

TUNBRIDGE WELLS RADIO CAR CLUB

Brian Mills – 01732 832691 & Ian Skilling - 01892 529721

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

NEWSLETTER No. 49

Welcome

First of all can I, on behalf of the club, extend a warm welcome to any members who have joined us since the last newsletter. I hope that you have enjoyed racing with us and will be joining us for both the spring meeting and the outdoor season. Also I hope that those of you who are new to the club will very quickly feel “at home” with us. Please remember that if you are in doubt about anything then do feel free to ask Ian or I any questions that you have or alternatively one of our regular members will be more than willing to help you.

The Indoor Season

As before this has been a very busy season for us with a large influx of new drivers. Some of them are still with us whilst others have visited briefly and then disappeared. I want to talk in more depth about that later in the newsletter.

Saloons again made up the bulk of those racing in proportions of roughly 2:1. Saloon numbers varied from 49 to 27 while buggy numbers ranged from 22 to 13. Of these a few hardy souls actually ran cars in both classes!

Buggy Results

22 drivers started out at the beginning of the championship but only 13 completed the necessary seven meetings to qualify. One or two stalwarts did make the transition from buggies to saloons during the season.

Congratulations to Dave for a near perfect score and to Nick Vincent who very clearly should be playing with the big boys and moves up to TQ. Well done also to Carl for winning formula 2. From the scores you can see just how close the racing was.

Formula TQ

1 st and Club Champion	Dave Mills	426 points
2 nd	Steve Andrews	410 “
3 rd	Jaime Vanns	398 “
4 th	James Burton	376 “

Formula 1

1 st	Nick Vincent	408 points	(TQ)
2 nd	Danny Litchfield	379 “	
3 rd	Dave Burton	362 “	
4 th	Darrel Gearing	356 “	
5 th	George Giles	344 “	
6 th	Nicky Riddall	336 “	

Formula 2

1 st	Carl Hopkins	349 points
2 nd	Colin Howard	335 “
3 rd	Clive Woodall	325 “

Saloon Results

44 drivers started the championship but only 24 qualified for trophies.

This time Dave did make the perfect score with seven maximums so well done again.

James had a very good season so will move up to TQ, and Sam's convincing win moves him to F1 (unless he does Tamiya again).

Formula TQ

1 st and Club Champion	Dave Mills	427 points
2 nd	Grant Riddall	410 “
3 rd	Chris Lillywhite	393 “
4 th	Mike Spurway	369 “
5 th	John Maddex	340 “
6 th	Jamie Walker	338 “

Formula 1

1 st	James Mean	385 points	(TQ)
2 nd	Kris Healey	363 “	
3 rd	Steve Fuller	351 “	
4 th	Liam Munchin	348 “	
5 th	Rob Dorling	342 “	
6 th	Philip Gidley	320 “	
7 th	Mark Parascandolo	313 “	
8 th	Daniel Hamblin	293 “	
9 th	Barry Healey	281 “	
10 th	Clive Singyard	248 “	

Formula 2

1 st	Sean Fuller	303 points
2 nd	James Parascandolo	298 “
3 rd	Lee Smith	285 “
4 th	Brian Hopkins	272 “
5 th	Thomas Singyard	266 “

Formula Tamiya

1 st	Sam Collins	350 points	(F1)
2 nd	Steve Collins	256 “	
3 rd	John Kelly	222 “	

Clubman Trophy

You may remember in the last newsletter that I said Ian and I were thinking about re-introducing the clubman trophy. This is awarded to someone who, in our opinion, has made a significant contribution to the club over a long period but is in no way dependant upon racing ability. We agreed that George Giles should be the first person to receive the shield, which would be engraved, held for a year and then returned ready for the next recipient.

George has always been one of those helpful people that new members tend to gravitate towards when they need advice or guidance. Indeed, I remember someone saying to me not long ago that he thought George was **the** most helpful person at the club. I can only assume that he had temporarily forgotten about your cheerful team in race control! When someone needs to borrow a crystal George is invariably the first port of call – I suppose that's the problem with having the full set. I'm pleased to say he is a driver who races for the enjoyment of it and not simply to win although we ought not to forget his three consecutive wins in buggy 'B' finals recently! My only regret is that when we presented the trophy we were very busy and the meeting was running late so I don't think, at the time, we did justice to the contribution he has made. Anyway **well done George**.

Congratulations

Some more good news was that during the winter season one of our long-standing members, Darrel Gearing, became a proud father. Congratulations to both Darrel and his wife. Members signed a card and sent Mothercare vouchers so they could be put towards baby's first radio control car.

Also Darrel's Father, Derek, went into hospital for a serious heart operation. He is now out and recovering well and has passed on his thanks to club members who signed his get-well card.

Web Site

Dave continues to make some changes to the site (address at the top of page 1). He recently removed the driver info as it had become very out of date. We are hoping to borrow a digital camera and take some up to date pictures of cars and add some details about setup and equipment used by each driver. As always you can view the championship results on the site, which is usually updated by about the Wednesday after racing. Also there is a link so you can e-mail me if you need to. The number of hits stands at just over 2,600.

Thanks

As I've said before the success of whatever we do in the club is very much dependant on the help we get from the members and wherever possible Ian and I like to thank them for the assistance they have given.

You can't fail to have noticed the improvement in sound quality during the season. This is due entirely to Brian Hopkins who donated the P.A. amplifier. All we had to do was buy some speakers and another mike to go with it. The amp has three mike inputs (we use two of them) plus two others, one of which we use for the output from the laptop to provide the race tones. I'm sure it helps to make the meetings run much more smoothly now that you can hear us in the pits.

When the majority of drivers arrive for racing they find the hall open and the track in the process of construction. This is thanks to Grant and Steve who are always the first to turn

up. It would be nice if you could help them by getting the tracking out of the shed and bringing it into the hall if you arrive early. My thanks, as always, to Grant for designing another series of demanding tracks. It's thanks to George and Steve that we now have some extra wooden tracking to allow Grant to dream up a circuit that's even more fiendish. Steve was also responsible for the repair of the shed (again) after we found the doors kicked in one morning.

My thanks to Dave for updating the web site and regularly uploading the results and also to Frank who hands out the transponders and helps us generally in race control. Can I also say thank you to all those people who help in their own small way. The people who help put the tracking away, the drivers who help me sort out the finals board, those who collect the results and put them on the clips, the people who sweep the floor when everyone else has gone home. To all these I offer my thanks for helping to make the club run just that little bit more smoothly. I nearly forgot - thanks to all of you drivers (and Mums and Dads) who have supported us again this season.

Finally following the failure of the club's public address system at the last indoor meeting, a thank you to Daniel Hamblin's dad Steve who drove all the way back to West Wickham to bring his mobile amplifier system for us to use.

Finances

The club at the moment is very stable financially. We bought a pair of large speakers and associated cables which were our biggest single expense costing £189.00. This was closely followed by the public liability insurance at £165.90 which was only £8 more than last year although it did need some shopping around to find it that cheaply. The other major expense (as always) were the trophies for the summer season at £143.80. There are of course many other day to day expenses all of which are on the clubs account sheets which I have with me at all the meetings and are available for anyone to see. Looking to the future we have the corporate YMCA fee and meeting charges, the spring meeting and the trophies for the winter season to finance. Fortunately, as we are essentially a non-profit making organisation, once we have met our regular commitments the club is in a position to use at least some of the remainder on improvements. If any member has a particular idea about how we should spend any of our profits then please let us know. Do bear in mind, of course, that the Caribbean holidays already booked for the race control team are likely to eat into these considerably.

At the time of writing this (April 2001) our bank balance stands at £1238.29. There is also a small amount of cash in hand plus our float of £10.

Membership Changes

No one can deny that at the moment saloon cars are much more popular than buggies. It may well be that this is due to the fact that people can identify with them far more readily. Since we introduced heats for them two indoor seasons ago there have been, as I'm sure you are all aware, some problems fitting them all in. There appear to be a large number of nomadic drivers who seem to travel from club to club without ever becoming a "member" of any of them. Also there are an increasing number who use our club as a second home during the winter when it is either too cold outdoors or their regular venue has no meeting. Basically there is not really a problem with this except that in some instances our regulars feel they are losing out to the visitors. Don't forget that up until we began running saloons in November 1999 we had a **very** stable membership with only the occasional visitor.

I think there were three main areas of complaint that I have heard from our regulars:-

1. Not enough room in the pits – so the track gets smaller and smaller
2. Large numbers of new people means we are in danger of losing the “family atmosphere” that we are used to
3. Points awarded to a visitor are points lost for regular drivers particularly when the visitor doesn't show up again. This last issue was addressed immediately by allowing only regulars to take championship points and by allocating finals places to them first and visitors second, up to our agreed maximum of four saloon and two buggy finals.

Don't get me wrong about this visitor thing but we need to keep the right balance between retaining those who have supported the club for many years, those who are new, keen and want to join us, and those who are just visiting. New members are the life-blood of any organisation or club and fresh ideas and different perspectives are almost always good things. But there are visitors and visitors. Let me explain. For the last two indoor seasons Kevin Moore and Matt Benfield, two very talented and well-known drivers, have come to race with us. From the outset they made it clear that they didn't want to be part of the championship and take points away from our regulars. In fact on more than one occasion they ran as “eleventh man” without a transponder so they didn't even get times – they just wanted to race for the fun of it. That's one side of the coin. On the other side are the people who turn up for the first time and spot straight away that we have been doing it all wrong for the last sixteen years! They didn't like the way things were done and how final placings were calculated and the fact that not everyone who turned up was guaranteed a final. One of them even rang the BRCA to complain. At the moment we are not members of that organisation so we run our club the way we feel our members want us to. Most of those who whinge are drivers from other clubs who quote the classic line “At our club we do it like this”. Now I'm as open to new ideas as the next man but I don't go to other clubs and pick holes in the way they run things. I therefore expect others to behave in the same way, however this doesn't mean that we aren't open to constructive suggestions. Another problem was that we have never turned anyone away – we have always fitted everyone in which only encourages “fair weather members” to turn up on a whim. Also we were concerned that if our regulars got fed up and left, all that would remain would be the sporadic visitors who would drift away later when the weather got warmer and so leave us with no club at all.

The dilemma then was what should we do to retain our “old” members but at the same time encourage newcomers who might want to start racing whilst still welcoming visitors within limits.

To decide on a strategy that would be agreeable to a majority, Ian and I decided that instead of making a unilateral decision we would consult with the members at an informal meeting at my home. This took place during February and was attended by fifteen people. It was agreed after lengthy discussions that we would do the following:-

1. Introduce a yearly membership fee payable by 1st May with: -

- Reduced race-day fees
- Inclusive YMCA membership
- Small concessions for family memberships
- Considerable savings for juniors

2. Limit the number of cars at a meeting to sixty

3. Allow members to book in first but **only up until 9.10am**

4. Allocate any free spaces after that time to visitors on a first come first served basis
5. Charge visitors a flat fee of £5 per meeting irrespective of age
6. Allow visitors to race at three meetings before they have to join
7. Preclude visitors from earning championship points until they have joined
8. Expect members to take part in both summer and winter championships
9. Design a new membership form that **everyone** would need to complete

The fees that were decided on are:-

- Senior (17 and over) - £25 annual membership plus £3 per meeting
- Junior (under 17) - £12.50 annual membership plus £2 per meeting
- Family (one senior and one junior) - £35 annual membership plus £3 and £2 per meeting respectively
- Family (two seniors) £47.50 annual membership plus £3 per meeting per driver

Assuming 22 meetings per year these new charges equate to £91 for a senior (£93 under the old system and £56.50 for a junior (£71 under the old system). As you can see there is a considerable saving for juniors, which is why, at the moment, there are no concessions for two juniors from the same family. The term "from the same family" is, I know, somewhat vague and I fully expect someone to test this to the utmost in the coming months. In simple terms I would expect those applying for family membership to have the same surname although I do understand that this may not always be the case. If you are third cousins twice removed you would be well advised not to even try!

We will be issuing membership cards annually from May 1st onwards. These will be business card size and laminated in plastic to make them more durable. If you intend to join but haven't done so yet can you please get the form and your payment to me as soon as possible, and certainly before the first outdoor meeting, as only one of us will be present for the first two. Thanks to all of you who have already paid. Incidentally, if you have the early version of the form there was nowhere for you to write your phone number. If you have one of these forms could you just put your number somewhere on it. Don't forget that if you don't join you can't earn championship points until you do, plus it will cost you £5 per meeting.

Spring Meeting

Due to popular demand we will be holding a spring open meeting again this year. The date we have chosen is Sunday April 22nd 2001 so it is on our regular two week cycle. This will be on the tarmac at Hugh Christie Technology College in North Tonbridge. Enter via White Cottage Road in the normal way but please don't drive or park on the grass. At the moment the hall is available for us to use should it rain (like last year), so do come prepared with the necessary tyres in case the worst happens. There will be the usual mix of normal and novelty racing (plus concours) so do remember this is meant to be a fun day rather than really serious stuff. As it is a fun event there will be no restrictions, as there are in the championships, so you can run your hottest motor if you dare. We will have the barbeque on site again (thanks to Dave Vanns) with the club providing some burgers, sausages, rolls and soft drinks. If you want to eat anything more exotic feel free to bring it along and cook it. Sandra and George will be running another raffle with one of the prizes being no race day fees for the summer season. If you have any items to donate to the raffle please contact George on 01732 351178.

The spring meeting is as always open to members and non-members alike with everyone paying a flat rate of £5. Trophies and certificates will be presented to the lucky winners on

the day once racing has finished and we have cleared up. Please try and arrive early so we can get you booked in hopefully by 9.00am.

Outdoor Season

The outdoor season will begin on 6th May, with the normal practice meeting and will take place at our track beside the Sports and Y Centre in St. John's Road, Tunbridge Wells. This is two weeks after the spring meeting and is run in the same way as all the others but the points do not count towards the championship. There will then be ten championship meetings of which you need to attend at least seven to be classified in the results and receive a trophy. As usual I have put the dates on the back of the last page so you can pin it up on your notice board. **Note the early start on 15th July** because of the British Grand Prix. Location maps and directions are available if anyone requires them.

As far as the weather is concerned, if it is actually raining at the track we will abandon racing for that day (unless it is a very brief shower). If you are not sure about turning up it is best to ring Ian as he lives very close to the track. If Ian and I have both left home you can ring my mobile which is 07801 453678.

As in previous years buggies will be able to run modifieds if they wish but saloon drivers who want to take part in the championship **must** run 27 turn motors although rebuildables are allowed. The only exception to this will be the TQ saloon drivers who **will** be allowed to run modifieds. If there is sufficient interest we will run a separate Tamiya class but please let me know ASAP if you want to take part in this.

It is possible that there will have to be some working parties to tidy up the track and lay some turf. If you are available to help with this the best people to speak to are Grant and Steve. The track looked in a sorry state at the end of the last outdoor season with some pretty large ruts and puddles in it. I still wonder whether we ought to consider replacing it with an on-road track. It may be possible to design a layout that would allow buggies to use parts of both an on-road track and some areas of grass. It's just a thought – perhaps you would like to let us know your opinion. Whatever we do, I still see as a big disadvantage the fact that the site is open to anyone who cares to stroll in. We were hoping that the YMCA would buy some vandal resistant hedging that we could then plant along the boundary nearest to the recycling bins. If that had come about we could then have erected a gate of some sort in an attempt to close off the area completely. Sadly as yet this has not happened. I did wonder if a more permanent solution might be to buy some second-hand scaffold poles, sink them in the ground and run chain link fence between them in much the same way as the rest of the fencing. The other option, of course, would be to find another site.

As you are aware the same rules apply to outdoor racing as they do to indoors. This means your transmitters must be in the pound at all times apart from when you are racing, practicing or going home. On the subject of "going home" there still seems to be some misunderstanding about what happens at the end of a meeting. Your transmitters **must** be replaced in the pound after your final (except the very last one of course) and can only be removed after the last final has finished. A transmitter that is not returned to the pound will result in the offending driver losing the points he has earned that day. **All transmitters (or the cases they are in) must now have your name on.** Unfortunately the end of the last heat is seen by many as a signal to push off home and leave the clearing up to someone else. We expect everyone who has raced on the track to make a small effort in tidying it up afterwards. It was suggested to Ian and I that those who regularly don't help should have their membership withdrawn. I hope it won't be necessary to do that but I can understand the frustration of those who do always help. I watched at an earlier indoor meeting and

there was a steady stream of departing drivers who plainly had made no effort to clear away the tracking or help in any way at all. Please bear this in mind for the future.

As always please remember that you need to marshal immediately after your race is over. Hand back the transponder and clip, turn off the car and transmitter, leave them on the table provided and go straight out to your marshal point. There is no need to go back to the pits. If you do you will only delay racing (see Ian's comments later). Drivers for the next heat need to get their transponders and be ready with their cars beside the rostrum to go out as soon as the current race is over. Also please put numbers on **both** sides of your car in case we have to count you manually.

The only other thing I need to ask is that you don't leave any litter or rubbish anywhere on the site. Last year a YMCA director arrived just after we had left and was not impressed by what he found.

I think that is all I have to say for now but you will be pleased to know that Ian has written another gripping instalment of his Chairman's Chatter so it only remains for me as usual to say please remember this is a hobby, so do**enjoy your racing**.

Brian
April 2001

Chairman's Chatter

Hello! It's me again and I have been thinking very hard for some time what I should write about for the newsletter.

Firstly I would like to say a few words about the recent meetings we have had with the reduced numbers. How much more relaxed they have been. A decision had to be made for us to move forward as far as the club was concerned because we could not have carried on with the high numbers of drivers who wanted to race and it was getting extremely difficult for us to cope with race organisation - the more that turned up - the longer it took to book everyone in and the less time we had to run the extra races in the programme. This was apart from the congestion you were all suffering in the pit area and I know there certainly were a few frayed tempers flying about. We were very aware of the problem but it took some time to sort out a solution. However that is now all behind us and we know the maximum we can cope with and we will try and keep within those limits.

I guess at the end of the day we were a victim of our own success which is a good feeling but not so good when there's seventy people all wanting to race.

Car Building and Preparation

This is a subject that some of our newer drivers might find useful. How efficient is your chassis? A lot of new drivers seem to be more concerned about how fast their car is rather than how efficiently their chassis is working. To make a chassis work well starts from when you first start to build your car. I have listed here a few important points not always covered in the manufacturers information.

1. Read the instructions through and familiarise yourself with all components.
2. When building the car make sure all excess plastic is trimmed from the chassis parts - if not your chassis will have those horrible sharp spiky bits sticking out all over the place. How many times have you marshalled a car and been stabbed by sharp bits of plastic. I certainly have been a few times when customers have brought cars into the shop.
3. There are a lot of self-tapping screws used on most cars. Make sure you use the correct ones in the correct places. Use a screwdriver that fits the screws and do not over tighten them or you will strip the thread in the plastic. Threadlock all other screws.

4. If you can, fit ballraces to all bearing points (if you can afford it) - this makes everything run much more smoothly and efficiently. The problem here is that ballraces don't have the same "street cred" as a hot motor but it is the best single improvement that can be made to a car.
 5. Grease all gears and bearings on assembly and make sure all parts that are supposed to rotate do rotate. Check this as you are assembling the car. Don't wait until you've built the whole thing only to find it doesn't work as it will be much more difficult to find where you've gone wrong.
 6. Before installing the steering servo always connect up the radio to make sure the servo centres itself before you fit the servo saver or servo arm to the servo.
 7. If installing an electronic speedo with reverse make sure when going forward the speedo is actually in forward mode and not reverse.
 8. Make sure all loose wiring is either taped or tie-wrapped neatly out of the way and cannot get caught anywhere.
 9. Before testing the chassis make sure the steering does turn to the right when the stick or wheel is turned to the right. Many a car has been broken first time out by reversed steering.
 10. When cutting out the shell make sure there aren't any sharp bits anywhere. Always go round with some fine glasspaper to smooth all edges. Again remember those poor marshals - polycarbonate can be extremely sharp if not trimmed properly.
 11. When testing the car make sure you can adjust the steering to make it go in a straight line. I have often seen cars going down the straight in a series a large "arcs" - not good.
- You are now ready to race.

I would like to mention a few pointers when racing. Remember the most important point in racing is to drive smoothly, not to crash, don't take other people out and hopefully finish.

There is an old saying "to finish first - first you must finish". If you are a newcomer to racing then it is often better to start off running the kit motor until you can drive a good course and lap consistently and not keep crashing or causing crashes.

When the printout of your heat is posted up look closely at the individual lap times - how much do they vary? Note your fastest lap - take this figure away from each individual slower lap and you will see how much time you have lost. Divide your fastest lap into the lost time and you will see how many extra laps you would have done had you have lapped more consistently. Faster lap times are not always achieved by installing a quicker motor - in fact it often makes the situation worse and you finish up with slower times.

I would just like to finish on that awful point - marshalling.

I know of very few drivers who can say they like marshalling - let's face it there is always something better to do. The meeting on 25th March was one of the worst meetings I have ever known for drivers not being on their marshal points. Please remember after your race you go straight out to your marshal point, not talk to your mates or go off back to the pit area. We want to see marshals at their points waiting for the drivers. Then all we ask is four minutes concentration and I mean concentration - watch your part of the track so you are ready to leap into action when needed. A good marshal should be like a coiled spring - ready to pounce when needed.

If the marshalling hasn't improved at the last indoor meeting then we will bring in a penalty system for drivers who either forget or try to avoid marshalling.

I hope the subjects I have talked about have been of interest, so lets look forward to the summer season and some good racing – I did hear something about a hot summer.

Ian
April 2001

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2001 MEETING DATES

22 APRIL	SPRING MEETING
6 th May	Outdoor practice meeting
20 th May	Week 1
3 rd June	Week 2
17 th June	Week 3
1 st July	Week 4
15th July	Week 5 Note: 9.00am start due to British Grand Prix
29 th July	Week 6
12 th August	Week 7
26 th August	Week 8
9 th September	Week 9
23 rd September	Week 10
7 th October	Week 11 (If req'd)
4 th November	Indoor practice meeting – (provisional)
18 th November	Week 1 – (provisional)

Saloons **must** run 27 turn motors (rebuildables allowed) except TQ drivers who can run modifieds.

Buggies are allowed to run modifieds.