

# TUNBRIDGE WELLS RADIO CAR CLUB

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

## NEWSLETTER No. 50

### Welcome

The first thing to do, as usual, is to welcome all those of you who have joined us and become members since the last newsletter. I hope that everyone has enjoyed racing with us and that you will be joining us when we move indoors for the Winter season. A few of our regulars will be missing because they have left to go to university, whilst some are nearing the end of their studies. We wish all of them well and look forward to seeing them racing with us during the holidays.

### Spring Meeting

After a few spots of rain early in the morning, the weather was kind to us and a good days racing was had by the 55 drivers present. The format of the day seemed to work quite well but we are always keen to hear your ideas on how we can alter or improve it.

It may come as a surprise, but considering it only lasts a day it takes an enormous amount of work both beforehand and on the day itself. The biggest headache by far is organising the crystals in the team event. I need to be sure that **any** driver from **any** team can race at **any** time, without causing interference to **any** other driver. It is a logistical nightmare trying to mix drivers of different abilities when so many of you have only got one crystal to use. My sanity was only (just) saved by Kris Healey who helped me in race control to sort out an unholy mess. It would make life so much easier for us if everyone had at least three crystals with them at all meetings.

The success of the day is very much dependant on the amount of input we get from members and their families, so Ian and I would like to thank those people who made it all possible by helping in a variety of ways. Firstly to Sandra Giles, who again organised and ran the raffle and cake stall making a superb £105.20. Those of us in race control can vouch for the quality of the home-made cakes, as can the local environmental health officer. Thanks also to George who always collects the school keys and arranges mains power for us in the tent. We also have Grant to thank (!) for designing the track and the skill event. While I'm on the subject of the skill event, can I just say "well done" to all those who took part in this event – it's not an easy thing to do, particularly when everyone else is watching you. Thanks also to Steve for arranging the burgers, sausages and cold drinks and to Jim for donating the bread rolls again. I am grateful to Dave and James Burton for judging the concours event, which had a very large entry this year. Frank was again in charge of transponders although I regret that I forgot to give him a mention on the day. As ever the Bar-b-q was under the expert control of Dave Vanns. Dave has looked after this important part of the event for as many Spring meetings as I can remember so my thanks to him. Apart from mentioning Hugh Christie who very kindly allow us to use the facilities free (providing we don't need to use the sports hall), it only remains to thank all those of you who came along and gave us your support on the day.

On the down side it was obvious that there was something of a food shortage. This happened because we had only catered for the number of drivers we were expecting and not their families, although this should not be seen as a complaint, in fact we (as a family club) welcome them to our meetings. Several suggestions have been made to overcome this problem one of which was pre-booking when drivers would be able to say how many

people they were bringing. They would then be given a number of vouchers (one per person) to hand in at the Bar-b-q. The other suggestion was for non-drivers to pay a small sum, say 50p, towards the cost of them being fed. I'm not sure whether you would all be in favour of this or not.

The winners of the various events are listed below. The only other thing to mention is that the first prize in the raffle, free race day fees for the summer, was won by Barry Healey. Somebody, (not necessarily his son) said it was probably the only thing he would **ever** win at a race meeting.

The results are as follows:-

Concours: 1<sup>st</sup> Kris Healey,            2<sup>nd</sup> Andy Ledeczky,            3<sup>rd</sup> James Mean

Buggies:

A Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Steve Andrews    2<sup>nd</sup> Nick Vincent,            3<sup>rd</sup> Jaime Vanns  
B Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Nicky Riddall,    2<sup>nd</sup> Carl Hopkins,            3<sup>rd</sup> Darrel Gearing

Saloons:

A Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Dave Wastall,    2<sup>nd</sup> Dave Mills,            3<sup>rd</sup> Grant Riddall  
B Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Chris Morton,    2<sup>nd</sup> Phil Gidley            3<sup>rd</sup> Daniel Hamblin  
C Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Barry Healey    2<sup>nd</sup> Danny Webb            3<sup>rd</sup> Sean Fuller  
D Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Hopkins    2<sup>nd</sup> Dave Edwards            3<sup>rd</sup> Matthew Weeks  
E Final: 1<sup>st</sup> Clive Griffiths    2<sup>nd</sup> Steve Collins            3<sup>rd</sup> Carl Hopkins

Team Event:

1<sup>st</sup> Steve Andrews, James Mean, Nicky Riddall, George Giles, Richard Hathaway  
2<sup>nd</sup> Nick Vincent, Richard Bower, Clive Woodall, John Sprules, Steve Fuller  
3<sup>rd</sup> Dave Mills, Phil Gidley, Chris Morton, Kris Healey, Dave Watts

Skill Test:

1<sup>st</sup> James Mean,            2<sup>nd</sup> Dave Mills,            3<sup>rd</sup> Nick Vincent

### Summer Season

That long hot Summer that we hoped for never arrived, well not on race days at least. We mostly seemed to dodge the showers, particularly the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> August when we could see the black clouds and the lightning getting closer and closer. It got so dark that Ian couldn't see which keys to press on the PC and the street lights came on! Good job that was the one meeting when we finished early.

Thanks are due to Steve and Grant for mowing and strimming and generally keeping the track in order. Steve also had the unenviable task of mending the rostrum after it had been vandalised. Steve was again part of the group along with George, Simon and Colin, that very kindly moved the tracking from Hugh Christie down to the YMCA. I'm sure you will have noticed that the edging of the off-road track had been painted. This was thanks to Brian Hopkins who spent some eight hours painting white stripes on the hoses. I have done this job myself several times so I know how mind numbingly boring it is. Can I also pass on my thanks to all those who helped out with the transponders (Frank, Jim, Derek and Brian) and those who filled in for us when Ian or I were away. Steve Hamblin and Dave Burton are two that spring to mind. Finally, Pete Drury kindly donated a large number of cartridges for the club's inkjet printer, so thanks to him as well.

Buggies, you will have noticed, are on the decline. At meeting number five there were only eight with not a single TQ driver present. Strangely the meetings either side of this both had eighteen buggies. Then at the last meeting there were only seven (with no TQ's). Saloons though very often outnumbered buggies by a ratio of more than 3:1. This means, in effect, that only a small proportion of members are able to use the club's purpose built track whilst the majority are making do with what is essentially a tarmac playground. We know from your comments that some of you are not happy with this state of affairs and feel that it is a problem that needs to be addressed. As I see it the questions are :-

- Should we build an on-road track?
- Should we build it on the present site or look for another?
- If not at the YMCA then where?
- Will we be able to accommodate buggies in some form?

If we did decide to use the present site then we may need to consider security. The YMCA have said that they are not willing to fund, or even part fund for that matter, the fencing we were hoping to erect adjacent to the recycling bins. As I said before, I feel this ought to be a first step for the area before we spend any vast sum on laying a track that is bound to attract even more unwelcome interest. At the moment we have to clear large numbers of beer cans before we can start racing and the Police even visited the site early one Sunday morning. Ultimately these are issues that we as a club will have to discuss and decide, possibly at a meeting similar to the one we held to resolve the membership issue. If you have any thoughts or ideas on this subject then please let us hear them.

Meeting number seven was surely the most fraught for many years. We were trying some new software to overcome the split time issue, but although it solved that problem it created a host of new ones. We also had a problem with the transponders not always reading followed by the club laptop deciding that enough was enough and it gave up the ghost. Oh, and by the way, it rained as well! Sadly all these things together meant that it would be impossible to calculate points for the meeting, so unfortunately we had to drop that one. I want to mention the transponders in more detail a little later.

### Buggy Results

In total 21 drivers took part in the championship but only ten completed the necessary seven meetings to qualify for trophies. As you can see only two TQ drivers achieved this so Steve didn't have too much trouble in winning again with a maximum score. I think next season, in view of the low buggy turnout, we will probably only run two formulas depending on numbers at the start. We may also have to rethink the criteria for allocating the large club shield, which historically has always been presented to the club champion in buggies but in future may go to the saloon champion. When there is no real competition it seems to me that it is somehow devalued.

However Danny did well to win his formula by such a comfortable margin as did Stuart in his first outdoor season. James also drove well considering he was only running two wheel drive.

### Formula TQ

1 <sup>st</sup> and Club Champion	Steve Andrews	427 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Nick Vincent	390 "

## Formula 1

1 <sup>st</sup>	Danny Litchfield	397 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Nicky Riddall	377 “
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Darrel Gearing	368 “
4 <sup>th</sup>	Sam Collins	346 “

## Formula 2

1 <sup>st</sup>	Stuart Willis	370 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	James Parascandolo	360 “
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Carl Hopkins	353 “
4 <sup>th</sup>	Colin Howard	330 “

## Saloon Results

Fifty one drivers took part with thirty five completing the required seven to qualify for trophies. Dave won saloons with a maximum score but that was only after some really good racing, particularly with Grant, though Pete scored very consistently. In formula 1 Phil was comfortably in front but it was **very** close behind him. In formula 2 Lee was an easy winner but lower down the order some places were separated by just one point. I think that proves that there isn't too much wrong with the points system we use. In order to even out the formulas the bottom two from each will move down and the top four will move up. Those of you who did less than seven meetings (and don't therefore appear on these results) will stay in your current formulas unless you hear otherwise.

## Formula TQ

1 <sup>st</sup> and Club Champion	Dave Mills	427 points	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Grant Riddall	413 “	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Pete Drury	393 “	
4 <sup>th</sup>	Kris Healey	365 “	
5 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Spurway	362 “	
6 <sup>th</sup>	Jamie Walker	334 “	
7 <sup>th</sup>	Jason Gidley	319 “	(F1)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Steve Fuller	299 “	(F1)

## Formula 1

1 <sup>st</sup>	Phil Gidley	366 points	(TQ)
=2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ben Hunter	348 “	(TQ)
=2 <sup>nd</sup>	Andy Doorne	348 “	(TQ)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Hathaway	345 “	(TQ)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Mark Parascandolo	336 “	
6 <sup>th</sup>	Rob Dorling	334 “	
7 <sup>th</sup>	Daniel Hamblin	317 “	
8 <sup>th</sup>	Barry Healey	274 “	
9 <sup>th</sup>	John Sprules	264 “	
10 <sup>th</sup>	George Giles	226 “	

11 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Croft	218 points	(F2)
12 <sup>th</sup>	Clive Singyard	190 “	(F2)

## Formula 2

1 <sup>st</sup>	Lee Smith	331 points	(F1)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ian Brocklesby	277 “	(F1)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Clive Woodall	268 “	(F1)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Penfold	254 “	(F1)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew Weeks	242 “	
6 <sup>th</sup>	Glen Ansty	224 “	
7 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Edwards	217 “	
8 <sup>th</sup>	Brian Hopkins	216 “	
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sean Fuller	212 “	
10 <sup>th</sup>	Paul Young	205 “	
11 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Watts	197 “	
12 <sup>th</sup>	Steve Collins	196 “	
13 <sup>th</sup>	Darren Boorman	189 “	
14 <sup>th</sup>	Thomas Singyard	173 “	
15 <sup>th</sup>	Derrick Marshall	140 “	

## Clubman Trophy

At around this time of year Ian and I mull over who we think is deserving of this trophy. It is given to someone who in our opinion has made a significant contribution to the club. Last year it went to George Giles for, amongst other things, the way he takes new members under his wing and passes on the knowledge he has acquired over his many years of racing. Considering his age that could be an **awful** lot of knowledge! However, we have decided that this year the trophy will be shared between two people who have helped us and the club considerably. This does not mean though that George hasn't continued to assist newcomers in his usual helpful way, or that we don't appreciate the help of all those of you I have mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. The trophy will be presented at the second meeting at Hugh Christie along with the others for the outdoor season.

## TWRCC People In The News

There are occasionally some pleasant things to report that I like to sneak in amongst all the nagging. Firstly congratulations to Dave Penfold who became a proud father recently. Also, you will be sad to learn, that a poor innocent young lady has made an honest man of Glen Ansty. Congratulations to Barry Healey for his promotion to Deputy Station Commander in the Fire Service. Finally Mike Spurway, that elder statesman of racing, has made it to the grand old age of 55. I know what your thinking and I agree, he hasn't worn that well has he?

## Promotional Items

It's possible that we may be able to get some items printed with the club name and/or logo. These would be things like pens, pencils, rulers, mugs and t-shirts but it would be nice to know if this would appeal to any of you. Please let me know if you are interested. I did notice Steve Fuller had a very nice t-shirt with the club logo embroidered on it.

## Finance

I'm pleased to be able to report that financially we are in a very secure position. At present we have £3130 in the bank, £14 pounds in hand and a £10 float. This means that thanks to your generosity Ian and I will again be overwintering somewhere in the Caribbean. The club accounts are always with me at meetings and available for any member who wants to see them.

Last outdoor season saw a slight rise in costs at the YMCA and Hugh Christie have followed suit with the hall charges. To be fair, this is the first rise for at least three years so I don't think we have any cause for complaint.

During the year the club bought a laser printer with duplexer, which allows me to print the newsletters automatically without having to feed the pages manually when I want to print on both sides of the paper. It occurred to me that as it stands idle most of the time (rather like Ian) it would be possible to print items for members providing that they gave them to me in an electronic form. We also have a small laminator, which could be made available to members. I don't think there were any other major expenses apart from the regular ones of YMCA corporate and meeting fees, trophies and insurance. The change to annual membership and reduced race fees seems to have worked well. One or two people asked if, because of their circumstances, they could pay the membership in instalments, which we were more than happy to agree to.

## Web Site

Now that Dave has a digital camera we are hoping to get some pictures of the cars on the site along with driver details. I would normally expect the results to be updated within three to four days of racing, but please remember, this isn't always possible because of holidays, work or other commitments. The results will always be available at the following meeting. To date the site has had over 4,200 visitors.

## Winter Season

We return indoors to the sports hall at Hugh Christie Technology College in North Tonbridge on November 4<sup>th</sup>. This will be as usual a practice meeting, which is run in exactly the same way as the others but no championship points are awarded. This is to allow you all to get used to the polished wood surface. A full list of the dates can be found on a separate sheet so you can pin it on a notice board or wherever takes your fancy.

As you all know membership is closed at the moment for saloon drivers although we have some buggy spaces left. We will be continuing the practice of visitors signing in on the sheet provided and then using this to allocate any spare places on a first come first served basis. Visitors need to remember that we cannot guarantee them a place.

As in previous years all saloons will be required to run 27 turn motors although re-buildables are allowed. Buggies can run modifieds if they wish but I don't think that will be an advantage because of the floor surface. If anyone is interested in running in a separate Tamiya saloon class then let me know ASAP.

It would help Ian and I if you could update your race cards when you change crystals or buy extra ones. If you arrive early, Steve and Grant would really appreciate your help in getting the tracking out of the shed and into the hall. Last indoor season it was common to see people sitting at their tables and making no attempt to help. Also when the meeting is over we expect **everyone** to help in putting the track away and tidying up. To encourage

you all to stay behind and help we will be reinforcing the rule that transmitters cannot be taken from the pound until the meeting is over. All transmitters as you know **must** have a label on the back, or on the case they are in, with your name on. It will not do to use minute lettering that requires a magnifying glass to be read. This labelling is used to ensure that no transmitters leave the pound other than when you are racing. It is totally unfair to other drivers to have transmitters floating around the pits when racing is going on. If your name is not on your transmitter it will be treated as missing and the penalty will be the same i.e. you will forfeit the points for that meeting. Labels are available from race control so there is no excuse.

Now on to the old chestnut of marshalling. When the race you are in finishes all you need to do is to turn off your car and transmitter, hand back the transponder, put your car on the table and your transmitter in the box and go out to marshal. You don't need to go back to the pits for anything because you will only hold up the next race. The penalties will be as before in that you will lose ten championship points from your **final** score if you are not on your marshal point when we are ready to start the race. Last season we were very lenient with persistent offenders but when the championship starts indoors and we have a limited amount of time available to us we will have to be stricter. You have been warned!

When we hire the hall at Hugh Christie we have to accept the rules that are laid down by the College. These are very briefly:

- Only trainer type shoes can be worn in the hall. Last year a tiny minority tried to ignore this. **Please remember you will not be allowed into the hall with outdoor shoes on.** If you want to come in you will have to take your shoes off.
- **No smoking** is allowed **anywhere** in the building.
- No rubbish (or cigarette ends) to be left either inside or outside the building.

If everyone takes notice of these few simple rules it will make life much easier for everyone, particularly Ian and I, who find it unpleasant to continually nag you all.

### Transponders

Many of you will remember that before the arrival of transponders things could get pretty fraught in race control. I had to count each car manually and then Ian would press the appropriate keys on the PC. When we bought the transponders they came with some DOS software, which was vastly inferior to the Windows based program that Dave had written and that we had been using. Dave modified his program to cater for them but a glitch has remained that causes a problem occasionally with split times. Recently AMB announced a new style of transponder that they sell with a Windows based program. The purchase of the entire system would be a considerable expense even allowing for the fact that they will let us trade in the old sets. The new transponders are known as personal ones in that once fitted to the car they stay there for as long as you have the car. You can go to other clubs and be certain that there is no other transponder anywhere with the same number as yours. This would mean though that every member would have to buy his own transponder (possibly via the club) which at the current exchange rates would cost about £26. I'm told that there are advantages for the club and for the driver with times being available for all your practice runs to name just one. Ian, I know, is sceptical about spending a great deal of money to replace something that we have only had for two years and I agree to a certain extent. However I thought I would make you aware of what is available and what we are considering on your behalf. As I have said elsewhere in this newsletter your comments are (nearly) always appreciated.

## Backward Glance

Looking back on the last few years as we reach newsletter number 50 the club has seen many changes take place. Chris (Janes) retired from the police force and moved away from the area, which meant he had to stand down as administrator. We bought (with the help of Roger) the transponders, which instantly took a lot of pressure off those of us in race control. We also started racing saloons for the first time in the club's history, which of course proved to be extremely popular. More recently we introduced the idea of a yearly membership along with reduced race day fees. Despite all these things the ethos of the club remains largely unchanged in that we are still at heart a family orientated group where fathers and sons and brothers race together. It is a place where, quite rightly, mums, dads, brothers and sisters can come to watch and feel an integral part of the club. It is also, I hope, a place where your opponent on the track is likely to be the same person in the pits who lends you that all important wishbone you need to be able to race in the next heat. That is as it should be and is due largely, I still believe, to the foundations that were laid by Ian and Chris way back in 1985. I very much hope that spirit will continue for a long time to come.

## Finally

Lastly can I just say thank you to everyone who has supported the club during the year and that I hope you all have a good time during the coming seasons meetings. Don't forget this is meant to be fun so do please..... **enjoy your racing.**

Brian

October 2001

## Chairman's Chatter

Well here we are again - where did the Summer go? Each season, be it Summer or Winter seems to go so quickly and we are either going indoors or getting ready to move outdoors. Newsletter number 50 - quite an achievement for the club from the early days. Steve Andrews, Grant Riddall and myself are the only ones who were around at the start. Chris Janes, who a lot of you will remember, does still keep in touch and it must be so gratifying for him to read on the website how successful the club still is, - we seem to be going from strength to strength.

Something that often comes to mind about our club is that we seem to have achieved a very friendly atmosphere, as new drivers that come along are always made very welcome by all the regulars. They have often come to Brian or myself after the meeting, and have said how they have enjoyed racing with us. This is very pleasing, from an organisational point of view, as drivers will quite frequently complain about something that is not to their liking or maybe their lap times have been wrong etc. If you do have a "beef" about something remember the way **we** deal with it will depend very much on how **you** deal with it - so bear in mind a complaint is best dealt with in an amicable way so we can all enjoy racing to the full.

As you will all know we have a very strict code of conduct as regards bad language and abuse of the marshals. At one of the Summer meetings a driver was reported to me for using bad language, which I duly announced over the speakers. Unfortunately the driver concerned did not apologise for his behaviour but four or five other drivers did come up and apologise for theirs as they obviously felt very guilty about something they had said.

So if you do use bad language keep it quiet as you never know who is listening - it isn't necessary and it creates a bad impression when visitors and new drivers attend. Anyway that's enough of all that - now I'll talk about something else.

Going back to the early days of 1978, Tamiya produced a car called the Rough Rider. Some of you may remember it. They retailed at £79.95 in those days - a lot of money twenty three years ago. I learnt from a Tamiya collector (he has over 100 cars) that in the original box unbuilt these cars are fetching £1000 each. Not a bad investment - I wish I'd put a few away all those years ago. How many times have I heard that said? It was totally different when those cars were around. The average customer buying one was probably twenty to twenty five years old and the only decision he had to make was whether to buy it or not. There weren't all the different cars to choose from as there are now.

Have you ever heard of "hairy tyres" - do you know what they are? I will explain. In the early days of electric car racing it was all done indoors. There was a very successful club running at Alexander Palace in North London and all the demon tweeks came from there. I was running a car called Lectricar and it was one of the first mass produced cars around for indoor racing. I used to race at a club in West Norwood with a floor very similar to that at Hugh Christie (polished wood) and the only tyres available were foam tyres, which on that surface were absolutely useless in standard form. However, somebody discovered that if you put a layer of clear silicone sealant onto the tyre and rolled it around a few times on a flat surface this created a hairy look to the tyre which would cut through any dust on the track and create grip. What we didn't realise was that it also laid the silicone onto the track which was good for grip but very slippery for people with normal shoes. So the next thing was it was banned from use because of this but by this time there were other types of tyres coming along to get the grip. So there we are - hairy tyres.

It's strange how the early days of a hobby or sport are so interesting when manufacturers are all going in different directions thinking their ideas will be the best. It is a far cry from the very sophisticated cars, motors, speed controllers, tyres and all the other equipment we use to go quicker than the next guy. But at the end of the day I always feel the most important things are driver ability and car reliability. A good driver will always get the best out of a bad car but a good car doesn't necessarily help a bad driver.

Well folks that's all for now so we'll see you all on November 4th for hopefully another exciting Winter season.

Ian  
October 2001

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## **WINTER 2001/2002 DATES**

4th November 2001	Practice Meeting
18th November 2001	Round 1
2nd December 2001	Round 2
16th December 2001	Round 3
30th December 2001	NO MEETING
13th January 2002	Round 4
27th January 2002	Round 5
10th February 2002	Round 6
24th February 2002	Round 7
10th March 2002	Round 8
24th March 2002	Round 9
7th April 2002	Round 10
21st April 2002	SPRING MEETING (PROVISIONAL)