

CLASSICAL GAS

October 2003

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

Owen's September Surprise



It was another Rover Group FTD at Falcon's final autotest of the year but it was a Metro this time with Owen Turner blowing the regulars away in his Rally prepared Metro. Keith Pettit chased hard and at one stage drew level but it was to be Owen's day.

There were thirteen entries to do battle with Peter Manning's tests on another nice day. This is around the ideal number for the meadow at the back of Neil and Allsion Brays house. After last years successful experiment Peter repeated his unique twin tests, with two identical layouts end to end, the finish line of the first becoming the start of the second. This idea makes it really interesting to watch the tests as you can see two competitors "racing" each other and the driver on the first test can see how the one in front is getting on!

The Watling Metro boys joined the regulars on this occasion. Owen

Turner had his 1400cc Rally prepared K series car and his navigator Andrew Dadswell had his similar engined road car. They were joined by Dan Turner who was competing in the Production class in the Lane Mini.

It was Arnold Lane, the winner of the seasons opener, who set the pace with the fastest time on the first test just in front of Roger Dudely who was competing in the production class alongside Jackie and therefore not strictly eligible for the FTD award! They were followed by David Manning, who went so well last time out and Owen Turner. Neil Bray was well of the pace, picking up penalties

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Top Left—Owen Turner kicks's up the dust on his way to FTD at Falcon's Autotest Finale for 2003. Above—Keith Pettit chased hard but had to give best to the flying Metro.



Out of the blue came an e-mail from Australia which has enabled me to fill in the missing years on my "Nipper" history. Read more starting on page two.



Believe it or not it's a Skoda! You can read my review of Dave Randle's new book "The True Story of Skoda" on page three.

NIPPER'S MISSING YEARS

Back in 1997 I wrote about a couple of disjointed pieces about Maralyn Knight's Triple winning "Tucker Nipper Special". The story covered the early years and the later ones but there was a big bit missing from the middle. Then out of the blue came an e-mail from Australia which fills in some of the gaps to make the history of this famous car almost complete

The late H. W. Tucker-Peake conceived, built and drove the Tucker MG, perhaps the ultimate all round sporting machine. Not only did he campaign it in trials, it was also his circuit racer. Tucker and Betty had two daughters, Maralyn and Susan, and they took them trialling whenever possible, Tuck even converted his car to a four seater! However, the time came when they couldn't go with mum and dad anymore. Tucker responded by building them a trial's machine of their own, which he called "The Ticker Nipper Special", based on the running gear and chassis from a Ford 5 cwt van. With sister Susan in the passenger seat Maralyn was very successful with her car and became the second woman to win a triple and the first to win two.

Maralyn married Peter Knight in 1967 and gave up trials driving, but not motorsport. The couple became RAC timekeepers, officiating in many major events. "Nipper" was sold to a lady called Rosemary Cond from Gloucestershire. Maralyn knew that Rosemary had done a few competitions with it but that was that. Before Tucker passed away he had heard that the famous old car was in a barn somewhere. Sadly his detective work was never completed, as tragically he couldn't speak properly after suffering a stroke.

Then during the summer an email arrived in my In Box, all the way from Australia. It was from Rosemary Cond, filling in those missing years.

What about Nipper today. Well, a few years ago, and quite by chance, a friend of Maralyn's spotted an ad for a "Nipper" in a magazine and low and behold it was her old car. She got in touch with the person selling it and found it was Rosemary Cond's old passenger. But by then the Nipper had already been sold. Maralyn traced the new owner to Barton le Clay, close to where it was born! The car was in remarkably good condition, considering it's age, and the new owner was prepared to sell. But it would have taken a fair bit of time and

money to restore it and Maralyn decided to let it go. She regrets that now, but that's life! The latest news at the time was that Nipper was under restoration by a gentleman in Lechlade in Gloucestershire. Maralyn got in touch with him and has provided him with some pictures of the car as it was originally built. She hoped it will soon be returned to its former and original glory, in particular that the new owner will do away



Maralyn and Sue Tucker-Peake in their "Tucker Nipper Special" on Lynton Hill in the 1963 Lands End Trial

with the Lotus 7 style nose and front wings that it acquired in later years.

"Nipper" is now trialling again in the hands of Mike Telford from Carlisle and I got to photograph it in the queue for Great Hucklow on the 2002 Edinburgh. "Nipper" has resumed it's Tucker-Peake connections though, as we hear from Susan T-P Jamieson who says of Mike Telford :-

"He is a super guy, and just as passionate about the car as its previous owners. I met him and the Nipper on last year's Lands End. Living in Carlisle, its a long way to come, and so they trailer it down and back. So for this years Trial we arranged for him to leave the trailer and van in our yard

near Launceston.

As front runner Jeff & I had to set off around 6pm from home for North Petherton, at around 5.45 Mike and passenger rang from just north of Exeter to say heavy traffic has delayed them, so we passed and waved along the A30. At the end of the trial an anxious time was spent waiting for them to finish, and the long awaited experience of being reunited with the Nipper back' at home'. Unfortunately as the results showed they had to retire with Big End failure not long after the start, but they were able to crawl back to Launceston, load her up, under the cover of darkness (at around 2 am in the morning), and head back for the long return journey back to Carlisle. I understand from him that he is now trying to find a new 100E engine for it."

Lets hope Mike gets Nipper running again soon so we can enjoy seeing it in action.

THE MISSING YEARS

"Dear webmaster - I hope you are also the Editor of Classical Gas, which I have just discovered by searching for "Tucker Peake Nipper" on Google. Imagine my surprise when the first three hits led me to the picture and story of the wonderful Nipper.

I am the Rosemary Cond mentioned in the article. My father, Jim Cond, a very keen trials enthusiast, bought me the car for my 21st. birthday in 1967. I went on many trials with either him or my sister as passenger - and occasionally with the 'passenger' mentioned in the article. I won a number of awards with it. I loved the car and was very distressed when I had the minor accident that caused the front to be redesigned. My father liked to do everything himself and the redesign was what he could manage to do with the resources available - including the manually operated rotating bar on which the headlights sat!

I went to live in London in my mid-20s and took the car with me. But it soon became obvious that I could not keep it there and back to my parents it went. They separated not long after and Dad moved into one house and three garages in Birmingham. One housed his beloved Imp; another a beloved 1920s Riley and in a third, hanging from the roof, was the Nipper. I fantasised about us getting it going again, but it was not to be.

Dad died in 1987. We gave away the Riley (never to be heard of again incidentally, despite promises to keep in touch) and we buried the Imp. I couldn't bear to do either with the Nipper, hoping that one of my two sons might develop the same passions as their grandfather and bring the car to Australia, which is where I now live. They haven't! In the meantime, the only option open was to persuade a friend with a barn to house the car. He came to Birmingham with his trailer and we loaded up the car and various spare engines, gearboxes, wheels and so on and off it went to a barn near Wirksworth in Derbyshire. I have some wonderful photographs of the car in this space some years later.

In the mid-90s I met up with the 'passenger' friend and over a long dinner with too much wine, I persuaded him to go and get the car and see if he could organise for it to be restored. He said he had a mechanic friend who might be interested. So, on to another trailer went the Nipper and down to somewhere in London (I was in Australia all this time). By this stage however the car was in too delicate a state for him to take on the restoration. Apparently the aluminium panels and so on were like cobwebs. He decided to try and sell (I had kept all the log books and some MCC trials programs which I handed on to him) and this is where your story starts. He told me that he thought the car might have gone back to the Tucker-Peake family, which, according to your story, nearly happened.

I would love to know who now has the car and whether it is still trialling. There are still some spare wheels in that barn in Derbyshire if wanted and I have lots of memorabilia and photographs.

Rosie Wickert"

The True Story of Skoda

By Dave Randle



As the twenties gave way to the thirties Skoda produced some really luxurious cars. This is the Type 645 Limousine Landaulette. Power came from a 2.5 –litre straight six. The chauffeur had only three gears to play with but it would do 60 mph. Nearly eight hundred of these upmarket motors were built between 1929 and 1934.

Two people I know have published books recently. I reviewed Sue T-P's excellent "Women in Motorsport" last month. Now it is time for Dave Randle's Skoda book, not entirely un-connected when you remember that Sue drove works Skoda's in the European Touring Car Championship.

The Estelle is a very popular trials iron. They were cheap and plentiful, providing a rust free alternative to Beetles and Imp's in the rear engined classes. Unfortunately the situation is changing now as supplies are drying up, but there are still plenty of enthusiasts out there to be interested in Dave's book.

Dave tells how Skoda is in fact one of the oldest surviving car marques. Emil Skoda was born in 1839 and was educated as an Engineer before acquiring a machine tool factory in 1869 in what was then Bohemia. Skoda died in 1900 but the directors of the company carried on and in 1919 started their automobile venture, making Hispano-Suiza's under licence.

The genuine Skoda car though came from another source, the company of Laurin & Klement, that was acquired by Skoda in 1925. The book tells how all this was bought together to build a firm producing many luxury and sporting cars before the second world war, the aftermath of which left what was now Czechoslovakia in the communist Eastern Block going on produce the Octavia and the Estelle before the companies acquisition by Volkswagen.

"The True Story of Skoda" is a very good read and nicely illustrated with many photographs from the archives of Skoda GB. It is published by Sutton and is priced at £15.

Michael's Musings

Well the Classic Trials season has started again and the first two ACTC events have been won by Front Wheel Drive Cars.

What price on one winning the Wheelspin Trophy next year.

I understand the March Hare team is in place with Dave Nash taking over as Secretary of the Meeting.

The Falcon trials season will be in full swing when you read this with Brickhill and Kensworth coming in quick succession.

It seems the world of Classic Trialling is going through a difficult period at the moment, divided between those who want the events to be "competitive" and those who want less extreme cars. Lets hope it is all sorted out soon as the sport needs a united front.

Events are running under-subscribed and its no longer necessary to sprint to the nearest sorting office with your entry for an MCC trial.

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

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(September Autotest—Continued from page 1)

on both his runs which was to drop in out of contention for the day. Keith Pettit didn't set a very good time either but looking back through the seasons results Keith doesn't get going until the second or third test!

Neil made up for his early mistake by setting fastest time on the second test, which had the same layout as the first one on this twin test event. Simon Robson and Roger Dudley followed Neil. Owen Turner

had a terrible run but soon made up for it by being fastest on tests three, four and five, putting him in the overall lead by test five. Keith Pettit had got going now and was in joint second place with the flying Roger Dudley.

Keith set a very fast time on test seven, putting him into a joint first place with Owen Turner but slipped back after a slow test eight and despite being fastest on test nine Owen held onto his lead for a well deserved FTD.

RESULTS

A1	Bob Tautm (Fiat)	477.2	
A2	Arnold Lane (Mini)	426.3	1st Class
A3	Andrew Dadswell (Metro)	455.0	
A4	Owen Turner (Metro)	419.2	FTD
A5	Davi Manning (Mini)	437.0	3rd Class
A6	Neil Bray (Mini)	428.3	2nd Class
A7	Matt Robson (Mini)	457.1	
D1	Simon Robson (Liege)	427.0	
D2	Keith pettit (Midget)	421.2	1st Class
P1	Roger Dudley (Mini)	426.0	1st Class
P2	Jackie Dudley (Mini)	545.8	
P3	Rachel Lane (Mini)	421.7	Best Novice
P4	Dan Turner (Mini)	511.5	2nd Class

	Owen Turner	Keith Pettit	Roger Dudley	Arnold Lane	Simon Robson	Neil Bray	David Manning
TEST	Metro	Midget	Mini	Mini	Liege	Mini	Mini
1	43.5	44.0	42.8	42.2	43.9	47.4	43.4
2	85.7	84.6	82.5	82.3	83.5	86.7	83.4
3	125.7	124.8	123.8	125.7	124.2	129.8	127.1
4	167.5	167.1	166.6	168.5	167.3	174.8	170.9
5	204.0	205.7	205.7	207.7	206.6	212.0	209.6
6	240.0	240.6	242.3	243.2	243.0	247.1	245.6
7	275.8	275.8	278.1	279.6	277.6	282.1	280.1
8	318.6	320.6	323.2	324.3	323.5	326.2	334.8
9	363.8	365.6	369.8	370.9	370.3	372.2	380.9
10	419.2	421.2	426.0	426.3	427.0	428.3	437.0
Overall	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th