

BLOG September 2013 : by Jerry Filor

No blog for the August meeting, which was basically myself, Chris and Jon trundling from Melton to The Blue Bell at Hoby.....

Stanford Hall :

Five club cars braved the weather and were on stand with the new Club Coleman Event Shelter, which was us for the first time. Jon, Matt (in my green cooper), Gary, Karl and Chris made the fast paced journey down the M1 and in via the outskirts of Lutterworth and the Swinford road. The last 10 miles being the most engaging through the country lanes before arriving at Stanford Hall.

I was organising the Mini Cooper Register stand for the 3rd year in a row, but more on that later....

Karl was unfortunate enough to end up with a



broken windscreen, courtesy of Gary and a wayward stone on the run in so the first task was

to try and find a replacement windscreen. Would you believe that there wasn't one to be had in all of the autojumble, so Karl could have been stuck with a very cold journey home. During the show

Karl explained to a number of people what had happened and was lucky enough that one



show goer was kind enough to provide a vintage

60's "emergency windscreen". This was a strange piece of automotive history that was basically a plastic film reinforced with alloy bars.....strange looking, but certainly more than up to the job and it provided Karl and his son a much more pleasant drive home ! A new windscreen has since been sourced and fitted, thanks to Matt S and also a similar emergency windscreen via that well known auction site, for the princely sum of 99p !

I was pleased with my selection of cars on the MCR stand, a good mix of Coopers, replica works cars and the real thing (well known ARX



977), the original Car and Car Conversions Cox GTM and a very rare Biota kit car (brought by the Wilkins father and

son team). Nick had a very draughty drive home in the rain, in the Biota which doesn't actually have a roof !



The Badgers Sett - Cropston

When I arrived at the GHW, I was a bit late, there was another group of mini owners there as well as Chris, Gary and Karl. It turns out that they had made contact through our Facebook page and hailed from the Stoney Stanton area and were not just mini's....but an A-series club ! They were reaching out to local clubs to build up relations for future shows and runs.

This month we also welcomed Paul Preston (Bowden Mini Restorations), hailing from Great Bowden (Market Harborough) to our club night



which followed his lovely White 998 Coopers inclusion on the MCR stand at Stanford Hall. In the short run from

the GHW to the Badgers Sett we almost lost him at Rothley, when he got caught at the traffic lights....only to lose him between Rothley and Cropston. Its safe to say that his 4 x 4 doesn't handle the spirited driving like his Cooper does ! Hopefully next time out he'll be able to keep up...

Gary has sold finally sold Pukka, his Grey and Pukka Pie Orange mini. Towards the end of the restoration Gary had 3 parties after the car so he was pretty confident of a sale. He went for the "sealed bid" method, rather than opening up a bidding war and he was sure that the winning party were more than happy with their purchase ! It must be nice to have the space in the garage again, and cash for a new project....

SOCIAL BIT

Sunday 20th October : Mini Fair 2 : Stoneleigh : Organised by the British Mini Club, who run the very successful Bingley Hall show in January. It is all inside like Bingley, and should be well

supported by traders and autojumbler alike. Advanced tickets (advisable) are £8, or £10 on the gate.

Leaving the GHW at 9.00am for those that are planning to go.

Thursday 30th October : Club Night : Vale of Belvoir Blast : Meeting at the GHW, depart @ 7.30pm. Melton posse to meet en-route at Wilton Road car park opposite the burnt out Kettleby Cross @ 19.50pm. Depart @ 8pm

Thursday 28th November : Quorn Slot car club – 7.30pm for racing to start at 8.00pm. The cost is £5.00 per entrant for a fast and furious racing evening with no damage to your pride and joy guaranteed ! The venue is behind the Station Public House, Derby road, Loughborough, LE11 5AG (for those of you with sat nav). Jon has approached some contacts at Derby Classic Mini Owners Club so this could be the start of an inter-club rivalry so get practising !

Its almost that time again.....seeing as we missed out on a Christmas gathering last year I thought I'd get in early and ask if anyone has any ideas for this year ? answers on a post card to....

JERRY'S MOTORSPORT MAYHEM

I had treated myself to the this little experience following two spectator visits, one to Prescott (to the MCR Cotswolds Caper) and the other to Shelsey Walsh (for the MCR Mini Cooper 50 weekend). Hill climbing is competitive, where you race not only the other competitors....but also the clock !, but not car breaking unless you do something really stupid !

You are racing yourself to better your time at my level, as without a racing license you can't compete in any championships.

So on a misty, foggy morning I set off early to pick up my co-pilot for the day, Chris, from Anstey. I think it was down the M69 that the headlights and rear foglight stopped working. Fortunately the weather had brightened up and the fog was lifting so we pressed on heading for the costwolds....

Filling up with petrol before arrival meant the briefing had started in the newly refurbished clubhouse by the time we had arrived and signed on.

I had joined a group of 30 people hanging onto the words of the experienced instructors giving out their knowledge before we began. The number were split into groups and allocated an instructor before we gathered in the paddock area to walk the course. Our instructor was an unashamed granny who drove a 4 litre Judd powdered Pilbeam formula one type open wheeled racer, with which she recently set fastest time at another hillclimb venue, I think it was Harewood Hill. The current record for Prescott was around the 37 second mark !

We set off to walk the course in our groups with the instructors telling us the correct lines through the corners and twists to get the quickest lines. This mostly consisted of using the small paved areas on the corner apex to straighten out the bends and minimise the cars movement from one side to the other.

When I had been a spectator at Prescott, although you could see a lot of the first part of the circuit from the lower level, once you get past the Pardon Hairpin (an uphill, off camber hairpin) the upper part of the course is hidden from view. It proved that the Esses and semicircle were difficult to get right despite all of us being told many times by the instructors what we **SHOULD** be doing !

With the course walk complete we returned to our cars and prepared for our first taste of the hill

as part of a convoy run to get the feel of the track. Surrounded by a delectable array of machinery ranging from Caterhams, Westfields, midgets, Porsches, loti (Elise and Exige varieties), not to mention Alfa Romeos, a rally prepared Toyota Celica, Healey Sprites and an intriguing self build road registered car that could have been mistaken for a 1930's Alfa Romeo grand prix car. This was a very interesting car that had been scratch built in the 1960's and powered by a Triumph 2000 engine.

The most spectacular car there was a TVR which roared off the line each time !

The first run was a bit tentative, the speed trap is early on in the run but any thoughts of this were put to the back of your mind as you tried to remember the correct lines, and where you were on the track.

Wearing a helmet, which the Race school provided, took some getting used to ! I kept forgetting about it and clouting the car with it as I got in and out of the car, better than my head I suppose !

After the convoy run we parked up in formation in our groups and awaited our individual runs. Effective marshalling kept everything running smoothly, my group followed the car group mainly consisting of Triumph TR's, Morgans and Westfields.....all rear wheel drive examples.

After the first couple of runs we were told we were being filmed and observed by the instructors and were given some general feedback on the corners that were not being taken properly. They said that this varied between groups and appeared to be different on different days !

There were a couple of delays as some drivers were pulled out of the gravel run off areas (not a position I wanted to find myself in !) and you

were always mindful of the less than forgiving Armco barriers, particularly at the Esses.

A hearty lunch was provided in the excellent club house, owned by the Bugatti owners club (they do Christmas Dinners there, hint, hint !), before the embarrassment of the video playback and instructors passing commentary on them.

The runs continued after lunch with the bonus of having a run up the hill with an instructor in a Porsche Boxter. This certainly was an experience as it was so competent that it almost felt uninvolved, but there you go !

In hill climb competition you would get one or two practice runs, then your time would be set from your third run. It's a bit like the final practice with the top ten F1 cars determining Grand prix pole position, and the remainder of the top ten grid positions.

The reason I enjoyed the hill climb experience is that it is quite explosive and the skill, when experienced, is to get everything right from the start, through the corners etc to set the best possible time.

I know how deflated I felt when, on what was looking like a quick lap, I went from third to fourth, instead of second around one of the corners half way through my run and it ruined it completely !

The Prescott Driving school day was great fun, well run and I'd do it again every weekend if I could afford it. After a break for tea there was a further "video nasty" session and presentation of certificates. The mighty TVR won the award for most improved driver of the day, I was pleased to take part, not prang the car and really enjoyed myself learning new driving skills in the process !

I did pick up one battle scar during the day though.....while I was picking up my portfolio of pictures from the professional photographer (who was clicking away all day !) down in the paddock

the Lotus Exige which was parked behind me bumped and dented my brand NEW rear bumper that I purchased at Stanford Hall and creased it ! The driver had dropped his handbrake and bent down to get something from the footwell.....rolling the car forward into my bumper !

There was just little bit of paint missing from the front of his Exige and probably more of a dent to his pride....but he generously offered to pay for a replacement bumper and there was no real harm done ! I don't think he had owned the car long and he was very embarrassed !

Chris and I didn't hang around getting back as my headlights were still not working and by the time I got back to Melton it was dark. I was very relieved to have got home without being spotted on only sidelights. It turned out that the problem was corrosion in the wiring loom connector to the light switch, which I have since cleaned up, smeared with Vaseline and hey presto.....everything works, including the spotlights, so overall...a result !