

# May / June 2025

# SPOTLIGHT

Newsletter of the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk



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## Chairman's Introduction - Membership Renewals!

Yes, it's that time of year again: membership renewals were due on 1st April for the club year 2025-2026. Well done to the 70 members who have completed their renewals, but that leaves another hundred of you (including family members) who haven't yet renewed. If you're intending to compete in the near future, you'll need your club cards. Go to the club's website at <https://www.scccon.co.uk/> then click on 'Membership' near the top left of the home-page.

I must also thank all the volunteers who supported the selection event for Motorsport UK's Disabled Driver Scholarship. We had a super sunny day at the Lotus factory and I must give special mention to Jon Fry for making the arrangements for us to use the Lotus site. It was a relaxed enjoyable day and we now have two new scholarship winners (Jack and 15-year-old Callum) who will be tackling events in the Toyota Yaris loaned to SCCON by MSUK.

As always, if you think you can help SCCON in any way please contact me at [cjnewson32@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cjnewson32@yahoo.co.uk) or 07717 - 109472

Martin Newson, Chairman

## APRIL FOOL!

SCONNIE



Even at the bargain price of only £4-45 each, no-one has ordered any of the new SCONNIE tee shirts that were advertised in the March/April edition of Spotlight. Was that because we're all feeling the pinch financially, was it because the weather was too cold to be thinking about tee shirts or did most of you realise it was an April Fool joke?

The clues were firstly the spelling; we tend to be known as "SCCON-IES" with two Cs and that the tee shirts were 50% "Polly Ester", whoever she is.

The tee shirts really are available in the USA where the nick-name SCONNIE applies to students at the University of Wisconsin. The following photos are not SCCON members!





A few more young ladies who are not (yet) members of SCCON

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## **SCCON's Midsummer Vintage, Classic & Sports Car Run**

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2025



For details visit the SCCON web-site at [www.scon.co.uk/html/classic/classic.html](http://www.scon.co.uk/html/classic/classic.html)

## Rally Report - The Lee Holland Memorial Stages, 2nd March 2025 - Anglesey



Round 6 of the Protyre Circuit Rally Championship meant a trip to Anglesey! We had always planned to do one of the rounds there, but after engine failure in round 3 at Donington, that trip/expedition became even more important.

While we had a very good run there and back, it's still a 7 hour drive and was stunning when we arrived, clear blue skies and dry. We could see the Mountains of Snowdonia in the distance and got ourselves set up for the event.

6 stages lay in wait for us over the course of the day, which was also a round of the Junior Championship for both England and Scotland, and for single-seater Cross Cars, basically a motorbike engine with Reiger Suspension, a bit of Carbon for bodywork and a complete lunatic behind the wheel. The main rally had 53 entries, plus the Junior Class had 24 1000cc cars and there were 8 Cross Cars with 850cc or 890cc engines.

This made for a long drawn out day, as the senior rally ran behind both classes. The stages were good, fast and flowing on the circuit and twisty and technical on the outfield areas, the surface was abrasive and hard on tyres, and off line it was covered in chunks of rubber that had literally been torn off the treads of other competitors.

We spent the day battling with a local crew for 2nd/3rd in class, the chap leading was to be fair, very quick, I never knew a Citroen AX GT had twin cams, throttle bodies and a sequential gearbox! But it was an absolute weapon, and boy could he drive it.

For us the trip was all about scoring points for the class championship, Jon managed to stay on course, we had no mistakes from either of us all day, we set some decent times and were happy to come away with 3rd in class at the finish, we dropped a little time on stage 6 with a bit of traffic, but had a good haul of points in the bag at the end.

Jon Bray and Darren Styles

### RESULTS

1st o/a Michael Igoe / Will Atkins Citroen C3 Rally 2.

Michael and Will also won both the recent Brands Hatch Stages and the 2025 Snetterton Stage Rally

Winners of the Junior Stages category were Ollie Forrester / George Myatt in their Skoda Citigo

The top Cross Car was Richard Rees in his Mygale XC04.

Mygale is a French manufacturer well known for their Formula Ford chassis.

There's a good video of this event at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eC0VvkGZfo>

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## GOING OFF WITH A BANG!

For my birthday back in February, my granddaughter Faith bought me some canned beer. She liked it because it was called 'Faith' - described by Northern Monk, its makers, as a "Fruited Hazy Pale Ale".

I'd put it in the sideboard with our other drinks, but recently we wanted to move the sideboard. To make it lighter and easier to move, I took all the drinks out and put them on our dining table.

Before putting the drinks back into the sideboard, I went into the kitchen and there was then a tremendous 'bang' from the dining room. One of the cans of 'Faith' ale had exploded, showering beer everywhere, so it was out with the kitchen roll to mop it all up.

I hadn't shaken the can when I moved it, it wasn't in the sun and its best before date was June 2025. I obviously had to drink the other cans very quickly before they could explode too! Keeping the faith? - not on this occasion.



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## SCCON Natter 'n Noggin Evenings - every 3rd Thursday of the month

For a chat about SCCON and where you'd like our club to be going, grass-roots motorsport and anything to do with cars and motoring in general, come along to one of SCCON's monthly get-togethers at the White Horse, Trowse, NR14 8ST. We gather around 8pm and if you haven't been before you'll be especially welcome.

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# SERVICE OVERDUE LIGHT

## OR AREN'T SOME CAR MANUFACTURERS ABSOLUTE BASTARDS !

I was driving back from Devon on the M5 when the low oil pressure warning light on my Alfa Romeo Giulietta started flashing. The engine wasn't making any unusual noises and I was very near Sedgemoor services so I drove in and parked. But just before I stopped, another warning light, in the shape of an oil can, came on permanently at the bottom left of the dashboard info panel. I got out and checked the engine oil level which was fine.

Then an AA van came into the services and parked behind me. So I asked the AA man if he'd come across this happening on any other Giuliettas. He hadn't, but he told me that some French cars now illuminate their low oil pressure warning light to indicate that a service is overdue!. Well Alfa Romeo and Fiat are now part of the Stellantis Group that also owns Peugeot, Citroen and Vauxhall, so it was possibly the same thing on my Alfa. He also said that unless I was sure what the warning meant, I mustn't drive the car.

I phoned Tara and asked her to look in the Alfa's handbook that I'd left at home. It gave reasons for various modes of flashing of the low oil pressure light, but continuous flashing wasn't mentioned. But it did say that low oil pressure is only indicated when the lamp is on continuously (which it wasn't). The space at the bottom left of the info panel was merely described as a 'Car Status' indicator and gave examples such as 'door open' or 'risk of ice on road'. I then asked her to do a Google search on Alfa Giulietta oil pressure light flashing. Sure enough, she found that when the first light is flashing, it does indicate service overdue and NOT LOW OIL PRESSURE. My service wasn't overdue because I'd done it myself only 2000 miles ago. Then, to her great credit, she found how to switch off the flashing oil light.

The procedure is:

- 1 Turn on ignition
- 2 Press throttle down and hold it fully open
- 3 Press brake pedal 7 times
- 4 Keep pressing throttle for 60secs
- 5 Release throttle and turn off ignition
- 6 Wait a further 60 secs and turn engine on

And hey presto - the lights went out - problem solved! I was able to drive home having been delayed by only half an hour or so.



Earlier versions of the Giulietta had a spanner symbol in the car status location and a 'Service' message as shown in the photo above, but Alfa have gone to the trouble of changing it to an oil can symbol instead and deleting the word 'Service'. This can only be to cause more unnecessary worry to drivers and get them to contact their dealer more often. How many people have had their cars towed when they didn't need to be?

Peter Riddle

## MOTORSPORT UK DISABLED DRIVERS SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE



Motorsport UK's Disabled Drivers Scholarship Toyota Yaris in action

Spotlight last reported on Motorsport UK's Disabled Driver scheme in the June/July/August 2024 edition when Craig Bennett wrote about the Disability Scholarship Day held at Bicester in May 2024. Dean Linnell and Dominic (Dom) Pearson were two of the successful candidates and they were each awarded a year of club motorsport with SCCON, driving one of MSUK's 1300cc Toyota Yaris automatics fitted with hand controls. All the costs associated with running the Yaris for Dean and Dom have been reimbursed to SCCON by MSUK.

Various issues conspired to limit Dean's participation, but Dom has been a regular and very welcome competitor on SCCON and AMSC events over the last year. It's worth mentioning his participation in the recent Autosolo held at Debden on 6th April. Dom entered in the Autotest class because MSUK's rules say that, to enter in the Autosolo class, a car must be "taxed and driven to the event". But the Yaris was trailered to the event so it didn't meet this criterion. However, the car did fulfil the intent behind this rule which is to ensure that only road-legal cars can enter an Autosolo and highly modified vehicles are either excluded or they run in their own Autotest class (if there is one). The Yaris has no performance modifications and is fully taxed, MOT tested and insured for the road.

SCCON has asked Motorsport UK whether this rule can be relaxed in the case of the Disabled Drivers Scholarship but they have not been very helpful. Their best suggestions were either for someone to drive the Yaris to Autosolo events instead of trailering it, or to unload it away from the venue and drive it the last few miles to comply with the "driven to the event" rule.

If Dom had been permitted to enter as an Autosolo competitor at Debden he would have finished third in class, only 6 seconds behind second place, a very creditable performance. Unsurprisingly, the Yaris wasn't competitive in the Autotest class.

## MOTORSPORT UK / SCCON DISABLED DRIVERS ASSESSMENT DAY 2025

Motorsport UK will continue to loan their Disabled Scholarship Toyota Yaris to SCCON for another year, starting in May 2025 and an assessment event was held at the Lotus Cars factory site on 27th April to select the scholarship recipients. Richard Egger of Loughborough Car Club very kindly brought their disabled driver Nissan Micra and all the participants drove both SCCON's Yaris and Loughborough's silver automatic Micra.

Unfortunately, quite a few of the original applicants had to pull out of the event beforehand which left just four to contend for the two scholarship places on offer. A single test layout was set out which each applicant drove nine times with a SCCON in-car mentor to guide them around the course and coach them to improve their driving techniques. It was great that Dom Pearson was one of the mentors as he was able to give advice based on his experience of the MSUK Scholarship scheme during 2024/25. The applicants were also interviewed by a judging panel comprising MSUK's team, who had come down from Bicester, plus SCCON's chairman Martin Newson.



A group photo before the off - MSUK's team are in blue on the left and SCCON's team are in hi-viz



The participants set off on their familiarisation walk (like a real Autotest) before starting their drives



SCCON committee member Nigel Steggles helping one of the participants get ready to start the test

Jon Fry had made all the arrangements with Lotus which included the provision of a very welcome sandwich lunch by Delia Smith's Canary Catering, kindly paid for by MSUK. The weather couldn't have been better and the whole event ran very smoothly - so a big thank you to all the SCCON volunteers who made it happen.

At the end of the day the winners were announced to be wheelchair-user Jack Stanton and 15-year-old Callum McCormick who has autism.



The recipients of the scholarship for 2025/26 shake hands after the result is announced

On the Monday after the event, SCCON received an e-mail from Elise Whyte of Motorsport UK saying "I would just like to say, thank you so much for yesterday. It was a fantastic day and I believe all four participants had a brilliant time".

HJ and PR

## Rally Report - The Tegiwa Dukeries Stage Rally, 16th March 2025 - Donington.



Round 7 took us back to Donington, after round 3's DNF anything over 5 miles would be seen as an achievement! Seven stages were planned for the day, and hats off to the Dukeries Club, it ran like clockwork.

Conditions were good, dry and cool but OK, the twisty bits were good for us, the long drags round the circuit not so much, what we make up in the corners and under braking is all taken back in a straight line! But we had a plan, and to be fair stuck to it, this being to score points!

Stage 1 was an eye opener, we did ok, but it was clear fairly quickly that the set of tyres chosen were shall we say, better off in a tyre wall than on the car, strange handling and a nasty vibration saw us come into service with only 40 minutes to the next MTC and the need to get new rubber fitted quickly, not easy when the chosen set isn't mounted as yet!

Thankfully the guys at the Michelin truck got us sorted and out we went with shiny new boots and a renewed need to go fast.....

Stage 2, we went grass cutting, first corner was ok, second corner was a bag of understeer mixed with some interesting words, once settled and back on track we had a good run through, at this point we had found a decent battle between us and Brian Marquis/Stuart Delf and the Aldertons was starting to develop.

The day went on as planned, we would gain a bit of time then drop a bit of time, but by stage 6 had found ourselves now battling with another crew for 3<sup>rd</sup>, stage 6 itself was utter carnage, cars off all over the place, a close one with a BMW who, after passing us on the main straight only to go through the chicane at Coppice really badly, and holding us up, he then proceeded to spin at the next corner and very nearly take us with him into the gravel.

As we sat waiting for stage 7 a few spots of rain fell and the wipers came on, after a brief chat about how we had to get to the end, and needed the points off we went, flat out..... it didn't seem too bad at first, grip was ok but a small amount of caution was used in the fast stuff, as we got into the stage it became clear that any chance of closing the 7 second gap to the car we were battling was about to vanish, he was running some 12 minutes behind us on the road, and it had stopped raining, so for us 3<sup>rd</sup> in class was then a confirmed 4<sup>th</sup> in class, but we had made the finish!

So more points on the board, so far in the Class F series, we've had 2 class wins, one 3<sup>rd</sup> and two 4ths, with only one DNF, so we head to Cadwell in a couple of weeks, for what will be our last round, with an eye on the class win.

Hopefully we may see a few of you there!

Jon Bray and Darren Styles

## Slice it down the middle! - Cars made wider

As rally enthusiasts, we're familiar with cars being fitted with wheel-arch extensions to cover bigger wheels and tyres. Examples are big-wing Ford Escorts, Lancia Delta Integrales and more recently, the Ford Racing Puma as rallied by club members Mark Annison and (the sadly missed) Ian Humphrey. And we're all aware of how cars have got wider over recent years but car park spaces and house garages haven't, making it much more difficult to get in and out of your car when you have limited space to open the door.

The following examples of cars getting wider start with a surprising co-incidence: the 1974 VW Golf Mk1 was 1610mm wide, exactly the same width as the first Porsche 911 of 1963. The Golf is now 1789mm wide, an increase that translates to seven inches. The current narrow-body 911 is 1852mm wide or nine and a half inches bigger than the first 911s. I think Porsche 911s are now too wide for many of our Norfolk roads.

The latest Golfs and 911s are completely different cars from the originals but there are several examples where cars have been widened by slicing them longitudinally down the middle and inserting extra metal into the bodywork while keeping the styling pretty much the same. One well known example is the Morris Minor.



The narrow Morris 'Mosquito' - prototype of the Minor



1948 Morris Minor Series 1 - 4" wider

It was decided late in the Minor's development programme that it needed more interior space, so four inches were added to the width of the car. The press tooling for the bonnet was well on its way to completion so, to avoid the cost of completely new tooling, it was cut down the middle and made wider. To prevent the risk that the modified tooling might cause visible lines on the bonnet pressing a four inch wide feature, that became a distinctive part of the Morris's styling, was added. And the front bumper was made in two halves, with a painted joiner piece over the gap, which saved the cost of new bumper tooling.



In the 1970's, while I was working for Austin-Morris, by then part of British Leyland, the South Experimental workshop at Longbridge widened a Mini Clubman. The Mini Forum on the internet says it was widened by eight inches, but my recollection is that it was made six inches wider. It was a thoroughly professional job with specially made bonnet, glass, grille and bumpers. But, as soon as it was complete, everyone thought it looked rather strangely proportioned and it never progressed beyond that single prototype.

A couple of years later, I worked extensively on the braking system of the ADO88 which was the early prototype for the Austin Metro. We were trying to make the seven inch drum brakes from the Mini 1000 work on the new, heavier car. But, despite trying many different brake lining materials from various suppliers, we couldn't find one that met all the legal requirements. Lining compounds that met the maximum allowed pedal effort when tested with virgin material (like a new car straight from the showroom) always failed the brake fade test that required repeated decelerations from high speed down to 50 km/h. And vice versa for the harder linings that passed the fade test. The higher performance versions of the Metro were always going to have front disc brakes with four-piston callipers. But because the Mini's low-cost drum brakes had reached the limit of their development, the more expensive four-pot system was specified for all variants of the Metro.



A styling model of the ADO88



1980 Austin Mini Metro - as launched

Like the Morris Minor thirty years earlier, it was decided to make the Metro a little bigger inside than ADO88 to make it competitive with other super-minis of the time, and an inch and a half was added into the car's width. Several slightly different styles had been proposed for ADO88, but it finally got a very successful re-style by Harris Mann who had previously designed the Austin Allegro. I drove many miles in prototype Metros and they were pretty good to drive with excellent ride and handling and low noise levels. Unfortunately the Metro emulated its Mini predecessor because it was a lot more expensive to manufacture than its main rivals.

When BMW re-vamped their Mini Clubman for 2017, it was made just over four inches wider, (and eleven inches longer) than their original Clubman launched in 2007. For the new wider version virtually every panel was changed. But how could BMW still call it a Mini? Compared to the 1969 Austin MAXI, a 2017 Mini Clubman is about seven inches longer, four inches wider and over an inch taller; in my book that's not a Mini.

Some cars have been widened by their manufacturer without any intention of putting the wider version into production and one example is the Saab 'Paddan' of 1966. It started life as a Saab 96 that was cut in half lengthwise and 20cm (nearly 8") of metal was let in to widen the car. Four were built as test mules to house the mechanical components of the Saab 99 that was under development at the time.



Saab Paddan test mule with a 1965 Saab 96



Saab Paddan

It was nicknamed the 'Paddan' (which is Swedish for 'Toad') because of its dumpy looks. The 'Paddan' would never be sold so they had windscreens made in two pieces but, apart from that, the build quality was very high.

The Padden was easily recognisable as a Saab, but later prototypes had the correct body for the new 99 and Saab wanted to disguise what they really were. So, when they were test-driven on public roads in Sweden, they were badged as Daihatsus to hide their real identity. The sole remaining 'Padden', pictured above, is now on display in the Saab Museum in Trollhättan.

Another British car that gained width during its production life was the Jaguar XK120/XK140/XK150 series of sports cars. When launched, the XK120 was criticised for having a cramped interior that made the car too small for larger drivers. To address this the XK140, launched six years later, had its engine, firewall and dashboard moved forward by three inches to increase legroom and the car was also made three inches wider than the XK120. But the re-style from XK120 to XK140 was very subtle and most people don't notice the difference in width. Whereas the XK150 appears to be a significantly wider car than the XK140, yet it's actually the same width. The optical illusion comes about because the XK150 has a wider bonnet with a styling feature down the centre (like the Morris Minor) and a much wider grille.



Jaguar XK140 of 1954



Jaguar XK150 of 1957

Did Lotus, our local car manufacturer, ever widen their cars? Well not themselves, despite early Lotuses having a reputation for tight space in their cockpits. Colin Chapman was about five feet eight inches tall and he was passionate about keeping his cars as light as possible. Making them bigger would add weight so he was happy for his cars to fit people just a bit bigger than himself. When Mike Kimberley, who is 6 feet 5 inches tall, joined Lotus in 1969, he couldn't get a satisfactory driving position in any Lotus. So he had become a car company executive who had difficulty in driving any of its products!

But some Lotus-derived models have been made wider; they are the successors to the Lotus Seven Series 3 made by Caterham Cars since 1974 and by Westfield Sportscars since 1986. Launching their own version of the Seven wasn't plain sailing for Westfield because Caterham took out a law-suit against them for copying the Seven when they owned the design rights, having bought them from Lotus. The case was settled out-of-court after Westfield modified their car to make it (a bit) less like a Caterham and they agreed to stop calling their car a Seven, re-naming it the Westfield SE. In 1991 the SE's cockpit was widened by 80mm (just over three inches) and lengthened too (the cockpit, not the whole car) to create the clumsily-named Westfield SEiW model. Nearly ten years later Caterham did much the same thing when they launched their SV model in 2000 with a cockpit wider by 110mm (just over four inches) and like Westfield they made their car's driving compartment longer too by a substantial ten inches. You could still buy a narrow version of the Caterham 7 if you preferred the original.

Back to the 'slice it down the middle' technique and two more British sports cars have been widened in this way, one by its design team and one by a private owner. In 1967, to address forthcoming American crash test and exhaust emissions legislation, an Austin Healey 3000 was cut down the middle and widened by six inches. A 3.9 litre Rolls Royce FB60 engine was installed along with a Borg Warner automatic transmission which would have been popular in Austin Healey's biggest market - the USA. Six further pre-production cars were ordered, two automatics, two with a Jaguar 4-speed manual transmission and the final two with the same Jaguar gearbox plus a Laycock overdrive. But then Lord Stokes terminated the agreement between Austin and the Healey Motor Company and only three prototypes were ever built, one with each of the transmission options.



Austin Healey 4000 prototype of 1967



Jim Stabe's 11" wider MGB with V8 Chevy power

They all survive and the automatic version seen in the photo above is displayed and kept in full running order by the Healey Museum in the Netherlands.

The next example is an MGB widened by its owner Jim Stabe of San Diego, California. He took 17 years to modify his 'B' including the fitment of a 535bhp supercharged 5.7 litre V8 LT1 engine from a Chevrolet Camaro Z28 mated to a Borg Warner T56 6-speed manual gearbox. He sliced the car down the centre-line and made it a massive eleven inches wider. The bonnet was constructed in aluminium from two MGB lightweight competition bonnets, and it is hinged at the front. The suspension, steering, brakes and wheels were sourced from a Chevy Corvette C4 ZR1 (for which Lotus developed its 5.7 litre V8 LT5 engine) and Jim says that only about 10% of the original MG remains. But look at the photo above - it may not rain very much in California, but where are the wipers? It is a legal requirement in California for every car to have at least one windscreen wiper. And cars of the MGB's age should also comply with U.S. Federal Standard no. 104 that defines (in a very complex way) the percentage of the screen that must be wiped. This MGB's screen would probably need four wiper arms!

*The February 2021 issue of 'Spotlight' featured an article about testing DeLorean prototypes that I first saw printed in a book by Barrie Wills who I worked with extensively at Lotus during 1989. Before working for DeLorean, Barrie had worked for Reliant at Tamworth and I'm now reading another of his books in which he describes how a Reliant car was sliced down the middle and made wider during its production life. I was very surprised to learn about this car because I hadn't realised it had got wider.*



Reliant Scimitar GTE SE5



Reliant Scimitar GTE SE6

The car in question is the Reliant Scimitar GTE, one of the first sports-estate hatchbacks when it was launched in 1968. It was one of Reliant's most successful products, initially using Ford's Essex 3.0 litre V6 engine and then Ford's Cologne 2.8 litre V6, and it stayed in production for eighteen years. When the GTE was upgraded from the SE5 model to the SE6 in 1976, it was widened by nearly three inches and lengthened by four inches. The new car's styling was substantially unchanged, with only subtle changes that included revised bumpers, bigger outer headlamps and a flatter windscreen. It also gained optional power steering. Did you know that the GTE is another car that has been (almost secretly) widened?

### More vehicles made wider.....

After I'd written the article above, I learnt about two more very different vehicles that were also widened by their manufacturers. The first is the pre-war Morris Six of 1927 that was fitted with a 2½ litre straight-six overhead valve engine. But it was severely criticised for feeling unstable, so Morris re-designed the car almost immediately making it wider by a substantial eight inches. The motoring press still didn't like the steering or the cable brakes, and the car was only produced for two more years.



Narrow Morris Six of 1927



Widened Morris Six from 1928 to 1929

And finally a vehicle I had the opportunity to drive in 2022. My Granddad had been a London tram driver and when trams were phased out in 1952, he became a bus driver. He used to take me to West Norwood bus garage where he would lift me up and sit me in the driver's seat of 'his' bus. From 1939 until 1954 all new London Transport buses were of the RT type (made by AEC) and the almost identical RTL (made by Leyland). The RTL had a 9.8 litre Leyland engine, de-rated to improve reliability, while the AEC's 9.6 litre diesel was also de-rated. When launched the RT was 7'6" wide, but an 8'0" wide version (the RTW) was built by Leyland though no RTWs were built by AEC. The passenger seats were an inch further away from the body sides and the gangways were 4" wider which the conductors liked.

500 RTWs were made out of the total of 1600 RTs built by Leyland. For the first year of their manufacture RTWs were banned from Central London because it was thought they would cause more congestion but, after extensive trials in mid-1950, they were allowed to run on all London routes. Even after the launch of the 8'0" wide Routemaster London bus in 1954, the RT in its three variants remained as the predominant bus in LT's fleet through the 1960s and into the 1970s.

However, the drivers disliked the RTW because the extra weight made the unassisted steering heavier and they were withdrawn before the RTLs. RTWs ended service in 1966 whereas London Transport's RTs and RTLs continued until 1979, a full forty years (!) after it had been so expertly designed.

Modern day London buses are now 8'4" wide.



RTW467 - the first (and the last) 8'0" wide RTW

## THE NORTH DEVON MOTOR CLUB STU WOOD TARGA RALLY 2025

My good friend Barry Thrower usually rallies with his son Jack, but Jack wasn't available for a Targa Rally to be held on 7th April at RMB Chivenor near Barnstaple (RMB = Royal Marine Barracks). So Barry asked me if I would navigate for him on the Stu Wood Targa run by North Devon Motor Club, to which I agreed.

My wife Tara is a keen member of the d'Capo Choir (based in Barnham Broom) and Chivenor is where Gareth Malone first started his Military Wives Choir on TV back in 2011. And I have a link to Chivenor too from forty years earlier when I was in the Territorial Army. In 1970 I attended my unit's annual camp at Fremington, not far from Chivenor and during my fortnight's military service in Devon I had the opportunity to drive an ex-wartime DUKW amphibious vehicle over the sand dunes and along the beach at Instow. But the Royal Marines driver looking after the DUKW insisted that he drove it when we took to the water to cross the River Taw to Braunton Burrows next to Chivenor camp. DUKWs were powered by a 269 cubic inch (4,416 cc) engine and they were fitted with a 5-speed transmission. They were built in the USA by General Motors and on land they could reach 50 mph. One of the DUKW's claims to fame is that it was the first vehicle in the world to have selectable tyre pressure adjustment controlled from the driving seat.



DUKW in grey livery, very like the one I drove. All DUKWs are left-hand-drive

Barry still has his very first car that he bought when he was 17. It's a Ford Cortina GT Mk1 and he bought it because his Dad was rallying one with Chelmsford Motor Club at that time. Even at such a young age, he managed to get affordable insurance from the Co-op Insurance Service. Barry developed the Cortina into a historic rally car and I competed with him on the Targa Rusticana and the 1998 East Anglian Classic Rallies. On the EA Classic, we finished in the top ten and second in class by just 1 second despite our Brantz trip-meter failing on some of the regularities. We were 5th on the night navigation rally, beaten by that single second on the speed test round Brandiston Airfield. The class winners who beat us were Nick Payne and Anthony Preston in a Cortina GT very similar to ours.

North Devon MC's 2025 Targa Rally, was run in memory of Stu Wood and had ten speed tests. An innovation I really liked was that instead of having to write down the code-board letters, the time cards had a box for each code-board containing a selection of code-board letters and you had to circle the right ones. This was a lot easier than writing legibly while going over humps and bumps.

For the Targa, our car was Barry's Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 8-valve. This has the standard engine producing only 60bhp so we had the least powerful car on the event. A Ford Ka and a Vauxhall Nova had 75bhp (if their engines hadn't been tuned) but all the others had at least 90bhp and most had a lot more.



Hence our objective was mainly to have some fun and to not come last! Cars were started at 30 second intervals so running at number 42 we got caught quite often; we always got out of their way but this usually caused us some time loss waiting behind them at the next manned passage check.

The code-boards were all on the left facing the track so you had to slow down a lot to see them and there were lots of complex wiggles around cones when approaching and departing from code-boards. And some of the manned passage checks were shown fully on the left side of the track on the test diagrams, but the box you had to stop in was further to the right. This led to confusion for many crews including us and I was disappointed to get a total of three penalties for not stopping on the correct side of the stop line flag. But when the results came out, over half the entry (!!!) got at least one penalty on every test and in the Clubman section of the event that we had entered, only one crew got fewer penalty points than us.

We finished 37th out of 61 entries in the whole event and 12th out of 24 cars in the Clubman section, which was very good considering our power deficit.

Peter Riddle



Barry and myself in 1998 on Chelmsford Motor Club's East Anglian Classic Rally

## A MYSTERY OBJECT

Can anyone identify the object pictured below?

Please e-mail all answers or suggestions to [info@sccon.co.uk](mailto:info@sccon.co.uk)



The disc is 13 cm in diameter and is welded to the steel rod.

The steel rod is 30cm (about a foot) long.

The black painted part can be pushed against the long spring to approximately half-way along the rod towards the disc.

The two nuts secure rubber buffers of 4cm diameter.

The 'handle' part is coated in soft black plastic.

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