan Whittington, Gordon Franks Suze Bisping and Steve Thompson** had a



great night, coming out on top and receiving a huge trophy and a bottle of wine. Congratulations to you all and 7Oaks will be back to defend the title next year!

Anyway enough ramblings from me, hope to see you out and about. I am off to do **Ian Crocker's** scatter on Thursday 5th April and am breaking in a new navigator...**Andy Elcomb**...who is coming out to play in my Nissan! Should be an interesting night, especially as I haven't done a scatter for a fair number of years...hope it's like riding a bike!!!

Dawn Travers

Need an event to qualify for the 7Oaks Speed League?

Below are listed all the events you can come along and marshal at to get you started. There are still plenty to choose from, but please ring the organiser first to check availability. You won't be turned away but we do want you to have a productive experience whilst marshalling:

If you have any queries or questions please contact **Karen Webber** (contact details in front of Acorn).

If you have any questions about how to register your marshalling qualification contact **David Balderson** on email: balderson@ntlworld.com

If you have already marshalled at a 7Oaks event since 28th October 2006, don't forget to let **David Balderson**

Date	Event	Other Info	Venue	Contact
April 15 th	Cadwell Sprint	Co-promoted with B19 Counts as 1 day	Cadwell Park, Lincolnshire	Tom Law (B19) 0208 3042037 tomlaw41@btinternet.com
Date TBC	20/12 Rally	Counts as 1 day	Start from Vigo	Chin 01732 823132 chin@btinternet.com
May 10 th	Autotest	Counts as 1/2 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson 0208 3002609
May 24 th	Autotest	Counts as 1/2 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson
Jun 7 th	Autotest	Counts as 1/2 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson
Jun 21 st	Autotest	Counts as 1/2 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson
Jul 5 th	Autotest	Counts as 1/2 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson
Jul 19 th	Autotest	Counts as 1/2 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson
Jul 29 th	Autotest	All Day Sunday Event Counts as 1 day	Farningham	Stacey Thompson
Aug 26 th	North Weald Sprint	Counts as 1 day	North Weald, Essex	Philip Fawcett 07840 523439 marshal_7oaks@hotmail.co.uk
Oct 14 th	The Weald Trial	Multi Venue Trial Counts as 1 day	Various In Kent	Clive Cooke 01732 353814 clive.v.cooke@virgin.net

COMPETITION CALENDAR 2007

Forthcoming Events

DATE	EVENT	ORGANISING CLUB / Contact	LOCATION	Status	Champ Round
13th April	12 Car Rally Map 187	Weald (CENSUS): Contact Matt Fowle 01273 551145 or Email matt@mdfowle.freeseve.co.uk	Start Pease Pot- tage Services M23 MR 263 333	CS	
15th April	Sprint	7Oaks/B19: Entries Karen Webber Tel 01732 875091 Email kes.web1@tesco.net	Cadwell Park, Linconshire	Nat B	Regionals, 7OaksSL
18th April	Noggin & Natter	The Three Horseshoes, Main Road, Knockholt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7LD	In the bar from 8pm!	Social	
18th April	Next Acorn	Deadline for copy — send to dawn.travers@ntlworld.com			
21st April	20/20 Rally Postponed	Weald (7Oaks): Contact Chin on 01732 823132 chin@btinternet.com Date to rearranged shortly—watch this space		CS	
22nd April	Production Car Trial	Weald MC (B19): Jane Anthony 01474 852779 jane_b19@hotmail.com	Chapmans Field Ridley Nr Meopham MR 188/633636	CS	
22nd April	12 Car Regularity Run	Blackpalfrey MC (Weald MC): Contact Andy Gib- son Phone/Fax: 01227 792740 Email: andy@Blackpalfrey.co.uk	Start TBC Maps 178 188 189 may be needed	CS	
28th April	Hillclimb	Woolbridge CC: For regs contact Gwyneth Wright gwyn@gwynethwright.co.uk or download from www.woolbridge.co.uk	Wiscombe	Nat B	Regionals; 7Oaks SL
10th May	Grass Autotest	Weald MC (7Oaks): Stacey Thompson	Farningham	CS	
13th May	Hillclimb	Swansea MC: Alun Morgan 01792 884713 Regs available to download from our club web- site	Lys-Y-Fran Wales	Nat B	ACSMC
24th May	Grass Autotest	Weald MC (7Oaks): Contact Stacey Thomp- son 0208 3002609	Farningham	CS	
3rd June	Hughes Rally (Historic)	Blackpalfrey MC (Weald MC): Contact Andy Gib- son Phone/Fax: 01227 792740 Email: andy@Blackpalfrey.co.uk			HRCR Club- mans Rally Champion- ship
7th June	Grass Autotest	Weald MC (7Oaks): Contact Stacey Thomp- son 0208 3002609	Farningham	CS	
16th June	Sprint	Borough19: Contact John Sharpe jmsharpb19@hotmail.co.uk	Lydden Hill, Nr Canterbury, Kent	Nat A & B	Speed League; Regionals
21st June	Grass Autotest	Weald MC (7Oaks): Contact Stacey Thomp- son 0208 3002609	Farningham	CS	
5th July	Grass Autotest	Weald MC (7Oaks): Contact Stacey Thomp- son 0208 3002609	Farningham	CS	
19th July	Grass Autotest	Weald MC (7Oaks): Contact Stacey Thomp- son 0208 3002609	Farningham	CS	
22nd July	Hillclimb	Swansea MC: Alun Morgan 01792 884713 Regs available to download from our club web- site	Lys-Y-Fran Wales	Nat B	ACSMC; 7Oaks SL
29th July	Grass Autotest (All day)	Weald MC (7Oaks): Contact Stacey Thomp- son 0208 3002609	Farningham	CS	

For further information contact :-
Competition Secretary: Ian Crocker 01892 546006 email: ian@seight.com
Speed League contact : Karen Webber: 01732 875091 email: kes.web1@tesco.net

Cool Runnings

Just because I've stopped racing cars doesn't mean that I have no further interest in the subject. Far from it. I still love to follow the antics of Formula 1, Touring Cars, Le Mans, and of course the members of Sevenoaks DMC. One of my other great passions has been running, and many will know that I've completed the London Marathon a couple of times and also the London Triathlon, along with a great many other distances. I still compete occasionally as the sport fits in easily with my job and lifestyle. It was therefore of great interest to me to combine the two subjects recently when the opportunity came up to compete in the Brands Hatch Half Marathon.

I have previously run several circuits already, some at proper running events, and some during the lunch break at sprint and race meetings. I have a 21-minute lap time on the Silverstone GP circuit, 8 minutes at Lydden Hill, 20 minutes at Goodwood, and I can't remember Castle Coombe or Mallory Park. The common denominator, with the exception at Lydden, is that they are all flat and fairly easy going, although Lydden was not that bad at all really. Brands Hatch however seemed a bit more daunting.

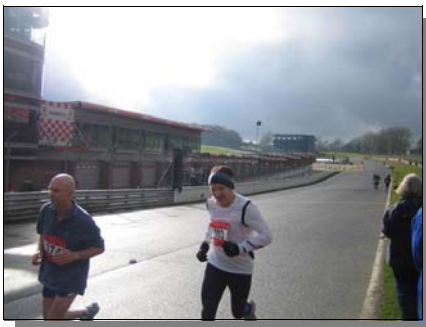
It's fairly tough in a car around both circuits with the combination of fast and slow corners, tricky cambers, hills and drops. Although I have raced on both circuits, I have only experienced the place from a car or viewed from the paddock and grandstands. It's pretty daunting in a car, but believe me, on foot it's terrifying!

Of course, like every good competitor, you have to get your excuses in early. I had a bit of a cold developing, and a bit tired from the week's training. I think this is the equivalent of "the engines a bit down on power" excuse.

The event itself comprised of about 600 competitors starting of course on the race start line using the light system and at 11.30am off we all went tearing into Paddock Hill Bend at terrific pace, well, in my case at the only pace I've got. The start is actually uphill and the camber makes your ankles turn. As you drop into Paddock the ground really falls away and it is quite difficult to hold yourself on the hill and you end up over-running yourself until you reach the bottom and just like in the cars, you feel the lowest point in your stomach before you start the rise up to Druids.

The course is a total of 13.1 miles and comprised 1 lap of the short circuit followed by 1 lap of the GP circuit followed by 2 further laps of various combined perimeter roads and circuit, with the final run in under the paddock tunnel, down onto Cooper Straight and round to the finish line.

The first time up to Druids was a bit of a heff, but by the third time around, damned near impossible, but I made it.... just! Down the hill and Cooper Straight was good running and even the climb around Clearways was OK, even if the camber problem was a bit uncomfortable. Second time around took us up onto the GP circuit and the climb out of Surtees was relieved only by a short flat straight up to Hawthorn. Again, this is deceptive and quite



steep with even worse camber than the main straight. Another steady rise up to Westfield and Dingle Dell is then relieved as the track levels out a bit before the drop down into Clearways. The water station at this point was then very welcome.

The next time around, we came off at the Paddock Gate, and up around Druids via the woods and perimeter paths. Not good on the ankles this bit, eventually emerging behind the Vision Centre and heading towards the Camp Site and car parks, again on gravel paths, through the main car park behind the Grandstands and around again eventually finishing on the circuit.



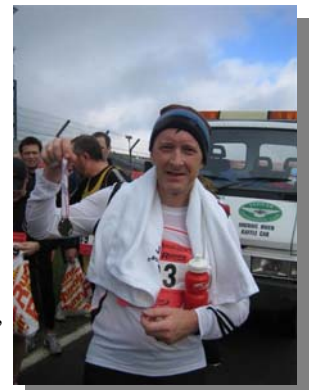
At 6 miles my left calf tightened up and my speed dropped from 8-minute miles to about 9 minutes, eventually finishing on 115 minutes, which is an average

of 8 minutes 45 seconds. Not bad in the circumstances, but a bit off my Personal Best of 100 minutes, although that was set 10 years ago! (Out of interest the event was won on 73 minutes)

Why??

Good question. Without the boring detail, about 3 years ago I developed Rheumatoid Arthritis in both hands, feet and knees. This knocked me back a bit and certainly slowed me down, but with the correct medical advice and a bit of lifestyle adjustment I have come to terms with the condition, and one of the ways I found to keep supple was to get back running and swimming. My target was therefore the 2007 London Marathon, at which I am running for Arthritis Care who offered me a place this year.

This isn't a blag for money, the story is about Brands Hatch, and I won't be turning up everywhere with a sponsorship form again, but I won't of course turn away any donation. If you would like to help, thanks, and please take a look at www.justgiving.com/stevemedhurst that will tell you all you need to know.



Steve Medhurst

Social Night Wednesday 18th April

Find a Pub in Kent.

At The Three Horseshoes, Main Road, Knockholt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7LD from about 8.30pm or earlier for a Noggin & Natter, food & beer!





Wheels

CROSS-COUNTRY

Less aggressive tyres for the 2007 championships

The first round of the 2007 Matador MSA British Off Road championship takes place on 14th – 15th April at Baden Hall near Stoke-on-Trent. The championship is once again being sponsored by Matador Tyres. This year all registered BORC competitors and Trophy competitors must compete on a single control tyre, the Matador Izzarda. This is an 'AT' – all terrain pattern, and is the first time an AT tyre has been used as the control tyre, over the more commonly used Mud Terrain or more aggressive patterns which are used by most competitors. This controversial decision was chosen to give everyone a 'level playing' field also with an aim, in it being the less aggressive AT pattern, its use will lessen land damage and allow the championship to use a wider choice of the best venues. Competitors entering the Clubmans events, run in parallel to the BORC will also be required to run an AT pattern tyre, but not necessarily the Matador brand. The National Hillrally championship is also looking to run less aggressive tyres in 2007. Currently any type of tyre is allowed, it is hoped agreement can be made limiting all competitors to a Mud Terrain pattern from a 'Tyre List' approved by the organisers. Currently tyre use is becoming more of an issue in many forms of motorsport, as the tyre pattern is seen as one of the areas that can result in excess damage to venues. In some parts of the country, land for some cross country events is becoming difficult to secure, due to land owners concerns about possible damage to the ground in view of the recent defra and the single payment scheme regulations.

TAKE COVER

Soon after the last *Wheels* appeared with my article implying that doctors and paramedics can't carry a tune, I nearly got sued by a medic claiming not only to be tuneless but even to be starring in a Dusty Springfield Tribute Show. I could only apologise and say how glad I was that his operation had been a success.

A narrow escape and a reminder of just how litigious our world has become with even the plague of class-actions threatening to spread to Europe from America. I'd always assumed that the mind-boggling damages awarded were all thrown out later on appeal but apparently that's not always so – there really have been some staggering payouts, while in the UK the largest personal injury claims can now exceed £5m.

So how does it all affect our sport? I know from trying to cajole or press-gang people into marshalling that every report in the press about someone being sued for a wrong decision, in a conker competition for instance, tends to deter people. Well, dreary though the subject may be, it makes sense to be adequately insured. Take part in an MSA

approved event and you have death and injury cover as a competitor or official as laid down in the Blue Book. If you don't think that's enough for someone in your position then top-up cover is available at £40 for every £50k of additional benefit for death, loss of limbs and permanent disablement, up to a maximum of £250k. (Details are on www.locktonmotorsport.com). Note that the top-up cover is now available to marshals. I don't think there's any Rough Guide to what level of cover anyone should have – depends on your circumstances. "Enough" is perhaps the key word.

It's worth checking any existing life policies you have in place to see if they cover our sport. For Personal Accident, both MSA and private policies are likely to pay out. For Public Liability, which although highly unlikely in the case of competition could still occur, if there are two policies called on to contribute it will depend on the specific contract wording. What was that about "the large print giveth and the small print taketh away?"

Drivers are not covered against legal action by other driver/s they have punted off – maybe cause

for pause before doing the punting or the pouting afterwards.

If the police prosecute for bad driving on an event (and note how they increasingly get involved when there's hooliganism in other sports), insurers won't defend driving prosecutions as such. However, if dangerous driving in competition results in injury, there would probably be parallels with other sports (football and rugby for instance) where there have been both private and Crown prosecutions for assault. In such cases it would be in the insurer's interest to defend and they'd almost certainly do so, just as they would for HSE prosecutions. But still better not to drive dangerously in the first place.

Like I said, a dreary subject. But an important one. And while we're on sort of legal matters I'd even suggest there's a case for pre-nuptial agreements because of the strain our sport places on relationships. Think how devastated you'd be if as part of a messy divorce settlement you lost your precious cigarette cards of World Famous Stewards. Oh, I don't know though.

Stuart Turner

AUTOSCENE



REVIEWS FROM



BMW SINCE 1916
Manfred Grunert & Florian Triebel ISBN 3 932169 47 6
€59 from BMW dealers, order no 01090398988 or motoring bookshops

With nine decades of history to look back on, you expect BMW to come up with something special and this whopping 600-plus-page hardback is a belter. Just when you'd thought you'd seen the best of the Bavarian firm's period photos, a whole lot more receive a fresh airing. It helps that Grunert and Triebel have both worked in the archive, yet the range of images is still staggering. There's everything from evocative early shots of Austin Seven-based Dixis in Eisenach to later studies of the

levelled Munich factory at the end of WW2, Glas workers in '66 being told that it had been taken over and the electric 1602 on test – many of which even the most ardent marque enthusiast won't have seen before. Even the sensational BMW VI aero-engined 'Rail Zeppelin' features: it was tested between Berlin and Hamburg in the early '30s and set a then-record of 230kph. Ten chapters span everything from personnel, r&d and production to motor sport and adverts, many of which are beautifully reproduced. Anoraks won't be disappointed either, because the appendices list all cars, motorcycles and aero engines made in volume, plus profiles of all the company's directors over the years and even accounts for

those of a financial bent. It's obviously aimed at (reinforced) coffee tables, yet is informative and excellent value for such a superbly printed book.

RACING IN THE RAIN
ISBN 1 893618 71 4
John Horsman, David Bull Publishing, £29.99

This book from John Wyer's chief engineer and team manager delivers a superb insight into his successful sports-racing partnership. From Aston's DB4GT and Project cars to the 11th hour withdrawal of the Mirage M12 from Le Mans in '82, Cambridge graduate Horsman covers his career alongside some of the greatest drivers and cars including three Le Mans wins and three championships. Yet it's the behind-the-scenes stories that bring the 416-page, 300-picture book to life: a recce of European hotels in a GT40, sorting the

Porsche 917's aerodynamics in MIRA's wind tunnel in the dead of night, and Brian Redman's fiery exit from the Targa Florio. The story of the Mirages from the Len Bailey-designed M6 to the Renault-powered GR8 with Harley Cluxton is fresh and fascinating. And, ever the gentleman, Horsman gives full credit to all the team players. An important and entertaining record.



COD FILLET QUIZ

1. Mikko Hirvonen in a Ford Focus won his second World Championship rally in Norway in February. Where and when was his previous WRC win?
2. Name the only driver to win the FI Championship posthumously?
3. The Classic Rally of the Tests was first run in 2001. Who won?
4. Where is the Val Des Terres hill climb?

ANSWERS ON PAGE ii

Increased marshal representation

At the first Motor Sports Council meeting of 2007, members concluded that marshals should be more represented in the decision-making and legislative process.

The existing Training Steering Group, which is already predominantly concerned with representing marshals' training interests as well as those of other volunteers and officials, will be renamed the Volunteer Officials Advisory Panel to reflect more accurately its wider remit. The chairperson will be a member of the Panel (rather than an MSA executive), and this person will take up a seat on the Motor Sports Council to speak on behalf of volunteer officials.

It was also agreed that a specific Marshals Working Group should be set up, reporting to the revised Volunteer Officials Advisory Panel, thus replicating the structure already in place for timekeepers, scrutineers and other volunteer officials.

In a further recognition of the vital work of the marshals, the MSA has confirmed that every MSA registered marshal will now receive the MSA's quarterly publication, *Motorsports Now!*, bringing them in line with the MSA's other volunteer officials.

Presentations at Council dinner

At the Motor Sports Council dinner in February, the Chairman, Graham Stoker, presented a commemorative clock to retiring Council Member, Julian Fack, and an Official d'Honneur award and carriage clock to Alan Foster.

Julian Fack first competed in Sporting Trials in 1972. In the 35 years since, he has been British Champion ten times and designed or built cars that have claimed an additional 12 titles in the hands of others. He joined the Trials Committee in 1978 and became chairman in 1995, which brought him onto the Motor Sports Council. Despite retiring from the Council in 2006, Julian continues to compete at the highest level and is chairman of the BTRDA Trials Committee, a member of the BTRDA board, a BTRDA Council Member and a Life member of Midland Auto Club.

The Chairman presented Alan Foster with an Official d'Honneur award, the highest accolade for MSA volunteer officials. Alan has had a prominent involvement in MSA-authorized motor sport for many years, from karting father, through kart scrutineer, to Technical Commissioner and then as an environmental scrutineer; this latter role expanding his involvement into other areas of the sport – racing, hill climbing, sprinting and rallying.

Council members also paid tribute to the late David W

Williams who died suddenly in November 2006. Known affectionately as 'DWW', David's contribution to the sport was immense, through Port Talbot Motor Club, the Welsh Association, ANCRO, and the MSA – where he served as committee chairman, timekeeper and Motor Sports Council member.

Special Stage Rally Cars regs

In February, the Rallies Committee presented its recommendations to the Motor Sports Council for a complete revision of regulation K37 (concerning the eligibility of cars).

The publication of this first draft signifies the beginning of a period of consultation, after which a revised draft will be presented to Council in June for further consideration, before moving to ratification in September.

The earliest date for any regulation changes to come into effect for new cars will be 1 January 2009, while existing vehicles will remain eligible to compete until 1 January 2010.

The recommendations are on the MSA website (www.msauk.org) and interested parties are invited to provide their feedback to Ian Davis, MSA Rallies Executive (email: idavis@msauk.org), by the end of April 2007.

Most vehicle fires can be fought successfully with dry powder and foam extinguishers.

But not fires involving metals like magnesium and titanium – used to provide lightweight strength in racing cars.

Metal fires are recognisable from the clouds of dense white smoke they produce. The important thing to remember is putting water on a metal fire – even the small amount of moisture in carbon dioxide extinguishers – can make it far, far worse.

The intense heat produced by metal fires can render ordinary dry powder extinguishers useless and experts warn certain metals can even react violently with some multi-purpose dry powder extinguishers.

It's important to remember that, although some modern brake assemblies include components made from exotic metals, it is usually the brake fluid that is burning in a brake fire.

Brake fluid has a flash point – the temperature at which it can be ignited – of around 120°C and an autoignition temperature – when it will spontaneously ignite – of around 310°C.

When brake discs or drums get really hot, they can cause the brake fluid to ignite and the heat from the disc or drum will cause it to re-ignite.

So, cooling the disc or drum using a foam extinguisher is usually the best method of fighting a brake fire, unless, of course, you detect signs of a metal fire.

The good news on circuits is that it is unlikely that a fire will have been raging for long enough to ignite components containing exotic metals.

On a rally, though, it only needs a driver with a puncture at the start of a stage to press on regardless on an alloy wheel rim to generate enough heat to set the wheel alight by the finish.

The best course of action is to summon help immediately, warning Control that you have a metal fire; use dry powder extinguishers with extreme caution and try to shovel enough sand – or dry earth – over the burning metal to stop the fire spreading to other parts of the vehicle.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Australia, October 2006
2. Jochen Rindt, 1970
3. Frank Fennell/Kevin Savage, Mercedes Benz 300SE
4. Guernsey, C.I.



MSA licensing statement

The Motor Sports Association has experienced issues with its IT system relating to the processing of licence applications. This caused a considerable backlog of applications and the MSA despatched more than 3,000 temporary paper licences to ensure that competitors were able to participate in their chosen events.

"We experienced technical problems with both the hardware and software within the licensing operating system, but this has now been resolved," says Kevin Pay, MSA Operations Director. "We employed additional staff to get the licences out as quickly as possible."

"There will always be teething problems when you bring new technology on line and we apologise to licence holders for the inconvenience that this delay caused," says Colin Hilton, MSA Chief Executive. "We would like to thank people for their patience."

Release MSA06-032: 6 March 2007