

CLASSICAL GAS

February 2004

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

Gold's Scarce on Exeter

Start and run to Sparkford

It was clear and bright as competitors assembled at the three starts for the run down to Haynes Motor Museum at Sparkford. The route card had a recommended route but very few Popham starters turned off the A303 for the tour of Salisbury Plain and Devizes. Most just kept straight on with the aim of some shuteye in preparation for the day ahead. There were exceptions though, and Clive Booth and John Allsop preferred the scenic tour. Having returned to live in Ross-On-Wye Stuart Harrold had his first Cirencester Start and was rather surprised at the efficient and professional scrutineering after years of a more laid back style elsewhere. Down in the West Country none were more disappointed than Brian Alexander when he couldn't even get to the Trewint start when his Fiat's

Awards were at a premium on a tough Exeter Trial held in excellent conditions. It went down well with competitors despite some of the sections being pretty rough. The only real complaints seemed to come from car competitors in classes one, two and five who were denied an attack on Waterloo and Tillerton and the harsh judgments made once again on the Slippery Sam restart.

brakes locked solid. The only reported problems on the run in came from yours truly. Michael Leete arrived at scrutineering to find he had no petrol cap, having left it on the bonnet at Sparkford services just up the road. A quick about turn to the filling station Michael started to search the forecourt to no avail before a friendly motorcyclist shouted out he had seen it lying in the road about half a mile away! Scrutineering left the MCC confused over Dave Nash's class 7 MGB and a list of remedial work for Ed Nikel's ex-Matt Willmore, ex-Mike Pearson Buggy.

Sugg Lane

It was good to see the MCC using this nearby hill, now discarded by The Lands End in pursuit of a politically correct shorter route. The Class 0's had a go at this one as well, sharing a common road-book and mostly a common route. After descending Windmill Hill, used as a section last year, there was a long 40-mile road run through Axminster, crossing the track of the Seaton Electric



Stuart Cairney's Imp paws the air as he scrabbles for grip on Tillerton's muddy rocks.

tramway, before the next section. The tiredness was starting to creep in by now and there were many nodding heads and swigs of Red Bull on the way.

Gatcombe Lane

Another gentle section for the entire field although it claimed one of the magnificent Trojans and John Salters Vincent who retired soon after.

Normans Hump

With the class 0's diverted away the competitive triallers entered Bovey Woods for the first show-down of the trial. They found Norman's had plenty of grip but was very rough with lots of loose rocks. Dave Nash was in immediate trouble as he found the MGeetle didn't have enough power for the gradient. Running the mandatory 15psi for class 8 Stuart Harrold expected to be free from punctures but arrived at the top to find the sidewall ripped out of his nice new tyre. Stuart Cairney was another one to puncture here although he didn't find it until he got out onto the tarmac road, only to discover the wrong socket on the extension despite having checked it in the morning! Jonathan Laver spun his wheels at the start and they kept spinning all the way to the top but he just made it out of the section. Dave Sargeant struggled with his engine, which he just couldn't keep on the cam and he bogged down for a fail.

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Clinton Bottom

I think this is the long version and was straightforward this year with no restarts and plenty of grip. Unlike Normans, Clinton has corners and it can get a bit confusing coming over a hump and seeing tracks going in different directions. Jonathan Laver was a bit gentler with the right foot here and cleaned it without any trouble and so did a delighted Stuart Cairney.

As usual though there was lots of activity on the road just outside the woods. Dave Nash was taking the opportunity to find out while the MGeetle was down on power, discovering that the ignition timing was about 20 degrees out. Dave's problems weren't over, as no sooner had he got going than a tyre went flat.

Waterloo

This is one of those hills that hasn't changed much but has got much more difficult in recent years. The organisers seemed to recognise this and diverted classes one, two and five up the escape road, called Rockenhayne, with the class 0's. Mind you quite a few others joined them as many competitors struggled to find grip on the loose services just after the 90 right. Fred Gregory was one of them when his exhaust came loose.

Stretes

The class 0's were allowed to tackle this one which indicates it wasn't too difficult, in fact its been used as a special test in recent years.

Higher Rill

The next section was only a few yards up the road with Mark Tooth in charge. Unusually it had a downhill start which meant you had to be a little careful not to under-steer into the bushes on the first corner but otherwise it was simple enough.

Back Lane

With the Class 0's doing this first section in Otterton Woods under the eagle eye of the Dellow Register it wasn't too difficult. They soon diverted back onto the main road while the more competitive classes wound their way through the trees to

the next section. The route included that very difficult left hand hairpin at the bottom of a muddy descent. Peter Mountain was one of those to have trouble with this and bent the Panhard rod on his newly restored Dellow Mk1 on the process of the multiple reverses necessary to get round.

Passaford Lane

John and June Blakely were in charge of the start, which was positioned on the start of the hill itself so there was some concern about getting away. Fortunately almost everyone found enough grip for a nice muddy blast up through the trees.

Exeter Services

With no servicing in the car park quite a few competitors disappeared up the road for a bit of maintenance after handing in their control card. Michael Leete changed tubes on punctured wheels while Fred Gregory had a look underneath his Rickman Ranger as it was making horrible clonking noises. Fred and Steve Boakes soon saw that the UJ on the propshaft was on the way out and decided to retire and do some spectating rather than risk further damage on the hills. After fixing his punctured tyres, which were devils to get off the Rim, Dave Nash had a look at his slipping clutch. He couldn't do anything and decided to press on. Earlier Dudley Sterry and David Wall were spied under their J2's bonnet adjusting the clutch ready for the serious stuff in the second half.

Tillerton

After last year the organisers had hoped to do some repairs to Tillerton to make it a bit smoother. However, the best laid plans of mice and men go wrong sometimes and the work didn't get done so it was scrubbed for classes one, two and five who were getting a bit disappointed at missing out on the action. With Angus Stewart on the start as usual things ran pretty smoothly and the hill didn't claim that many scalps although Clive Booth lost the headlamp bezel from his Dellow Replica but was quite delighted to have somebody hand it back to him later in the event.

Fingle

The old hill was as enjoyable as ever

but didn't trouble the scorer too much. Perhaps next year it could be a special test. Start online A and stop astride line B. Perhaps next year line A could be the start of Fingle and Line B at the section ends board!

Hinchcombe Special Test

The first special test was on the approach road to Wooston Steep, alongside that rather nice looking fast flowing river. It was dead straight and pretty simple. Start on line A and stop on line B. Pretty easy though. Well no, just ask Ian Davis, revelling in the power of his new engine, who overshot the line in his VW or Stuart Harrold and Chris Phillips. On braking the Troll shot right, demolished the finish line boards and ended up with three wheels over the river bank. It took eight people to lift the car back on the track and at one point Stuart thought it would roll sideways into the river!

Wooston

Cars were going in more directions than Piccadilly Circus hers. The class 0's went up a gentle little track to the left before the main hill. Personally I think that was shame because the Class 1 to 6 route was pretty easy, even for the class 6's who had a re-start. The real men in classes 7 and 8 had to assault the steep bit and this ended the hopes of many including John Parsons who had been going really well up until now. The hill wasn't Buggy friendly as Ian Davis also spun to a stop although later in the day Simon Woodhall proved it could be done. A Dellow Replica seemed to be the car to have as both Mike Pearson and Clive Booth sailed to the top in fine style whereas both Peter Mountain and Ross Nuten failed in their Mk1's and Mk2's respectively and Eric Wall was given a run back on the restart in his Mk1. Not surprisingly none of the Liege's made the summit on this power-sapping slope.

Clifford Special Test

The second special test didn't have the drama of the first one although it did involve a bit of shuffling backwards and forwards. Oh how I wish the special tests on a trial all followed the same format, or better still get rid of them all together. The MGeetle ended

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its trial here when Dave and Julie retired with a slipping clutch.

Simms

There was a different route to Simms this year with a compulsory stop in Islington Village Hall on the way so competitors could contribute to the church restoration fund. The hill itself was in fine form, finishing many of the clean sheets. Running towards the front of the field Clive Booth and John Alssop sailed up in their Dellow Replica but shortly after Mike Pearson ground to a halt in his similar car, as did Geoff Hodge in the third car from the Reg Taylor stable. Simms was Buggy friendly than Wooston and

both John Parsons and Ian Davis stormed to the summit although later on Simon Woodhall was to stop in his big-engined version. In class 1 Alan Cundy only had to get to the A boards in his Golf but cleaned the whole section nerveless. None of the FWD Allstars came out the top but they all got to the A boards for a clean on Simms and a gold medal although Michael Collins broke one of his drive shafts in the process. Class three was spectacular, both David's Heale and Turner taking the corner in glorious four wheel drifts on their way to cleaning the section.

In class four Giles Greenslade was the only Beetle to get to the top.

Michael Leete lost his clean sheet here; all the others had come to grief on earlier sections. It looked as if Giles would be the only car in class four to clean the old hill until Adrian Booth came along and stormed up to put a smile on his face after a disappointing run through the night. There were very few cleans in class 7. It was possible though as Keith Oakes (Dutton Phaeton) and Clive Kalber proved in his venerable Ford Pop. Only a couple of Marlins succeeded but Andrew Martin had no problem in his Dutton Melos. It was difficult though and even Roger Bricknell failed!

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Exeter Results for Falcon's & Friends

Keith Oakes (Dutton Phaeton)	Silver –Failed Wooston
Ted Holloway (Sierra)	Failed Clinton, Normans Hump, Waterloo, Back Lane (RB) and others
Mark Rosten-Edwards (Escort)	Silver - Failed Simms
Mike Pearson (Dellow Rep Mk2))	Silver - Failed Simms
John Parsons (VW Buggy)	Silver - Failed Wooston
Ed Nickel (VW Buggy)	Failed Normans Hump, Wooston and Simms
Verdun Webley (VW Marlin)	Failed Putwell Normans Hump, Waterloo, Tillerton and others
Peter Mountain (Dellow Mk1)	Failed Normans Hump, Tilleron, Wooston & Simms
Stuart Cairney (Imp)	Failed Waterloo, Tillerton & Simms
Neil Bray (Primrose)	Failed Wooston, Simms & Slippery Sam (RB)
Michael Leete (VW 1302S)	Silver - Failed Simms
Dave Nash (MGeetle)	Retired with clutch problems after Wooston
Fred Gregory (Rickman Ranger)	Retired with prop shaft problems at Exeter Services
Nick Ikin (Citroen 2CV)	Bronze -Failed Wooston & Simms
Geoff Hodge (RDT)	Failed Waterloo, Tillerton, Wooston & Simms
Jonathan Laver (Escort)	Silver –Failed Simms
Simon Groves (Escort)	Silver –Failed Simms
Ross Nuten (Dellow Mk2)	Retired at Simms with a broken diff.
Clive Booth (Dellow Rep)	Silver –Failed Slippery Sam (RB)
Simon Robson (Liege)	Failed Wooston, Simms & Slippery Sam
Ian Davis (VW Buggy)	Silver –Failed Wooston
Peter Thompson (Opel Kadett)	Failed –Normans Hump, Waterloo, Simms
Colin Sumner (Morgan +4)	Bronze –Failed Normans and Simms
Peter Manning (Midget)	Bronze –Failed Normans Hump & Simms
Keith Pettit (AH Sprite)	Bronze –Failed Normans Hump & Simms
Brian Alexander (Fiat)	Non Starter—Brake Problems
Adrian Toker-Peake (Peugeot)	Silver—Failed Simms

Michael's Musings

There were lots and lots of Falcon's out on the Exeter and what a great trial it was. Ken Green and his team have been steadily improving their event over the years. A few years ago I always felt the event had a big hole in the middle between Normans/Clinton and Tillerton. However the addition of the sections in Otterton Woods have fixed that nicely.

Inevitably there will be issues on such an event and this year there were two big ones. Classes one, two and five missed both Waterloo and Tillerton as they were thought either too difficult or too rough or both.

There were also issues with the scores on Slippery Sam again with lots of Run Backs on the class eight restart. Without that Clive and John would have got a gold which they richly deserved after being the only Falcon's to climb both Wooston and Simms.

By the way there's a new addition in the Leete garage. More of that on another occasion.

As usual news, pictures etc, always welcome - mleete24@hotmail.com

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Slippery Sam

There was controversy here last year and it was to be repeated with Run Backs on the re-start being awarded too both Clive Booth and Stuart Harrold, costing both of them gold medals, the same fate befalling Nigel Moss for jumping the flag in his Troll.

The Finish

Most competitors arrived at the hotel in reasonable time. Very convenient for Ed Nikel's passenger as brother

Richard from Northampton was able to watch his local side play Torquay! The club supper was a nice occasion but a little too informal as everyone would have appreciated a few more words from the hierarchy and the opportunity to see some of their fellow competitors receive their awards. In conclusion the 2004 Exeter was a very nice trial, spoilt only by some unhappiness over the interpretation of the restart rules. It has probably saved the MCC a few bob on triples at the end of the year though!



Dawn is breaking as Verdun Webley and Arnold Lane come out of the woods at Passaford Lane and in ebullient form later in the event.



Primrose on the Clifford Sheds Special test and having her diff fixed after Simms. Btw—The Golf in the background cleaned the section!



Peter Mountains Mk1 Dellow on Tillerton



Ross Nuten's Mk2 Dellow took the easy way home!

