

Tunbridge Wells Radio Car Club

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<http://www.twrcc.co.uk>

NEWSLETTER No. 48

Welcome

The first thing to do on behalf of the club is to welcome all those of you who are new members or have joined since the last newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed racing with us during the summer season and that you will be joining us indoors at Hugh Christie starting on November 5th when we begin our winter championship. I hope you have all found your racing to be a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. At TWRCC we do our best to foster a “family” type atmosphere where new arrivals can feel part of the club as quickly as possible, and some of the comments I hear do seem to bear this out. A driver I spoke to at our penultimate meeting said how impressed he was with the friendly welcome he was given and how people he had only just met did their best to help him. That is, I think, the great strength of this club.

Spring Meeting

Well, I suppose it had to happen – the weather let us down for the first time at a spring meeting. The forecast had been excellent all week (always a bad sign) and even on the night before. The rain started on my way to Hugh Christie at about 7.30 in the morning and it didn't stop until about 2.00 in the afternoon. It's very difficult to make the right decision in that sort of situation and sadly we made the wrong one. It was the drivers themselves who decided early on to try to race outdoors and just hope the weather improved. It didn't and so in the middle of the morning we moved the whole meeting indoors. I think, on reflection, that was the right thing to do because we still had time to run two rounds of qualifying for saloons and buggies along with finals, team and novelty races. On the whole I think everyone had an enjoyable day although the IC drivers obviously couldn't race indoors and unfortunately had to go home disappointed. It would have made an interesting change for us to see them racing for the first time at TWRCC.

I must say thank you to everyone who helped out that day with particular thanks to a few who worked especially hard. Firstly to Sandra and George Giles for all the effort they made with the raffle and cake stall. This was Sandra's own idea and thanks to her and her assistants she made a superb profit of £87.31. Thanks also to Roger Packer who again kindly loaned us his caravan and awning, to Grant for designing two tracks (indoors and outdoors), to Dave Vanns for another excellent barbeque and to Steve and Jim for donating the sausages and rolls. There is always a lot for Ian and I to do at a spring meeting and the help of Frank in race control and the assistance of Dave and James Burton in the concours judging was much appreciated. Finally thanks to all the drivers (and their families) who stuck with us despite the weather and helped snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. It would help us to plan ahead if we could have some feedback about whether you think we should run a similar event next year.

The results are as follows:-

Concours: 1st Kane Wood, 2nd Andy Ledeczky, 3rd Miles Taylor

Buggies:

A Final: 1st Matt Holdstock, 2nd Graham Mills, 3rd Steve Andrews
B Final: 1st Roger Packer, 2nd Nick Vincent, 3rd Danny Litchfield

Saloons:

A Final: 1st Andy Ledeczky, 2nd Kane Wood, 3rd Mick Spurway
B Final: 1st Colin Howard, 2nd Darrel Gearing 3rd Andy Taylor

Team Event:

1st Grant Riddall, Dave Burton, Roger Packer, Clive Griffiths and Jaime Vanns
2nd Graham Mills, Lesley Baddeley, Rob Dorling, Danny Litchfield and Mick Spurway
3rd James Burton, Steve Andrews, Nicky Riddall, Dominic Keeler, George Giles

Skill Test:

1st Graham Mills, 2nd David Mills, 3rd Danny Litchfield

The Outdoor Season

Weather wise the season started badly with the first championship meeting having to be abandoned due to rain. We did start racing but after some hefty showers the off road track was waterlogged and would have been damaged had we continued and the tarmac area had huge puddles despite some enthusiastic sweeping. This meant that in order to still run best seven from ten we would have to tack an extra meeting on the end of the championship.

Chris Janes paid us a surprise visit during the season and slipped effortlessly back into his former role. For those of you that are fairly new to the club, Chris used to do what I do now before he retired and moved away. He has found a house at last and is settled down again so I feel sure you would all want to wish him and his family all the very best for the future. Coincidentally at the same meeting (I don't think there was a connection) we had some horrendous problems with the computer when our faithful old 486 rebooted itself seven or eight times. On each occasion we had to re-enter all the drivers numbers for the whole meeting and calculate the qualifying orders manually which lost us a lot of time. I'll talk some more about the computer situation later in the newsletter.

Some of you will have noticed that during the season the club's tent seemed to grow in size. This was because George Giles had kindly donated his old tent to the club. It is considerably larger than our original one and will allow us room for the transponder table if the weather is doubtful. Thanks to Steve for arriving early and erecting the tent in readiness for Ian and I to get set up.

Unfortunately at championship meeting number four an incident occurred that resulted in a member having no option but to leave the club. I don't intend to go into great detail or indeed name the person concerned because by the very nature of this newsletter he is unable to defend himself. In the last newsletter I spoke not only about the need for everyone to help at meetings with track and general tidying but also about the attitude that we expected members to adopt. I warned that we would no longer tolerate "those who display selfishness or a disregard for others". Sadly on this occasion we both felt that the line had been crossed in what we considered to be acceptable behaviour. As those of you that were present will know a vote was taken some weeks later as to whether he should be

re-admitted or not. The result of the vote was four in favour (one with reservations) and twenty against which means he will not be racing with us again. Ian and I now look on this incident as a closed chapter.

On a happier note one of our long-standing members, Darrel Gearing, was married during the summer season. Congratulations to him and the new Mrs. Gearing but a poor show that he didn't turn up for racing the following day!

There were one or two technical problems during the season when the transponders refused to work at one meeting and the printer went on strike at another. All in all though with these things aside I think there is a more relaxed atmosphere in race control now. As the season wore on I feel we got into a rhythm that allowed us to keep things moving at a reasonable pace without anyone feeling that they were under too much pressure.

Buggy Results

As we've come to expect there was some excellent off road racing this season. Altogether twenty six drivers took part but only fourteen completed the required seven meetings to qualify for a trophy. Steve scored a maximum at each meeting, which may be a record in itself. However, in the rest of TQ there was some close scoring between Graham and Grant with Jaime not far behind. John had things sewn up in F1 so much so that he stayed in bed for the last meeting when he saw what the weather was like. Both he and Roger scored consistently. Also Darrel had an excellent season having a particularly good last meeting. In F2 Nicky, Dave and Carl all scored well with only nineteen points between the top three. Those with a formula beside their score will move into that formula for the indoor season.

Formula TQ

1 st and Club Champion	Steve Andrews	427 points
2 nd	Graham Mills	406 "
3 rd	Grant Riddall	397 "
4 th	Jaime Vanns	389 "

Formula 1

1 st	John Maddex	384 points	TQ
2 nd	Roger Packer	364 "	TQ
3 rd	Darrel Gearing	354 "	
4 th	Dave Burton	345 "	
5 th	Richard Hathaway	340 "	
6 th	Danny Litchfield	337 "	
7 th	Nick Vincent	330 "	

Formula 2

1 st	Nicky Riddall	336 points	F1
2 nd	Dave Vanns	329 "	F1
3 rd	Carl Hopkins	317 "	

Saloon Results

This was our first outdoor season with saloons and it was very well supported. A total of fifty seven drivers took part but only sixteen attended seven or more meetings. Dave nearly made a maximum score but lost a point to a Tamiya driver on week nine. He and Andy have had some first class racing that even brought Ian and I out of race control to watch. In F2 Mick, Roger and Jamie all scored consistently to make it quite close at the end. Things weren't quite so close in F2 with Danny well out in front of his nearest rival Clive who in turn had a comfortable safety margin over Barry. Those with a formula beside their score will move into that formula for the indoor season.

Formula TQ

1 st and Club Champion	Dave Mills	426 points	
2 nd	Andy Ledeczky	409	"

Formula 1

1 st	Mick Spurway	395 points	TQ
2 nd	Roger Packer	387	" TQ
3 rd	Jamie Walker	381	" TQ
4 th	Rob Dorling	346	"
5 th	Kris Healey	319	"
6 th	Richard Hathaway	316	"
7 th	George Giles	305	"

Formula 2

1 st	Daniel Webb	370 points	F1
2 nd	Clive Singyard	323	" F1
3 rd	Barry Healey	286	" F1
4 th	Brian Hopkins	282	"
5 th	Dominic Keeler	280	"
6 th	Thomas Singyard	253	"
7 th	Paul Young	251	"
8 th	Clive Griffiths	242	"

Thanks

I must pass on my thanks to a few people for their help during the season. Firstly to Roger Packer for the interest free loan he made available to allow the club to buy the transponder system. This is a great asset to the club in general and race control in particular. To Steve for repairing the rostrum and for doing the strimming and to Grant for keeping the grass cut on the track. Also to Frank for helping in race control and to Jim, Derek and John for taking turns in handing out the transponders and clips. Lastly of course thanks to all of **YOU** for your support during the outdoor championship.

Computer

As I said earlier in this newsletter we had a few problems with the club PC that caused Ian and I to take a long hard look at the system we had. We decided that a laptop PC and a portable printer would be the answer. I realised that I could make a box to hold not only the

computer and printer but also the decoder for the transponders as well as leaving everything permanently connected inside. This meant that the only external connections to make on arrival would be the loop, speakers and mains power. The box was relatively easy to make but the difficulty was that we had already, quite rightly, committed ourselves to repaying Roger's loan as soon as possible. It was decided that I would buy the printer using my "flexible friend" and wait until finances allowed before I claimed it back. Fortunately we were able to borrow Dave's laptop for a few meetings until I was able to use my own one from work. Many of you will have noticed that this system has been in use for some time and is a great improvement. Setting up and clearing away times are a fraction of what they were and prints come out in seconds rather than minutes. I think the only thing we could do with now is more volume from the speakers.

Finance

The club's financial position has been pretty healthy all year. Roger's loan has been repaid and I have claimed back the money for the bubblejet printer so at the moment we are in the black. Obviously we have to remember that we need to buy trophies for the summer season and that our public liability insurance will soon be due for renewal. Of course it is always more expensive to race indoors because of the hire of the hall but despite that there seems to be no good reason to increase the subs at the moment so they will remain at £3 for under 17's and £4 for 17's and over.

As I said earlier one thing we may investigate when it's prudent is a more powerful public address system so that you can hear us better in the pits.

I have decided that from now on I won't publish the full club accounts with the newsletters as I did before but will just have them available in race control at each meeting for members to look at if they wish too. Please let me know if this is acceptable or if you prefer the old system.

Web Site

During the season we purchased the domain name www.twrcc.co.uk. This is, as most of you know, the new address for the club's web site. Thanks to Dave for updating the site with the fortnightly results and other useful information. If you feel there is something that would be useful on the site do let either myself or Dave know. The only improvement that I can think of at the moment would be a slightly more flattering photo of me on the "contact" page and perhaps a "censored" sticker across Ian's. There is a link from the site to my e-mail if anyone wants to contact me that way. Incidentally the number of hits is about 1600.

Tamiya Class?

I did suggest in the last newsletter that it might be a good idea if drivers (with Tamiyas) who were quite new to racing ran in a class of their own using non-rebuildable kit motors. We were underwhelmed when there was not one single taker. In case anyone is interested for the indoor season the idea is that you race with other formulas but I will extract the points for anyone in that class so that you can have a championship of your own. A slower motor would mean more chance of gradually developing driving skills and of course less breakages. Let me know if this appeals to any of you. Coincidentally, someone writing in "Racer" magazine recently complained that he couldn't find a club where he could race his Tamiya with a kit motor.

Indoor Season

The indoor season starts on Sunday November 5th in the large sports hall at Hugh Christie Technology College in North Tonbridge. Enter via the gates at the far end of White Cottage Road, pass over two speed humps and turn left before the main playground. The hall is just down there on the left.

Please try and arrive by 9.00am to allow us time to take your subs and book you in on the computer. Do remember that you **MUST** wear soft-soled shoes like trainers as **OUTDOOR SHOES ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE HALL** because of the polished floor surface. Do try not to drop litter either inside or outside and bear in mind the whole building is **NON SMOKING**.

I know I say this every time but please can everyone help put the tracking away and tidy up when racing is over. As everybody who races uses the track it seems only fair that you should all help to put it away. Incidentally if you arrive early Grant would always be glad of some help getting the track out of the shed. I know last year people were waiting outside for the doors to be unlocked but once inside they were quite happy to get their pit tables out and sit around while Grant dealt with the tracking almost single-handed. Don't forget he races himself and also has Nicky's car to prepare so your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

When we ran saloons last year we limited everyone to a 27 turn motor although rebuildables were permitted and we intend to do the same this season. This means that you can run a hotter motor but you will not be able to score points or be part of the championship. Considering the speed of some of the 27 turn motors last year and the number of crashes I think there is no need for anything faster. Buggy drivers will be allowed to run whatever they want in the way of motors as before.

As always please remember to marshal **IMMEDIATELY** after your race so that we can keep things moving at a reasonable pace. Also when marshalling please replace the track as quickly as you can when it gets moved out of position and be alert for cars that have crashed.

Included on a separate sheet are the dates for the coming indoor season so that you can stick it on a notice board or indeed wherever you feel inclined.

General

There are a few points I wanted to discuss that didn't really fit into any category so I have lumped them together here.

It was suggested when we were outdoors that the wooden tracking was too hard and led to too many breakages. I suggested that you might just like to drive better! However if anyone has a contact somewhere, like Chatham Dockyard, where we can pick up some large sized second hand rope then please investigate and let us know.

Ian and I are considering re-introducing the "Clubman" trophy which has not been awarded for some considerable time. It is awarded to someone who has consistently made a significant contribution to the club and it is in no way connected with racing ability. Could you be the lucky recipient?

Just lately I have been working on a handout to give to new members explaining a little about the club's history and our methods of racing. When it is finished and printed I will make some available for our present members to take if they wish.

As always we are pleased to hear suggestions from you if you have any ideas about how the running of the club, racing or indeed this newsletter could be improved. Those that are physically possible would be the most welcome!

New members and spectators are actively encouraged to come along and join in. Often I think it would be wise if potential drivers, parents or relations who are buying a car for the first time, came along to the club first to make sure they buy something suitable. It's very sad when youngsters particularly come along with their pride and joy only to find they haven't got a hope in hell of being competitive. I'm sure many of you would be only too pleased to offer your advice.

Anyway as I come to the end of another newsletter can I just say I hope you have an enjoyable seasons racing at TWRCC whether you are a new or established member.

Ian has written something for the newsletter about his memories of early racing which follows, but as I always say about now, remember this is a hobby so above all do please....**enjoy your racing**.

Brian
October 2000

Chairman's Chatter

I have been asked by Brian to write an article for the newsletter. As he covers most items of relevance to the smooth running of the club it leaves me wondering - what shall I talk about. Well here goes!

As Steve Andrews and myself are now the only ones left who can remember the humble beginnings of the club I thought I would put into my own words how things were in those far distant days. We are talking about the mid 80's when some of our younger members were not even born. Racing was a very casual affair depending on whether there were enough of us to actually participate in a race or two, or if we had cars that were the least bit compatible. We were running mostly Tamiya cars but there were some Kyosho and I remember trying a very early Yokomo - totally useless. Cars like: Frog, Boomerang, Hot Shot, Falcon, Grasshopper, Hornet and Optima were the order of the day. Everyone had something different - just like the early days of most sports. We used to meet on Wednesday evenings and Sundays. Before we built our first off road track racing took place in the car park outside the YMCA building. There were obviously a lot less big cars around as I can remember the car park being empty. We just used a few traffic cones and tyres to mark out the track but because of the size of the car park the track was very simple and it was more like oval racing - it seemed quite fast but obviously nothing like the cars of today nor did the cars handle as they do today. But it was great fun. Lap counting was a problem however - Chris Janes produced some printed sheets with squares that we entered a tick into as cars completed a lap. Split times were a problem but we somehow managed it by noting down the order they finished in after the five minutes was up. Very much the same as we do today but now with transponders things are a little more accurate.

I can remember very clearly Grant Riddall joining the club. He was running a car called a Ninja, which I think he still owns. This car was very quick although it was hardly a standard kit - every time he broke a part he would manufacture one machined from solid aluminium in most cases. He was a rival for Steve and they are still rivals all these years on. I think maybe young Nicky Riddall will be able to beat Steve one day when Steve's reactions are slowing down. Although in this summer championship Steve has managed to get seven meetings with maximum points - I don't think that has been achieved before.

My eldest son, Adrian was very much into computers at the time and I managed to get him to write us some race control software we could use. He had an Amstrad computer at the time which was very slow and I was the only one who could use it without any problems as the software wasn't exactly bullet-proof and you could get in a bit of a muddle with it if you weren't careful. However we were then able to race with computer timing - a major breakthrough. We used that old Amstrad computer up until Dave Mills' software came along about three years ago. Another major step forward had been made. My son has gone on to work in the computer business with speech recognition, speech generation and animation. Dave is now also doing well with his job in the computer business. It is very pleasant to know that two lads who came to the car club have been able to use their skills to contribute their "bit" to something that all club members get benefit from.

I can remember one of the funniest moments we had at the club before our area had been fenced off. A man was out on the field walking his dog - a west highland terrier, when the dog caught sight of all these cars tearing round the track. You can imagine what happened - we had about six cars plus a dog racing round the track. The dog seemed to get in amongst the cars for a couple of laps much to everyone's amusement. Somebody was heard shouting "get a number on that dog or he won't get counted". I can remember it well - who else can.

I think I'll close now or I'll be accused of rambling on by Brian but I will tell some more tales later on, maybe about the even earlier days of radio car racing or even back to my days in slot car racing, now that **is** a very long time ago.

I would just like to say how pleased I am to see our club going from strength to strength under Brian's extremely efficient control - we have a club to be very proud of - and long may it continue.

Now that really is all for now but I'll look forward to seeing you all for the winter season on 5th November.

Ian

TUNBRIDGE WELLS RADIO CAR CLUB

WINTER SEASON 2000/2001 MEETING DATES

The winter season will be held at the Sports Hall, Hugh Christie Technology College, Tonbridge, Kent. Please enter via the gates at the far end of White Cottage Road. Pass over two speed bumps and turn left. The sports hall is down there on the left. Remember racing starts at 09:30 am sharp so try and arrive by 9:00 so we can collect your subs and load the computer. When racing is over please can **everyone** help to put the track away and clear up. The dates are:-

Sunday 5 th November	Practice meeting
19 th November	Week 1
3 rd December	Week 2
17 th December	Week 3
31 st December	NO MEETING
14 th January	Week 4
28 th January	Week 5
11 th February	Week 6
25 th February	Week 7
11 th March	Week 8
25 th March	Week 9
8 th April	Week 10

Don't forget saloon drivers are limited to 27 turn motors (rebuildables allowed)
Buggies **are** allowed to use modifieds.