

# CLASSICAL GAS

May 2003

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

## Lands End Trial 2003



**Simon and Matt Robson pulling away from the Bluehills 2 re-start in their Liege on the way to a Silver. (Picture by John Salter).**

It was a dry Land End this year and dust was a big problem on some of the sections. It certainly wasn't a Falcon friendly event with many members falling by the wayside and retiring.



Patrick, Candece, Bradley, Jacob and Morvah, the Osborne family, about to start their Lands End adventure. Read more on page four.

*It* had been very dry in the West Country prior to the Lands End. In fact it was reckoned to be some five weeks since it rained. As a result there was a lot of dust about and some of the sections were pretty rough.

The start had been bought forward as part of the organiser's efforts to get the event to finish at an earlier time and all the Popham starters left in daylight. Clive Booth didn't join them as he decided not to start after a horrible vibration on the way down from Hatfield. Closer investigation revealed that the pivot bearing on the rear A frame was completely worn away, allowing the axle to move about, so Clive decided not to start, taking the Dellow Rep home to pick up the daily driver and head back West to spectate on Beggars, Crackington and Blue Hills. Clive had better luck than Peter Mountain who didn't even make the start in his newly re-built Dellow!

There was plenty of room at the North Petherton grouping control, where the Liege's were all parked together, including the "old number one" machine of Peter Davis, loaned to MCC Committee man Alan Foster for the occasion. It didn't quite have the grunt of the Foster Morgan +8, especially as the promised blower didn't materialise and the two SU's weren't in the greatest tune!

The approach road to Felon's Oak was very dusty, a sign of things to come. There was plenty of grip, and the section wasn't on the doctoring list, so it didn't present to many problems. The road to Minehead wasn't an easy one for John Parsons as the steering started to go a

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“bit funny” on the corners. By the time the Buggy got to Minehead it was almost un-drivable and there was a horrible noise coming from somewhere at the back. Leaving the town JP pulled into the nearest lay-by, got the jack out, and soon found that one of the inner rear wheel bearings had completely disintegrated. There was no way this could be repaired so John and Dot limped back to Minehead and were on a recovery truck back to Stoke Hammond by 4am.

Stoney Street was very rough in the dry. It didn't present to many problems for the cars, but all was not well for one of the crews as Mike Hayward had started to feel really poorly. Michael Leete found a convenient lay-by to stop for a while and they continued, but Mike felt worse and worse and the Beetle turned for home when the route crossed the A361, but not before failing the Beggars re-start when Michael stopped far to low in the box.

There was a holding control at The Culbone Inn where there was some frantic work amongst the Liege community, with various clutches being adjusted. Simon Robson had to get his handbrake working before Beggars after having to hold the car on the clutch at Felon's Oak. Simon wasn't the only one grovelling under the car trying to fix his hand-brake in the dark as he was soon joined by Andrew Brown whose had given up on the Stoney Street startline but unlike Simon he couldn't get his fixed and had to do the rest of his re-starts “on-the-clutch”.

Beggars was pretty rough in the dry, with a lot of loose rocks, especially in the re-start area. Colin Perryman got a picture here but still got away OK and went on to claim a gold. Ross Nuten was in trouble as his Dellow was using-up more brake fluid than petrol. Verdun Webley donated a litre can but this was soon used up and Ross became yet another Falcon turning for home for an early bath.

Daylight was starting to break as the cars arrived at Riverton which didn't present to many problems for the cars, although some of the bikes found the ruts at the top a bit deep and John Lees got a foot knocked of the



**Verdun Webley and Mike Pearson about to leave Popham Airfield to start The Lands End. They were to be one of the many Falcon's destined not to finish this years event.**

peg. Simon Robson was able to dive underneath his Liege again to check the back axle, which had been leaking earlier in the trial. All was well and the crew carried on but began to slip further and further back down the field as they kept stopping to check the car.

Sutcombe saw the end of Verdun Webley's Lands End. The axle twisted on it's mountings, ripping the UJ out of it's lugs, breaking one of them in the process. Verdun and Mike Pearson dived under the car to assess the damage and it was soon apparent that it wasn't repairable without new parts. An Easter holiday with the ladies was planned so they had to go on down to Cornwall. Phoning home Dorinda and Frances were just on their way so they diverted to pick up the stranded crew, leaving the Marlin at Sutcombe. Over the weekend Verdun made a tour of the Cornish scrap-yards and managed to find the necessary parts, stopping back at Sutcombe on the way home on Tuesday to fix the car and drive it home.

Up until now Patrick Osbourne had been going well in his nicely prepared Skoda, complete with children asleep in the back! Unfortunately the clutch suffered a bit on the Sutcombe re-start. They continued but there was another re-

start to come at Darrcott and this finished the clutch completely. They managed to limp out of the section and telephoned Britannia Rescue to take them down to St Ives for their family holiday.

Crackington had been doctored as usual, but only the class eights had to re-start. It wasn't a formality though and Dave Nash and Neil Bray spun to a stop in the doctored bit. Team Liege had some problems here when Chris Sewell sputtered to a halt. The fuel tank outlet had fractured, but they continued with the bouncer holding things together by hand until they found a shop that sold super-glue and fixed everything back together!

Class Eight competitors arrived at the foot of Treworld to be greeted by a friendly marshal asking them if they had read their route card! Closer examination revealed that only the yellows had to stop here, so the class eights were able to blast up without any difficulty, although at the expense of a ruined rear tyre for Dudley Sterry.

Warleggan wasn't too much of a problem, and neither was Hoskin, where the yellows had a much easier re-start than usual and were able to blast up. There were quite a few clean sheets when the cars arrived at Bishops Wood but this was to change on the Yellow and Red re-start. Like last year

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it was on the steep bank after crossing the track, but this time it was right on the steep slope, positioned so that even if cars stopped just in the box the rear wheels were still on a steep slope, which seemed to have experienced an extremely local shower of rain! This was where the MCC slimmed out the Triple list and only the real Supermen retained their clean sheets. For the record the following are now allowed to call themselves Clarke Kent :- Dudley Sterry, Tony Young, Eric Wall, Tim Whellock, Roger Bricknell and Tommy Kalber.

The route wound it's way towards the coast, an ever-increasing dust cloud announcing the approach to Bluehills. No problem on "One" but "Two" was a different issue. There was an enormous amount of loose dust, rock and stone on the restart area making it very difficult for the restarters to get away. Even if they did their problems were not over as the spinning wheels threw up huge clouds of dust that the tail wind blew past the cars so the drivers couldn't see the corners at the top properly!

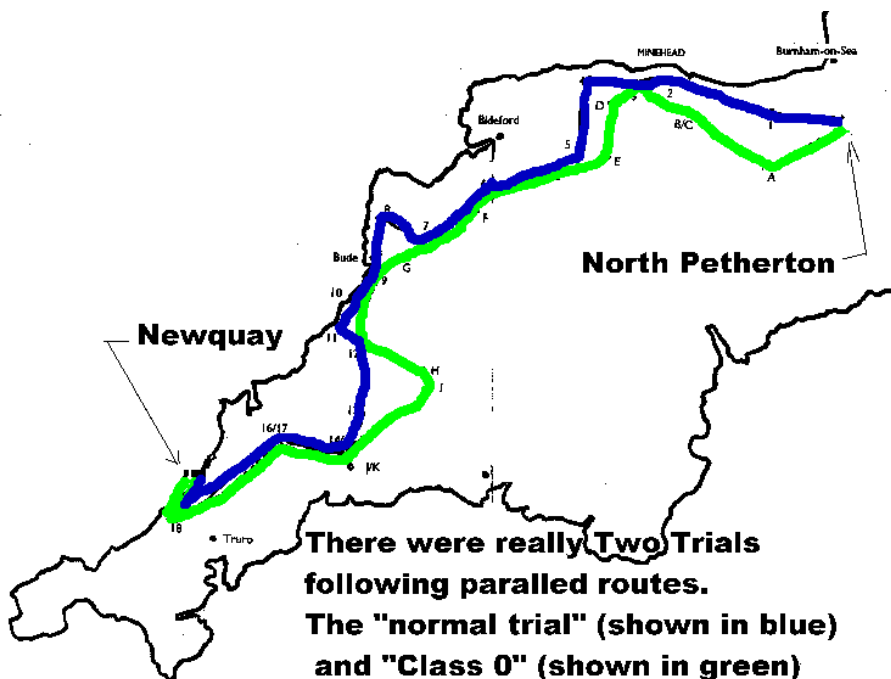
In consequence the banks relieved a fair amount of bashing, and early runners Mike Relf (Opel

Manta) and John Bennett in the immaculate class 4 Renault, did quite a bit of damage to their cars. Clive Booth was spectating here and thought the Liege's went really well, being nimble enough to negotiate the deviation with ease. Dave Nash and Neil Bray weren't so lucky and were unable to get away on the restart. As the cars went through so much of the loose material was blown away, but then they started to dig holes, and by the time Dave Haizelden came through as the last car it looked as though the section had been cluster bombed!

With the dry weather and the earlier start time the event finished pretty much on time and competitors were able to "enjoy" the delights of their Newquay Hotel! Or not as the case may be as both Dave Nash/Neil Bray and Simon/Matt Robson were so disgusted by theirs they refused to stay there. Dave drove home and Simon managed to take over Brian Osbourne's room as the MGB had broken it's back axle.

Popular opinion is that the trial itself was enjoyable and well organised. All it needs next year is some rain in the weeks before the event and to move the finish back further West!

***There was a big emphasis on the new Class 0 this year. It had just as many sections, allegedly smoother, to be more considerate of older and less well prepared machines and pilots!***



***Top – Colin Sumner was fighting his way though the dust cloud on Bluehills 2.***

***March Hare Class Winner Colin Perryman on his way to Gold.***

***Dave Nash and Neil Bray (pictured on Bluehills 2 and at the start) failed Bluehills 2, finished and drove straight home after one look at their hotel room!***

***(Pictures by John Salter, John Lees and Michael Leete)***

## Michael's Musings

Mike Hayward and I were very disappointed not to finish the Lands End as we were one of many Falcon's on the retirement list.

The dry, rough conditions certainly put a strain on the drive train and I suppose a lot of retirements were inevitable.

In a way we were lucky as Newquay isn't the nicest place to stay after a trial, at least if you are over nineteen! Personally I think it's a shame that the trial doesn't finish at Lands End. Yes I know it's a lot more road miles but to me that's in the spirit of The Lands End.

Events change over the years and it seemed that the MCC were really pushing Class 0 this year. Could it be that we will see the trial going in that direction? If so why not call it the North Petherton to Newquay Trial which would leave space in the calendar for a Lands End for the rest of us!

Having made those sarcastic remarks I should say that the trial was very professionally organised this year. Congratulations to all concerned.

As usual news, pictures etc, always welcome - [mleete24@hotmail.com](mailto:mleete24@hotmail.com)

Michael Leete - 4, Rectory Close, Clifton, Shefford, Beds, SG17 5EL.

Phone & fax 01462 816313



## My Lands End by Patrick Osborne

I have been trialling on and off for about fifteen years mostly in class one cars with differing levels of success and many trips home via Britannia Rescue ! My dear wife also loves the trialling experience, so what do you do when children come onto the scene? Trialling and young children don't really go together do they? .... or do they??

We do love the Lands End Trial, it has to be my favourite, probably because I was brought up on going up to Blue Hills every Easter to see my Uncle try to scratch his way up the gradient in his Mini! Anyway my wife and I agreed that we would take our two boys, Bradley 4, Jacob 2 and Morvah the dog to Cornwall to see my family the hard way!

I asked my wife Candece to pack a small bag of clothes for us all, and when she had I checked it and halved the amount again to keep weight

to a minimum, even the child seat was the lightest we could find. The dog had to use her ballast behind the rear seats and the potty doubled as her drinking bowl.

So on the Friday afternoon we set out to Popham, one small bag of clothes, 4 nappies, one dog, two children, one wife and myself. The run to Popham was lovely in the warm sunshine we almost needed air conditioning. After signing on and trying to help Stewart Ikin with his electrical problem we set out again for North Petherton, a nice steady run across the beautiful scenery of Salisbury Plain, somewhere along the route the boys fell asleep, we checked in at North Petherton and had the car checked with the boys still asleep in the back.

As we set off for the trial proper Candece and I wondered how the boys would cope with the rough hills. We went up through Fellons Oak

without any problems, boys still asleep, and we tackled the rough Stoney Street (that really felt rough !) but it didn't wake the boys they actually woke in the rest control before we went up to Beggars, good I thought, we need all the bouncing we can get from the re-start, I put the Skoda low in the re-start box which was a mistake, but we did manage to get away and out of those deep pits. The boys must have been so tired from their bouncing that they went back to sleep and totally missed the hairpins of Riverton, again with the dry conditions it was tempting not to go too fast.

On to Sutcombe to see the first signs of daybreak, so I threw a boneo into the back for the dog and



**The Osbourne Family ready for the off**

could hear that she was enjoying that as we bounced our way over the sea of rocks from the re-start. The clutch was starting to feel a little on the hard side after that

and I knew that we had the Daracott re-start to come. We stopped in the box on the re-start, the flag went down and so did our hopes of climbing any more sections in the driest Lands End for a long time. We managed to make it out of the section but the burnt out clutch finally gave way on the main road so after discussing the possibilities of changing it in the layby (yes it did cross my mind) we telephoned Britannia Rescue who took us the rest of the way to St.Ives.

So would we take the boys again? Well until they become a real weight liability yes, and they loved it. It wasn't the easiest way to travel to visit my family but it has to be the most enjoyable way to visit Cornwall. I have to say thanks to Colin Perryman for the advice on the clutch and bell housing, I now have a Sachs clutch and a vented bell housing for the Exeter.