



## **Newsletter November 2004**

### **INTRODUCTION by Bruce Lyle, Chairman**

I would like to apologise for completely missing the Autumn issue of this communication. I am aware that this is the only way we all keep in touch, and I can only imagine you have been waiting, with bated breath, for the next issue.

As Jonathan will explain later, it has been a very busy year for us here. I suppose every year is exciting in itself, but what of the future? Where will F1 go without Silverstone (and Jaguar), and where will the World Rally Championship be without Peugeot and Citroen? Malcolm Wilson and his team in Cumbria, including my old pal George Black, are OK, at least for now.

Thank goodness the Scottish Rally Championship boys are back on the straight and narrow, and we will still have an OPEN Championship. A brave, and correct decision last week, I think. We now await the decision of the all-powerful Forestry Commission, to see just how much it will cost to go play in their forests. I would not like to be setting the budget for the Snowman Rally, whose regs are imminent!

What a pity Alister McRae's car let him down at the end in Oz – it would have been a fantastic end to a heroic season. We seem to be losing all our top-end stars, though. Where will David Coulthard be next year? I certainly can't see Colin in a Skoda – can you? Not now that he has tasted Ferrari magic. Perhaps they are all trying to keep us guessing, and I can't wait.

Entries seem to be holding in most sectors, but at grass roots level, road rallies, autotests and the like continue to struggle. I was at the West Association Meeting the other week, and they came up with the excellent initiative of funding starter training for navigation rallies, and running novice events at subsidised low cost, to try to attract the newcomers we so desperately need to our sport. A pity Bernie doesn't drop a few crumbs off his table – it could go a long way! This problem is not unique to Scotland, and the MSA have it high on their agenda.

### **2004: A BUSY YEAR**

Nearly eight hundred competitors: that was the final reckoning from the RSAC Motorsport portfolio of events in 2004, after a busy season which saw five major events being organised within fifteen weeks. The cars taking part were a varied lot, with everything from stately Edwardian horseless carriages to up-to-the minute World Rally Cars – not to mention purpose-built off-road machinery - appearing on the entry lists. And age was no barrier to participation either: the Three Lochs Classic, for example, saw everybody from

pre-school age children to ... well, more mature ladies and gentlemen having a great day out.

The RSAC Motorsport season got under way with a new event on the calendar. The name of the **B-52 Stages** at Edzell reflected the venue's former status as a US Air Force base. Traditionally one is supposed to rise early on the first of May to wash one's face in the dew – there was no time for that this year, as the gates had to be open for the competitors at 6 a.m. The former air base buildings and vast expanses of tarmac abandoned by the USAF several years ago provided an excellent venue for a single venue rally, and competitors in the Scottish Tarmac Championship enjoyed the fast, open stages and the hard-fought competition. Our thanks go to all those from Dunfermline Car Club and other organisations who helped set the stage up and dismantled it afterwards.

The second event of the season was the principal date on our calendar. The **Scottish Rally** was again based in Dumfries on the second weekend in June and was again a round of the British and Scottish Rally Championships. For this year we had split the two, with the BRC crews competing on Friday evening and Saturday while the County Saab Scottish Championship competitors took centre stage on Sunday. The only stage common to both events was our new spectator stage at Heathhall, just outside Dumfries, which attracted large crowds on both days and provided spectacular viewing. Competitor reaction was good too: several crews remarked that, unlike many spectator stages, it was very close to a "proper" rally stage even though, at 0.7 miles, it was one of the shorter stages they would encounter during a championship season.

As well as the two main events, the Scottish featured several other rallies within the weekend's activities. The Belmont Ecosse 205 Challenge crews assaulted the forests of Galloway on Saturday, the Army Land Rovers marked their fortieth appearance on the Scottish with the usual spirited style of driving, and for the first time in several years there was a Historic section on the Sunday. Although the Historic entry list was fairly small, those who took part really enjoyed running at the head of the field through Ae, Castle O'er and Twiglees, and we'll be looking for a larger turnout next year.

Next it was the off-road stuff. The **Scottish Hillrally** has been running since 1996 and is renowned for its friendly nature, demanding route, close-fought competition and well-supported social side. Based at Perth Agricultural Centre, the Hillrally attracts crews from all over the UK and offers well over 100 stage miles over the Perthshire hills. This year's event saw yet another route permutation from the fertile mind of event founder Ian Sykes, with the final stage measuring a whopping 26 miles. No chance to back off to ensure a finish, then. The only disappointment for the organisers was that the Ochil Challenge, a comp safari added on to the main event as a taster for crews whose cars weren't road legal, was poorly supported. It's a good way of becoming involved with the event at low cost, so why not give it a try next year?

A fortnight later it was back to tarmac again, with the fifth **UK Rally Challenge** at Knockhill. Originally a stopgap event designed to give rally competitors and marshals something to do in the foot and mouth year of 2001, this event has grown in popularity and this year was a round of the Welsh-based Rallysport Challenge. The UK Challenge is promoted by AMTV and, as a result, featured on BBC1 Scotland a few weeks ago. The usual Irish contingent was slightly muted this year, but the Challenge provided spectators with a full day's viewing and the Nations' Cup competition was as closely-fought as ever. This year, for the first time, the home team came out on top.

And finally ... the last RSAC Motorsport event of the season was run at a slightly less frenetic pace. The **Three Lochs Classic** was based at the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club at Rhu, where we were made very welcome by the members and staff. The cars were given the option of tackling the "wee route" or the "big route", and returned to the Yacht Club for lunch before the Concours judging took place. There were a few intellectual exercises en route as well: Ross Finlay had come up with a few questions to be answered against the clock during the road run, while the afternoon saw the inaugural degree exams of the *Automotive University of Rhu*. The successful "students" received their certificates at the event prizegiving. All in all, good fun, and a fitting close to the 2004 programme of events.

None of these events just happen, of course, and we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all those who are involved in the planning, setting up, running and dismantling of all five events. The more people who help, the easier it becomes, so we'll hope to see you next year. Our thanks also go to the organisations and companies who sponsored us during the year. Although there isn't space to list them all here, particular thanks go to Dumfries and Galloway Council, Arnold Clark, Border Cars and Perth and Kinross Council.

### **MSA COUNCIL REPORT by Bruce Lyle**

The new Chairman of the Motor Sports Council is Graham Stoker, who is intent on breathing some fresh air into this august body. Graham's view is that Council should not simply be the vehicle for rubber-stamping new or updated technical issues, but that it should consider the direction and development of the sport in the UK, in much the same way as the FIA sets world-wide policy. To this end, future meetings will be in 2 parts, the first to deal with regulatory issues, and the second to deal with strategic and development issues. Arguably, the best motor sport brains in the country are brought together on Council, and it certainly seemed a waste of all that talent to limit involvement to technical detail.

The down side for me is that I will now have to work for my supper, as I am expected to provide a report on activities, and concerns, in Scotland. It is critical, therefore, that you contact me about anything you think is important enough for discussion at Colnbrook. Mobile phone 07771 717517, or Email [brucelyle@bigfoot.com](mailto:brucelyle@bigfoot.com). We really do have a chance to be heard, so let's do it! I will be delighted to hear from you anytime.

### **SIXTIETH SCOTTISH**

Next year sees the sixtieth Scottish Rally, the latest in a series which began in 1932. The regs for that first event promised competitors a "pleasant, sporting and romantic tour" through Scotland. Though we can't guarantee the romantic bit in 2005, RSAC Motorsport will be pulling out all the stops to ensure that competitors and marshals enjoy the event. With additional stage mileage in the British Championship rally and the Sunday stages again giving pride of place to the Scottish Championship competitors, the sixtieth Scottish will have something for everyone. There will be classes for the Belmont Ecosse 205 Challenge, Army Land Rovers (with more power promised for next year) and Historic and Post-Historic cars. We're particularly keen to welcome cars – and crews - which competed in the Scottish in the sixties and seventies, and already there have been expressions of interest from several owners of suitable vehicles.

Every marshal will receive a commemorative T shirt to mark the occasion, and one person who certainly deserves one is John Taylor from Cumbria. John was involved in his fortieth Scottish Rally in 2004. Can anyone beat this record: 40 out of 59?

Changing times ... the programme for the Scottish Rally in the early 1950s carried an advertisement for hip flasks, recommending that competitors carried one to fortify themselves as the day's rallying wore on. The programme for the 2004 event carried an advertisement for the Dumfries and Galloway Safety Camera Partnership!

### **LONDON-SYDNEY MARATHON BRUCE LYLE was there ... all the way!**

If anyone suggested to you that you should get into your car, have someone attach a towrope to it, and sit behind them, in glorious silence, from Glasgow to London, then back again – in 2 days, tell them to p..... off ! This is precisely what happened to Jimmy McRae and me on the London-Sydney Marathon Rally, which took up most of my summer. To be fair, if we had not accepted the tow, which lasted 1200 kms, and was accomplished at 130 kph behind a 6 litre 4wd Holden pick up, we would have been out of the rally. Jimmy had been driving like the star he is for 3 weeks out of the 4, winning the European leg, and setting equal fastest for the Indian leg, when we lost our water, literally, on day 3 in Oz. Cylinder head gasket gone, head warped, and block needing attention – 1000 miles from civilisation. We had to go 2 days due east before we found someone to do the head, and we lost 5 stages. The rules allow you to continue in the event, although we dropped masses of time. Our hero was not a happy man, however, and drove like a dervish for the last 4 days, getting back up from 21st to 11th at the end, in Sydney. He set fastest time on 5 of the last 6 stages. Some experience! I never would have believed I would have spent a whole month of my life in a Toyota Corolla! I really sympathise with my old co-drivers now – they really were the stars!

After all the hammer and bash was over, I was able to spend a week with my son, who lives and works in Sydney, and that was the REAL purpose of the exercise.

### **FORMULA STUDENT EDWARD PEARS reports on a Strathclyde success**

Strathclyde University's Formula Student team took part in the annual Formula Student competition in July. The competition was held at Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground in Leicestershire with 54 cars taking part in the class 1 part of the competition, and a further 13 taking part in the 'development' class.

Once again the team have made significant progress this year, in that of the 21 British teams completing in class 1, the Strathclyde team were very pleased to finish 6th. In addition to this we were in the top 20 teams for all the static events (design, sales and cost), and for the very first time competed in ALL dynamic events at the competition. Our static results included a fourth overall in costing. Furthermore, in the three of the 4 dynamic events which we completed we scored 'performance' points, whereby our time was within 110% of the winners' time; once again this is a Strathclyde first.

Had it not been for a small problem with a cooling hose the team would have also finished the endurance event; however despite being the fastest car on

the track at the time the competition officials would not allow the car to continue past lap 15 of the event due to the water leak. The team were understandably disappointed at this, as if we had continued for another 15 laps at the same pace we would have finished in 12th place overall out of the 54 cars. Despite this the team still finished in the top 50% (again a Strathclyde first) and were ahead of many prestigious teams: Bath University, Leeds University and Brunel University to name but a few!

In summary the team were pleased with our performance over the three days in that not only was our car very fast and more reliable than the majority, but it was also described by the commentator as one of the best looking cars at the competition.

### **IT ALL STARTS AGAIN IN JANUARY**

RSAC Motorsport Director Jonathan Lord went through his diary and counted up the number of events he'd been involved with this year, and wished he hadn't started the exercise. The Clerk of the Course's badge was used on eight occasions (including four rounds of the British Rally Championship); he was a steward on sixteen events including race meetings, rallies, rallycross, sprints and hillclimbs; Competitors' Relations Officer on Wales Rally GB; and a marshal on four events. Now, where's that brochure for holidays on desert islands with no cars or motorsport?

### **VETERAN REUNION**

The Veterans of Scottish Motor Sport are having their second reunion on Saturday 30 April 2005. Anyone who was involved in Scottish motorsport prior to 1985 qualifies as a Veteran! This includes drivers, co-drivers, navigators, mechanics, marshals, organisers, stewards and scrutineers. The first reunion four years ago was a very successful evening, and the organisers would like to hear from anyone who would like to attend in April but who isn't on their mailing list. If you are interested, contact:

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Larkhall  
ML9 2EQ  
Telephone: 01698 882724  
E-mail: [stuartparker@larkhall.demon.co.uk](mailto:stuartparker@larkhall.demon.co.uk)

### **WHO ARE WE?**

The Board of RSAC Motorsport Limited consists of seven Directors:  
Bruce Lyle (Chairman) – former successful competitor in racing and rallying  
John Cowan – experienced official at national and international level  
Mike Gascoigne - former RSAC and SMRC Chairman; race and rally official for many years  
Gordon Hastie – multiple navigational rally champion and experienced official  
Colin Hilton – Chief Executive of the MSA  
Jonathan Lord – executive Director of RSAC Motorsport and our Clerk of the Course  
Jim McRae – five times British Rally Champion and winner of many international rallies

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The Management team consists of the six Scottish-based Directors plus:  
John Cleland – multiple British Touring Car Champion  
Andrew Pemberton – current stage rally co-driver and event official  
Andrew Wood – former works rally driver and Scottish Rally Champion  
Barry Wood – regular successful competitor in historic racing and rallying

The staff at our Linwood office are Jonathan Lord and our Motorsport Administrator Catherine Higgins.

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***Don't forget – we welcome your views on matters mentioned in this Newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any opinions regarding articles which have appeared. If you'd like to suggest items we could feature in the next edition, just phone or send us an e-mail.***

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## **SCOTTISH MOTOR SPORT EVENTS IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER**

### **STAGE RALLIES**

#### **Forest**

22-23 NOVEMBER	ROGER ALBERT CLARK RALLY
5 DECEMBER	GALLOWAY HILLS RALLY

### **RSAC MOTORSPORT PROVISIONAL DATES 2005**

10-12 JUNE	RSAC SCOTTISH RALLY
17 JULY	UK RALLY CHALLENGE
22-23 JULY	SCOTTISH HILLRALLY
20 AUGUST	THREE LOCHS CLASSIC
24 SEPTEMBER	B-52 STAGES