

# WEST KENT RADIO CAR CLUB

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

## Newsletter No. 54

### Welcome

Firstly, welcome to the new members and visitors who have joined us this season. As you can see from the title above the club name may have changed but not the friendly, helpful service (!) that you have come to expect. More about the name change later. I'm pleased to report that I've received two items from members to print in this newsletter.

### Spring Meeting

The sun shone on us again this year so we must be about due for a washout! There were slightly less members than expected, probably because it was a bank holiday. The meeting was originally scheduled for the fortnight before until I realised that was the Easter break so the next best thing was to move it back two weeks and into May. As always the success of the day is directly proportional to the amount of effort put into it by the members. With that in mind can I offer our collective thanks to:-

- Jim Litchfield who was head chef and also brought along the bread rolls.
- Dave Burton who was Jim's assistant (at short notice) and also judged the concours for us.
- Dave Vanns (our regular chef) who couldn't be with us but lent us his bar-b-q.
- Grant for the track and skill event designs.
- Steve Hamblin for looking after the transponders.
- Steve Andrews for bringing the burgers and bangers.
- Barry and Kris Healey for an excellent raffle (see below) and also to Kris for organising the team event.
- Marleen – for her race commentary.
- All of you who came along with your families and gave the club your support on the day.

I just want to talk briefly about the raffle which exceeded all expectations. Two years ago Sandra and George Giles organised our first ever raffle at a spring meeting and a great job they made of it. Last year there was no raffle, but this year Barry and Kris agreed to run it and achieved a whopping £221.70. That is by any standards a terrific result. I know Barry spent considerable time writing begging letters and Kris also "lent" on one or two people. On race day the whole Healey family (Barry's wife and daughter included) sold a huge number of tickets and put in a lot of effort to achieve the result they did. Thanks to all of them. If it had been left to me there is no way that I could have devoted the same amount of time to it, which just proves how much it helps when someone else takes just a bit of the load.

Financially the rest of the day broke even which is pretty much as expected. It is after all meant to be a fun day. The bar-b-q ran in the same way as last year with the cost included in drivers race fees and everyone else paying £1, which bought them a burger, a sausage in a bun and a drink.

One thing we did that was new was a "non-drivers" race. Perhaps some of you could enter next year! My only regret is that on the day I was let down badly by a very average pit crew and therefore failed to finish. By a quirk of fate Ian came second in a brand new car off the shelf from his shop. I bet that was back on sale first thing Monday morning!

So to the results for the day: -

### Concours

1<sup>st</sup> Brian Hopkins

2<sup>nd</sup> Clive Bonner

3<sup>rd</sup> James Brooker

### Buggies

1<sup>st</sup> Steve Andrews

2<sup>nd</sup> Nick Riddall

3<sup>rd</sup> Danny Litchfield

### Saloons

'A' 1<sup>st</sup> Adrian Bidewell

2<sup>nd</sup> Chris Mears

3<sup>rd</sup> Dave Mills

'B' 1<sup>st</sup> Dave Penfold

2<sup>nd</sup> Kris Healey

3<sup>rd</sup> Grant Riddall

'C' 1<sup>st</sup> Clive Bonner

2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Turner

3<sup>rd</sup> Danny Mattess

'D' 1<sup>st</sup> David Bird

2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Hopkins

3<sup>rd</sup> Carl Hopkins

'E' 1<sup>st</sup> Gary Wise

2<sup>nd</sup> Martin Hoare

3<sup>rd</sup> Brian Fuller

### Team Event

1<sup>st</sup> Dave Mills, Dan Hamblin, Claire Piper, Dave Penfold, Marleen Maher and Danny Litchfield.

2<sup>nd</sup> Kris Healey, Barry Healey, Rob Dorling, James Brooker, and Mark Turner.

3<sup>rd</sup> Grant Riddall, Paul Young, Nick Riddall, Gary Wise and Phil Gidley.

### Non-drivers Event

1<sup>st</sup> Paul Mancini

2<sup>nd</sup> Ian Skilling

3<sup>rd</sup> Malcolm Bonanno

### Skill Event

1<sup>st</sup> Dave Mills

2<sup>nd</sup> Jason Gidley

3<sup>rd</sup> Dan Hamblin

Trophies and certificates were presented on the day along with miniatures of the Clubman trophy. These are for those people who have been awarded the Clubman trophy in the past and who then return it for the next year's recipient. The small trophies are for them to retain and were given to Kris Healey, Brian Hopkins and Steve Andrews. I also have one for George Giles who wasn't present.

I must just comment on a few things. Firstly, I was very impressed by the extremely high standard of the cars in the concours event. It was obvious that a lot of people had made an awful lot of effort. Secondly, there were only three buggies despite drivers complaining about their decline over the previous season. I've said it before – if **you** don't support it don't expect it to be there when you come back. Lastly, can I say how good it was to see some real sportsmanship on that day? During one of the races there was confusion between Danny Mattess and Mark Turner about whether someone was lapping or not. In the style of true Englishmen (I'll probably find out one of them is a Scot now) they agreed to a penalty shoot out to determine the winner. Well done lads!

### Summer Season

All things considered I don't think using the playground at Hugh Christie was as bad as some had predicted. OK it isn't ideal and it's a long way to carry the track but as there were no other offers we ought to be grateful to the College for helping us out. I thought there was some excellent racing throughout the formulas and at times the scores were very close. Congratulations to Adrian who is our Club Champion again outdoors and also to Mark Turner for winning F1 (not decided until the last meeting) and Claire Piper who won F2. The weather at the first three meetings was borderline as to whether we should race or not but we went ahead which was the right decision I think. It was free cakes at round 5 when Marlene and Dave (Penfold) treated us to celebrate young Harrison's birthday. It was also at this meeting that Dan Hamblin compiled a report that he subsequently sent to "Racer" magazine for inclusion at a later date. It was around this time that a letter appeared in RRCI stating that "Tunbridge Wells Club is no more". Fortunately they printed an apology in the October issue. At round 7 it turned out to be the hottest day since records began which reminds me to say thanks to Claire and Dave for bringing the refreshments along at each meeting. We feared that two fires a fortnight apart at Hugh Christie may interfere with racing but fortunately that wasn't

the case. Thanks to Kris for again helping set up the finals boards and load the computer and to the “early team” (Mark Turner, Gary Fleet, James Brooker, Stubby, Dave Penfold and Dave Mills) for getting the track out. Thanks also to Steve Hamblin who looks after the transponders and transmitters for us, and to Grant for even more demented track designs.

Results – Saloons (Formula **changes** are shown in the point’s column but remember this only shows those who qualified for a trophy).

Formula TQ

1 <sup>st</sup> and Club Champion	Adrian Bidewell	671 points	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Dave Mills	651	“
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Chris Mears	643	“
4 <sup>th</sup>	Grant Riddall	633	“
5 <sup>th</sup>	James Brooker	616	“
6 <sup>th</sup>	Dan Hamblin	604	“
7 <sup>th</sup>	Clive Bonner	596	“
=8 <sup>th</sup>	Andy Doorne	567	“
=8 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Spurway	567	“
10 <sup>th</sup>	Jason Gidley	565	“
11 <sup>th</sup>	Kris Healey	556	“
12 <sup>th</sup>	Phil Gidley	554	“
13 <sup>th</sup>	Gary Wise	535	“ F1

Formula 1

1 <sup>st</sup>	Mark Turner	596 points	TQ
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Dave Penfold	586	“ TQ
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Roger Packer	558	“
4 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Hathaway	536	“
5 <sup>th</sup>	Gary Fleet	518	“
6 <sup>th</sup>	Barry Healey	515	“
=7 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Edwards	485	“
=7 <sup>th</sup>	Nick Riddall	485	“
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Bishop	438	“ F2
10 <sup>th</sup>	Lee Smith	376	“ F2

Formula 2

1 <sup>st</sup>	Claire Piper	548 points	F1
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Mark Stubbington	508	“ F1
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Leigh Mellett	489	“
=4 <sup>th</sup>	Josh Beale	474	“
=4 <sup>th</sup>	Lee Edwards	474	“
6 <sup>th</sup>	Marleen Maher	462	“
7 <sup>th</sup>	Carl Hopkins	460	“
8 <sup>th</sup>	Paul Young	451	“
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Hoare	442	“
10 <sup>th</sup>	Brian Hopkins	425	“
11 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Hoare	392	“
12 <sup>th</sup>	Mark Collier	380	“
13 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Rogers	375	“
14 <sup>th</sup>	Kelly Walker	337	“

## Results - Buggies

1 <sup>st</sup>	Steve Andrews	671 points	Saloon TQ
=2 <sup>nd</sup>	Danny Litchfield	651 “	Saloon F1
=2 <sup>rd</sup>	John Maddex	651 “	Saloon F1

## Web Site

Thanks to Dave for updating the site and for making the alterations when we changed names. The new address is at the top of the first page. You will continue to be diverted if you use the old address by mistake. We have now had approaching 15,000 hits. Those of you with internet access will have noticed some changes. Firstly there is a link to a forum which resides on a site that Claire and Dave maintain that is also used by other clubs who have their own areas. You can discuss current topics, open new ones or organise votes on anything you think needs airing. However, please use it for its intended purpose and not for making personal comments that are likely to upset others. Secondly, on the results page all drivers' names have a link to an information page with details about their car and the equipment they use. Lastly there is another column on the results page for average scores. I have used this information for some time but it is now also available from the web-site. As before the results are usually updated on the day of racing and e-mails are sent to all those that have provided addresses to tell them the latest results are there. If you have an e-mail address and haven't yet given it to me then let me have it and you can be added to the list.

## Finance

The club is in a stable financial position with most of our cash in a deposit style account which at least provides us with some interest. On 10/09/03 (before the last meeting) the states of the accounts were as follows:-

- Deposit           £7254. 68
- Current           £ 142. 12
- In hand           £ 16. 17
- Float             £ 10. 00
  
- Total             £7422. 97

Please remember that I always have the accounts with me at the meetings and any member is welcome (and entitled) to see them – just ask.

## Good News(?)

During the summer three of our members all passed their driving tests. Congratulations to Kris Healey, Mark Parascandolo and Claire Piper.

## Farewell Buggies

It was bound to come sooner or later but the time has now arrived to draw a veil over buggy racing. No one can enjoy racing (or watching) when there are only two or three cars in a heat. At one meeting there was only **one**, and he went home early! It's true that the club was founded to race buggies but that is nothing like a good reason for keeping them going. Nobody knows how things will change in the future – we all know the saying about what goes around comes around. Could buggies make a return? Maybe. The only thing I can say with certainty is that we as a club provided the option (buggy or saloon) and the members decided for themselves. Rather like the Betamax video recorder they have been overtaken by their more prolific rival. As I said on the forum some time ago buggy racing at Tonbridge is like a much loved family pet that is ill – much better to put it out of it's misery with dignity rather than leaving it to a long, lingering and painful death.

## Winter Season

The 2003/2004 Winter Championship will start on November 2nd (with the normal practice meeting) in the large sports hall at Hugh Christie Technology College, White Cottage Road, North Tonbridge. The idea of this is to give you an opportunity to get used to the change in surface (polished wood) and try some setups on your car. It is run in exactly the same way as a normal meeting but no points are awarded at the end. As usual there will be ten championship meetings with the best seven to count. Seven are required for a trophy. In a break with tradition the dates are no longer on a separate sheet but are listed below. Let me know if you want this re-instated.

Motor limits will be as before in that F2 must use silver cans and all the rest will run stock motors. On the subject of "stock" motors there has been some discussion on the web-site forum and apparently in the pits regarding what you can do to a stock motor and keep it "legal". The answer is nothing apart from cleaning, skimming and brush replacement. Anyone we suspect of tweaking their motor will have their points taken away and may well be removed from the championship. The onus will be on the driver to prove he has not modified his motor. I personally find it rather sad that drivers have to race within the letter of the law and not the spirit of it.

Some suggestions for changes to racing have been made. One idea was for staggered starts, another was to have eight in a heat and start from two rows instead of three. An idea of mine (!) was to use your heat one times to decide start order in heat two and then use times from heat two to give the start order in heat three. Also I suggested towards the end of the season that we ought to return to five minute heats but an alternative view was to stay with four minutes but expand to six heats (to fill the buggy gap) with less cars in each heat.

Marshalling as always is a bone of contention. An idea has been put forward that each marshal has a high visibility vest with their marshal number on. When the heat is over the vest is passed to the next person due at that point. If there is no-one to pass the vest to then that person remains and marshals another heat (maximum two). Failure to marshal would mean a penalty to be decided, such as loss of best time or points. Also, to tie in with this we may have a scrutineering table (for motor checking) that cars are left on while you go out to do your marshalling. We may also get people with reverse on their speedos to mark their cars in some way to assist the marshals. Let us know your thoughts on all these ideas.

Race dates are:-

November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2003

December 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 (**Note no meeting on December 28<sup>th</sup>**)

January 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 2004

February 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004

March 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 2004

April 4<sup>th</sup> 2004

April 18<sup>th</sup> 2004 – **provisional date** for spring meeting .

I know I say this about the same time each year but when we hire the sports hall from Hugh Christie we have to accept the conditions they impose, all of which are perfectly reasonable. They are:-

- You must wear trainer type shoes in the hall – outside shoes are **not** acceptable. This applies equally to drivers, pit crew and visitors. You must expect to walk around in your socks if you turn up in anything else.
- No smoking is permitted anywhere in the building.
- Don't drop litter and particularly cigarette ends outside. There are bins provided.
- **No** tyre additives are permitted.

Racing will start at 09.30 sharp which means members must be booked in by 09.10 to be sure of a place. After this time spare places will be allocated on a first come first served basis to visitors in the order they appear on the signing in form. Visitors need to remember that we cannot guarantee them a race.

### Christmas Meeting

We plan to have a small celebration at the meeting before Christmas. Sherry, fruit juice and mince pies will be available as usual. For your information Marleen has announced she will be on the wagon and is bringing non-alcoholic wine for her own consumption – not surprising after last year!

### Track Situation

It seems hard to believe but it is now almost a year since we lost the track at Tunbridge Wells and I'm sure to many people it must seem as if we haven't achieved very much in that time. If that is the case then it isn't for want of trying. Having to deal with local councils is **the** most frustrating occupation. As I write this I am still waiting for a reply to a letter to KCC originally sent on April 16th, despite letters trying to hurry them along.

There are a few sites that I've looked at that were obviously unsuitable at first glance. One was at the back of Caley Road in Tunbridge Wells. The area was too small, there was no vehicular access – not even for a digger and it was adjacent to some houses.

However, on a slightly more positive note there is still the option of farm land at Matfield. The location is superb but there are no services and no access road once you leave the farm track, so we would have to lay something like road scalplings for that and for car parking.

The Southborough option is as far as I can tell still alive. The problem is that the Parish Clerk who was very helpful and supportive has left and sadly his assistant who I spoke to last could hardly be described in the same glowing terms. However, the proposal was put forward for the public consultation and I'm told will have been passed on to the officer whose job it is to collate all the information. The outcome though is anyone's guess.

There was also a site within the Tunbridge Wells area that Ian and I have seen. This is the one we asked you to design a track for. The area is very pleasant, there are toilets electricity and parking, and the space available to us would be sufficient. There are two problems though. Firstly, the owner is in discussions with his local Council and Sport England, and secondly because of rumours floating around at the time we decided the location must remain secret so that ours would be the first option on the site. That is still the situation at the moment.

We also looked at a site not within our local area. Facilities there were excellent but again there are planning and other issues involved over which we have no control. We were asked by the owner not to reveal the location. At the moment that site is still a distant option.

In the middle of July there was an article in the Kent Messenger about £100,000 being allocated by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council for a skate park. I wrote to the Director of Leisure Services and enquired generally if it were possible for us to share facilities (toilets, parking etc.) with them if we were able to fund the track ourselves. It seems that this isn't a viable option but he did reply saying that the letter had been passed to one of his officers who duly wrote and invited us to meet him. Richard Hathaway came with me to what was a pretty productive meeting. The Leisure Officer seemed to us both quite positive in his attitude and was impressed by the fact that we have saved a considerable sum towards the costs. He suggested a site at Hayesden Country Park which both Ian and I have seen and which offers, I think, a reasonable chance of success. The area is large enough, there is ample parking but there are no toilets or electricity. There are public toilets but they are a long way away. By the time Mick Spurway got back from them he would only have time for a quick race before he was off again! I have spoken to the Vice-Commodore of the sailing club nearby about using their toilets in exchange for a financial contribution when it comes to emptying the holding tank. He is going to put this to the committee and see what they think.

I wrote to TMBC again at the beginning of September to confirm in writing that we wish to move the project forward. They are now consulting with other services within the Council and also with local Councillors to see if any problems lie ahead. That pretty much brings you up to date with the situation at the moment.

The name change was something I suggested to Ian a while ago but was brought back into focus at the meeting with TMBC. By restricting ourselves, name wise, to a very small area we are making negotiations with the wider world far more difficult. "West Kent" broadens our scope enormously.

So what about financing a new track? We have money in the bank but certainly not enough to fund a project of this size. As I see it the options are:-

- Bank loans. The disadvantages are that we have to pay interest and find someone to sign on the dotted line.
- Interest free loans from members. Probably a better and certainly cheaper option although if there were a large number of people involved repayment could get complicated. Without mentioning names I will just say that one of our members has already offered a considerable sum. If any of you feel that you can help the club in this way please let me know so that I have an idea of what level of support there is. We need an idea of how much we will have available to spend.
- Grants from local authorities. TMBC have said we may be able to apply for a grant but of course there is no guarantee of success.
- Donations or sponsorship from local businesses (EM Models?). Due to his success with the raffle, I have asked Barry Healey if he would be prepared to look after fund raising issues. I'm pleased to say he has not only agreed but has written an item which I've included a little later in this newsletter. Please give him and the club your support.
- Up front memberships where members pay in advance for a number of years ahead. This is a way of raising cash without having to worry about the need to repay it but depends on members making a long term commitment.
- Increase the membership and/or race fees. This is an easy option but realistically would only raise a relatively small amount and may not be popular with members.

We must bear in mind that we will still have to pay TMBC rent for the site and the sailing club (if they agree) for the use of the toilets whilst repaying whatever we have borrowed.

You may not agree, having read the above, but I still feel that we should be actively searching out new sites. After all nothing is secure yet. With all the members we have that is an awful lot of eyes and ears. An ideal site would either have the following or provision for us to provide them. 700-800sq.m for a track, toilets, parking for 50 cars and electricity.

I must just say how deeply disappointed I am with KCC and the way they have behaved. I find it disgraceful that they forced us to leave Tunbridge Wells and yet they have done nothing to the site that would in any way have prevented us from using it for the outdoor season.

### Hi Everyone

A short while ago I was watching Kris race, saying to myself every father's prayer. "Please don't break the car, please don't break the car," when I was distracted by a grey haired chap. He said that the club was looking for someone to take on the responsibility of raising a "few quid," to help pay for the new track. Brian came out with all the old flannel about how well the raffle had gone at the Spring Meeting and felt the job had my name on it. I asked him how much money was needed but I didn't get a straight answer (I don't think he wanted to frighten me

off). About three weeks later and after accepting the job, Brian told me we needed something in the region of £20,000.

I attempted to remain positive and put the wheels in motion. The first step was to take a look at the money that the club raised in the Spring Meeting Raffle (approx £250), £19,750 to go. It may seem like quite a mountain to climb, however with the participation of every member in the club we will achieve our target.

I have to date made various enquiries about getting a National Lottery Grant, but you would not believe how many hoops you have to jump through and how much paperwork is involved. We will still continue to look towards the National Lottery for some type of grant, even if we are successful I think it may only be for a small amount of money.

To give an example of some of the problems involved, a few lottery agencies will not take any new applications until next spring, the impression I got was that even if we did apply next year the chance of us being allocated a grant would be remote. One of the other lottery agencies doesn't consider radio control car racing a sport, meaning we would not get a grant. The same agency does however consider flying radio control airplanes a sport. I did tell them that our cars also have wings on them and a few people at the club do seem to fly around the track, however they were not convinced.

I know that the club has already got a relatively healthy bank balance but we as club members will have to raise a lot more money. You will notice over the next few months various money raising ventures, please support them as much as you can. Remember all the money raised, will be given back to us as individuals, in the form of a top class track. The first fund raising venture you will notice will probably be the "Track Builder Treasure Hunt". This will take place every meeting and will cost you £1.00 to have a go, 50% of all takings will go the club, the other 50% will be paid out to the winner ( if you win, it could help pay for some spare parts ). If nobody wins on any particular week, all the takings will roll over to the next meeting but there will be a new treasure hunt, therefore previous entries on the old grid will not count.

Other fund raising activities that we will be holding include an Xmas draw, please attempt to sell the books of tickets to friends, family, workmates and school friends and return the counterfoils to the club as soon as possible. We hope to do the draw on the last meeting before Xmas. A prize will be given to the person who sells the most tickets. If you have any prizes that you would like to donate please could you give them to me or Kris. If you work for a company that offers a type of service or produces goods, please try talking to the boss very politely and ask if they would like to help our venture. Some companies may not be in a position to offer a prize, but may be willing to make a financial donation and, no matter how small, all will be very welcome.

I would also like to thank everybody who made donations of prizes for the Spring Meeting raffle; it was your generosity that made it a success. Particular mention goes to Mark Turner and Ian for their very generous donations and anybody that parted with their cash. Many thanks!

Finally, going back to the beginning of my comments and just in case you were wondering did Kris break his car, the answer was yes and it cost **me** £60.00 to put right.  
Don't you just love your kids!

Barry

### Club Day Out

One thing I've considered lately is whether as a club we could organise some activity other than Sunday racing. There are two possibilities I've looked at briefly. The first was a box at Brands Hatch to watch a race meeting. The other was an organised kart race at Buckmore Park. I've hired the track myself and can vouch for the fact that it is great fun. Perhaps you could let me know your thoughts on the subject.

### Penfolds Pearls (of wisdom).

As I said earlier I'm pleased to have received contributions from some of the members. Dave Penfold gave me this which I've got to say makes a lot of sense.

### Note for all drivers.

When you are going to lap someone it is polite to ask them to move aside rather than hitting them and possibly losing your position by damaging your car and the other drivers too. I have watched the qualifying heats and some drivers are still prepared to use heavy handed tactics to gain another position. These kinds of tactics don't make for good qualifying times and they also slow down other drivers who are trying to better their times.

### Notes on qualifying.

People in the club generally seem to forget that the first three heats are for qualifying and are not races (except against the clock). The only race of the day is your final. When you are in a qualifying heat if there is someone coming up behind you who is faster than you then, rather than block them or try to race them and end up slowing both of you down or crashing, you are better to let the faster driver through and tuck in behind. This will help you with your lines and more likely help you qualify faster. Coming first in one of your qualifying heats and then coming second in another doesn't always mean that the heat you came first in will be your fastest.

### Notes on finals.

Regarding the finals the main thing that will help you is the finals board. Looking on the board will determine who you have to "race" against for points. For example if you are F2 and there are four F2 and four F1 in your final then you have no need to race for points against the F1 drivers – just the other F2 drivers.

Thanks to Dave for his thoughts, although as I've said before anyone and everyone is welcome to make a contribution if they wish.

### Finally

Two people have asked if we can have a general meeting to discuss various issues. If this newsletter doesn't answer the questions that you have, we will allocate time at the practice for a chat. Please let me know if you have any issues you would like discussed or suggestions you have to make **in advance** so we know how much time will be needed. We may elect to have just two heats and finals if there is a lot to discuss. If I don't hear anything I will assume you are all "happy". You can e-mail me at [bwmills@totalise.co.uk](mailto:bwmills@totalise.co.uk)

It hasn't been the easiest season for us but I think we ought to be optimistic for the future. It may be that the Tonbridge site doesn't come about but it's only a matter of time before the right one comes along and we can build a track to be proud of. Ian and I would like to thank all those who have stuck with us and look forward to seeing you on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> to start racing for the winter championship. Thank you all for supporting the club and remember this is meant to be fun so do please ..... **enjoy your racing.**

Brian      September 2003

## Chairman's Chatter

This summer seems to have gone so quickly – it only seems a few weeks ago since the spring meeting and now here we are heading into another indoor season.

I think this summer season has been one of the most enjoyable we have had for a long while. Not a single meeting was lost through bad weather although one at the start of the season had a heavy downpour early on but it all dried out later.

What I find so interesting about the club championship is that not only are the drivers at the top battling it out to win the championship but there are so many smaller battles going on further down between rival drivers. It's all very nice to win but it certainly proves that competing further down the field is just as enjoyable – so well done to all drivers who have competed so hard all through the season. It was however a little disappointing to see rather fewer drivers at the last meeting on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September – maybe they didn't feel it was worth coming for the last meeting if they weren't able to better their position in the championship. I will leave that for those who didn't attend to decide.

As you will all know that was the last meeting for the buggies and is the end of an era. Steve Andrews, Danny Litchfield and John Maddex stuck it out until the very end but watching three buggies race or sometimes two (or even one) has got to be a bit boring. However, we will all look forward to seeing them compete in Saloons on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. At least we won't have the problems with marshals when there are only three in a heat. I can remember back in the early days at the club when it was all off road and we had anything up to forty buggies racing and nobody ever dreamt of racing saloons on tarmac – it just goes to show how the racing scene has changed over the years. I personally prefer the saloons as they can be related to full size cars and they can race so much closer together without the danger of wheels getting tangled up. Anyway, that is all history and we must look to the future. It will mean that we can accommodate more drivers overall and with the indoor season that is sometimes a problem.

Going onto another subject – does your car suit your own ability to drive it and also the ability of those you are racing against? If you are racing in formula 2 there are always a lot of crashes, some may be caused by you and certainly some caused by other drivers. Over the years we have seen many drivers buy a better car and then all they seem to do is more damage and consequently have more "DNF's" (did not finish). This is not much fun let alone the expense of it. The problem is that the more advanced cars just do not have the ability to withstand the punishment they have to take in racing. Cars like the Tamiya TL01 and the new TT01 are pretty bullet proof and able to withstand a lot of punishment. The conclusion to this is to think very seriously before investing a lot of money in a new car and instead of moving forwards you actually go backwards.

Well I think I have rambled on for long enough now and will look forward to seeing you all at the first indoor meeting on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Ian  
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