

# CASTLE COMBE



Photo: Colin Murrell

## THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR CLUB

LOOK AT ST CHRISTOPHER THEN GO ON REASSURED



# VSCC NEWS SHEET



8 October 2020

## AND AFTER COVID CAME THE RAIN....

2020 struck yet again on Sunday, this time deploying Storm Alex to scupper the second day of the Castle Combe Autumn Classic, one of the small handful of VSCC race meetings to escape the scourge of Covid-19. Both VSCC grids, the ODM Award and the Allcomers Scratch Race, were scheduled for Sunday and therefore were unable to go ahead as standing water rendered the track too dangerous. Of course, this cancellation, particularly when events have been so few and far between, proved a huge disappointment to organisers and competitors alike. We hope everyone got home safely and has since managed to dry out.

This week, Competitions Secretary, Richard Winchester, looks back at his curtailed day at a sodden but much loved circuit. We have the answers and correct route map for Toby Galbraith's rally on the edge of Dartmoor. We have more members' accounts of Prescott which really typify the spirit of the VSCC, especially in these difficult times and an account from Young member, Jack Bond.

Special thanks this week, however, go to the Orange Army and, indeed, everyone who braved the elements at Castle Combe to do their utmost to make the event happen; their disappointment on the day can only be imagined!

### THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR CLUB

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# CASTLE COMBE

With So Few Fixtures In 2020 Both Competitors And Club Staff Jump  
At The Chance To Get Out And About

*Sadly, for Competitions Secretary, Richard Winchester, Castle Combe proved to  
be the short straw as the rain came down...and down....and down.*

*He looks back at an unforgettable day of.....British weather*

I have always had a soft spot for the Wiltshire circuit that was once RAF Castle Combe. I did my first ever track day at 'Combe' at the start of this millennium in my long gone Toyota MR2 Mk I and I have memories of sheltering from the Easter Monday snow, in the back of a trailer, around the same time. There wasn't any snow last weekend but there was rain; lots and lots of rain. We were expecting it and my journey on the M42, M5 and M4 did not disappoint. Before leaving home on Saturday I had had a look at the live timing and was pleased to see our friends in the 'Chain Gang' had practiced and the first two rows on their grid promised an exciting race in the afternoon. My 150 miles of motorway travel were mostly spent bemoaning all those without any lights on, shouting at the football commentary as my team conceded a fourth goal and hoping, as with all events, I'd remembered everything. I smiled in the direction of Chateau Impney at the Droitwich junction and remained on autopilot to the circuit with a quick pit stop to check in at the Premier Inn. Paddock access was 6.30pm, I was an hour early.



Photo: VSCC Archive

Blakeney Motorsports kindly provided much needed shelter.

***Now, there is a guide that is handed to every new member of the Club staff: "How to Blag Your Way into Motor Sport Venues".***

It is an extensive file and covers circuits and venues in the UK and Europe and includes the chapters 'Arriving Early', 'No Tickets' and 'Accessing VIP Areas'. Even with the 'strict' procedures, quite rightly in place, I wasn't expecting any sympathy with the security staff. However, the smile, wave and keep driving technique proves its worth again and I'm parked up. Saturday's race programme had ended and it was good to learn that, despite the rain, the racing had been good and the Nashes had enjoyed themselves. Actually, they were still very much enjoying themselves, at two metres of course, under the popular shelter of the Blakeney Motorsport gazebos. Shelter? Sunday, more rain and fifty transponders to give out first thing in the morning, I was going to need shelter. A polite request to Patrick and that was that sorted. VSCC flag was up, a few hellos to our arriving competitors and it was time to disappear back to the hotel, dry off and enjoy a very pleasant supper with Jo, Simon and James.

It rained all night; it did not stop. Back to the circuit, the grassy area of paddock looked like a trials section at the end of the day. Weather apps on smart phones were compared to see if there was any hope of the rain stopping. 2pm maybe said one, no chance said another. The Owner Driver Mechanic race for our Standard and Modified Sports-Cars was the first practice session, scheduled at 8.30. With some cars making their way to the assembly area a muffled paddock announcement told us there was a track inspection at 9am before any track activity could take place.



# CASTLE COMBE

*There was a track inspection at 9am. There was another track inspection at 10am. Another track inspection would take place at 11am...*

We are now at mid-morning. Some of our drivers had decided not to come. Some had arrived, turned around and gone home and the rest were now thinking about it. Face mask on, glasses steaming up and waterproof not doing its job I headed to see the Clerk of the Course. From the elevated view above the start/finish straight and from the photographs I was shown, the standing water on the old airfield was the worst I had seen since our Donington event some years ago, the one when the F3 500s were floating like canoes through the paddock. From what I could see we weren't going on track anytime soon. The organisers wanted to hold out for as long as possible to have some sort of meeting. Did we want to race? Did the other organisers want to race? I was soaked through and I'd had some shelter, how on earth were the Orange Army getting on in the far-flung corners the other side of the solar farm that now sits in the infield. Time to gather, at a minimum of two metres, as many of our drivers as I could find and get a consensus. Some were in trailers, the MG collective were under a gazebo, some were keeping warm and dry in their Moderns, some were gathered up from the coffee kiosk. The 11am track inspection came and went. We are a resilient Club, we have dealt with many challenges since 1934. Fuel crisis, foot and mouth disease, snow, Storm Dennis at this year's Pom', to name a few, have all tried and (mostly) failed to beat the VSCC and its Members. We decided to pack up and went home. Transponders were handed back, cars winched onto trailers and the hub of the Blakeney Motorsport shelters were dismantled and packed away in the truck. As we were saying our farewells the familiar voice of Marcus Pye announced to the paddock that the race meeting had been cancelled. VSCC ahead of the game again? A flippant remark.

On a more serious note, as organisers ourselves the cancellation/abandonment of any event is of course the last thing we want to happen. The small team at Castle Combe did all that they could to remove the standing water in the worst locations around the track. The rain had not stopped for a day and a half and they fought a losing battle. The difficult decision the event officials made had our full support. 2020 will live long in the memory and thankfully it won't include seeing one of our friends in the barrier in a race that needn't have taken place. Packed up (remembered to take the flag down) a change of shoes and socks and the thought of the motorways in the rain. Not so, I'm not a plane spotter by any stretch of the imagination but the Cotswold Airport, the former RAF Kemble, was around 14 miles cross country. I had seen through social media that many BA Boeing 747s had been flying into the airfield where they were to be dismantled and I had been trying to find an excuse to go and have a look. A short drive later and I wasn't disappointed as six of these amazing aircraft were parked nose to tail alongside the perimeter fence on the A429. From there I carried on through the glorious Cotswolds countryside fleeing with the Fosse Way, skirting Northleach (shall I go and see the Vicar...), Stow, Morton-in-Marsh and home in time for tea. And now the sun is shining and the rain has stopped.

*Extract from The Secret Diary of a Competition Secretary, Aged \*\* and ¾*

Thank you to all Club members who came to Castle Combe; drivers, friends, family members and especially any of the rain battered Marshals from the VSCC who volunteered for the weekend.



# PRESCOTT - AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT

One Positive Thing To Say About Covid-19 Restrictions - How  
Necessity And The Internet Have Drawn Our International  
Membership Closer

New Zealand Member, William Hearne, Kindly Got In  
Touch To Say How Much He Enjoyed The Livestreaming  
Of Prescott

*"June and I were meant to be with you from May to September (as the song goes). But, the virus put paid to all that. We estimate that it could be several years before things are back to normal. We left the UK after living there for 16 years exactly a year ago today (2 October) and returned to our home country, New Zealand. We still have a house and a car in the UK and do hope to return for the spring/summer period as soon as possible."*



My cars here [left to right]:

1923 Diatto tipo 20s Targa Florio [competed with in the U.K]

1913 De Dion Bouton,

1923 Ansaldo 6a Torpedo.





# IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

VSCC Dynasties Are A Large Part Of The Heritage Of The Club And Surnames Resonate Down The Decades. The Ellison Family Is One Such Dynasty, As Daughter, Wendy Webber, Proved When She Tackled The Hill At Prescott Long In Her Father's Beloved Riley Sprite

Peter Ellison Bought The Car For The Princely Sum Of £165 Some 65 Years Ago

Wendy explains: "It was Dad's first car which he bought in order to go courting and he thought he would invest in a sports car. Over the years Dad and his brother have done trials, hill climbs, the vintage Le Mans meeting in 2015, as well as lots of other events. He regularly towed his glider behind it as well as a caravan when going to Prescott. The car had a complete rebuild in 2012 which Dad did himself "

"Last year, he fell ill with cancer and I took over the wheel and am really enjoying competing with my children, who are keen to race it as well as his brother, David Ellison, who was and who will continue to be a second driver at competitions alongside myself and my children. Peter always wanted his car to be enjoyed which we very much plan to do!"

"Sadly, Dad died recently but the car will stay in the family and it will be enjoyed and competed."



Father, Peter, Competing At Prescott



A Riley Is A Very Useful Vehicle To Have At The Airfield!



# IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

*The Family Ethos Of The VSCC Has Been Very Much In Evidence At the Few Events That We Have Managed To Enjoy During 2020*

One Of The Notable Features Of This Year's Mallory Park Race Meeting This Year (Apart From The Fact That It Happened At All!) Was The Number Of Families Across The Generations Competing Against Each Other

For what we believe is the first time ever in the history of the VSCC, three generations of the same family competed in the same race; Dougal, Andy and Wilf Cawley took their spots on the grid of the Race For Frazer Nash/GN.

Also on the grid was father and son duo, Dennis and David Johnson and, as always, the Blakeney-Edwards/Waterfield family were out in force as Archie and Tom took on Mum, Jo, in Archie's first race. Other family members to compete were Jo's husband, Simon Blakeney-Edwards and brother-in-law, Patrick.

Elsewhere, the Seber brothers and Wolseley Hornet enthusiasts, Rodney and Tony, flew the flag for their family name in the All-Comers Scratch and All-Comers Handicap races.

Duncan and Emma Potter campaigned their MG in the MG/A7 race and the Allcomers Handicap.

Father and son, Justin and Ben Maeers took part in a total of four races with their two GNs. The family affair was not just on the track, with Andy King displaying the Creamcracker MG, whilst daughter, Rachel, made sure he and the rest of the competitors were in the right spots on the grid. Meanwhile, Robert Moore, also in a GN, competed whilst father, Tim, worked hard as a handicapper.

Hughie and Mark Walker also competed, whilst Dan Smith and father Andrew shared the Frazer Nash Nurburg in the first two races.

Apologies to any families who may have been missed!





# FROST TROPHY

Of course, one of the casualties of Covid-19 this year was the Awards Dinner. Some six months later an awards ceremony of sorts - in the living room

John Chilman finally received the Frost Trophy for Long Wheelbase Cars for the curtailed 2019/2020 trials season.

John in his Chrysler won his Class outright at the John Harris (Derbyshire), first Class awards in all of the trials that ran, except the Exmoor with a second Class award.



Photo: Mike Archer



# TABLE TOP RALLY ANSWERS

Last Week Toby Galbraith Took Us On A Sublime  
Tour Of The Devon/Cornwall Border - We Just Had  
To Try And Imagine The Glorious Weather!



## Table Top Rally edition 17: On the Border

### Questions and Answers

#### Section 1 – unders and overs

- Q1 How many times did you cross gridline 87? (3, at 444870, 433870, 416870)  
Q2 How many times did you cross or use green roads? (4, at 448893, 418881, 386869, 374854)

#### Section 2 – round and round we go

- Q3 How many places of worship did you pass? (3, at 395815, 381809, 376794)  
Q4 What is the lowest spot height you pass? (115, at 370795)

#### Section 3 – tons of towns

- Q5 How many steep gradients did you drive through? (4)  
Q6 How many red dots (not diamonds) did you drive through? (5, in GS 4276 and 4576)

#### Section 4 – breakfast advice

- Q7 What 'crosses' did you pass through/near? (Longcross, Ramsdown Cross)  
Q8 From which direction did you approach SH 173 (From the West, at 435810)

#### Section 5 – the very long way home

- Q9 How many times did you cross the River Lyd? (2, in GS 4483)  
Q10 What was the highest spot height you passed? (176, at 438845)





# TABLE TOP RALLY CORRECT ROUTE



Thanks To Toby Galbraith  
For All The Table Top Rallies Click [Here](#)





# JACK BOND

The More Eagle-Eyed Among You Will Have Noticed Last Week That The Link To Tip-Top Engineering's Jack's Stellar Driving Performance Was Missing

*Of course, we couldn't allow that so here is  
Jack taking the Works Riley through its paces at Blyton.*

Jack is one of our most committed Young members who is making a career out of vintage motorsport. Here's what he had to say...

*Jack - you are only 24 now and you already have an impressive sixteen years of VSCC membership under your belt. Who was it that sparked your interest in vintage cars and got you involved?*

My Vintage car and VSCC passion has been lifelong really following on from my Dad - David Bond - who has been quite successful competing in trials and rallies in the family Bullnose Morris. My grandfather bought his first Bullnose Morris in 1962 and it's still owned by the family. He then went on to buy the well known yellow Cowley (was blue then) in 1970 which my dad started trialling in the 80s. It is still an active VSCC competition car now being driven by the third generation of Bond (myself).



*You currently have a 1923 Lagonda 11.9; which events and types of events do you enjoy competing in?*

The Lagonda isn't in running condition unfortunately at the moment. It once belonged to ex-President Roger Collings, who kindly gave the car to me to restore and enjoy. I have completed a large amount of mechanical work but am yet to finish building a suitable body. Hopefully will get it out in the near future and it will be a great car for LC&ES events.

*You now work for Tip-Top Engineering, which is presumably your dream job! How do you see your career developing?*

It's fair to say that I do have my dream job! I consider myself very fortunate to be able to fulfill my passion and hobby in my everyday working life. James and I have a lot of fun working together on some fantastic pieces of vintage machinery, from things such as single seat racing cars, chain gang Nashes, right through to early veteran cars and everything inbetween. I expect James and I can work together for many years to come and build the Tip-Top brand. I am forever learning and look forward to building my engineering knowledge further so we can keep restoring, repairing and simply caring for all the fine cars we are lucky enough to lay our spanners on.

*And finally, what are your ambitions in the vintage motorsport field?*

As for my Motorsport career I love every aspect of competition that the VSCC has to offer which is why I think that the aggregate trophies are so much fun to compete in. I have my name on the John Rowley so plan to try and put it on a few more of the VSCC's great trophies. I very much enjoy competing in a self prepared car and think it all adds to the achievement! I am considerably new to the VSCC racing scene as my family have never had a suitable car but I plan to make my mark and am always looking be improving my driving wherever possible.





# CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

With Castle Combe over before it began we now have a long wait for our next event, the Winter Driving Tests at Bicester.

Hopefully, you are enjoying the weekly News Sheet and it provides some light entertainment as the nights begin to draw in and 'CANCELLED' becomes the most over-used word in the English language.

If you have any contributions for the News Sheet, whether it be an ongoing garage project, an interesting anecdote - although even the uninteresting ones will probably hold us in great thrall by January - please contact [liz.fox@vscc.co.uk](mailto:liz.fox@vscc.co.uk) - I look forward to hearing from you.



Autumn colours in the fresh air, theirs simply nothing better that a pre-war motoring on an sunny autumn day or early evening. Life is all about the memories, make them good ones.

Contact 01200 538866 for more info on how to acquire either of these two. *Stay safe my friends*



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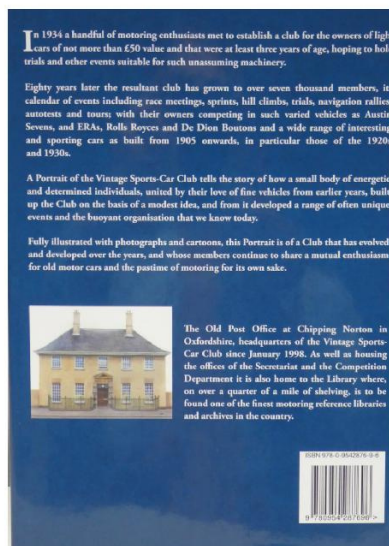
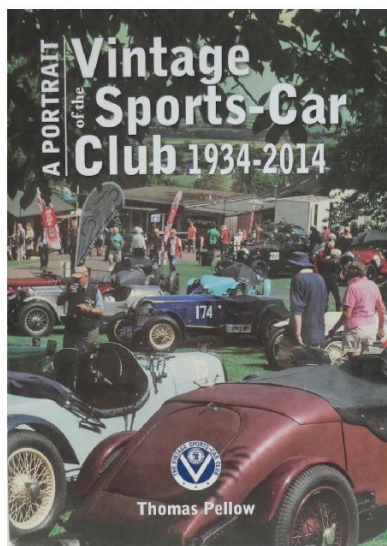
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# A Portrait of the Vintage Sports-Car Club

*By Thomas Pellow*



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## A Delightful Account of the VSCC

The Late Tom Pellow was approached by the VSCC to produce this glorious record of the club for its 80th Anniversary.

Available only through the club we are sure it will evoke many wonderful memories of the members and events that make the VSCC truly a unique, varied and fascinating club.

## This Week's Interesting Links:

[The End Of An Era; The Last Flight Of 747](#)

[David Roscoe's Film of Castle Combe 1967](#)

[...and David Roscoe's Film 'Vintage Variations' of 1969](#)

*Enjoy!*

