

# CLASSICAL GAS

April 2006

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

## Duncan's March Hare Day



Duncan Welch won Falcon's March Hare Trial dropping six marks, the same as Thomas Aldrian in his Austin 7 Special.

*Above – Duncan Welch waits for Julie Fleet to drop the flag on the Falcon's Folly re-start. Note the strategically placed log on the right. This was so competitors couldn't avoid the tree root!*

*Below – Thomas Aldrian came close to a win but was slower than Duncan on the special tests.*

### The Start

TWENTY FOUR CREWS LINED UP AT THE WATLING STREET CAFÉ, just off Junction nine of the M1, on 13th March. There had been 27 entries but James Diffey had broken his glorious Bresica Bugatti and two of the Lieges non-started including Stephen Kenny who had a bad bout of flu and didn't relish the long journey down from Lancashire.

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Retiring President Ron Warren being presented with a gift from the club by his successor Alan Davis at the AGM.



Edlesborough Trial winner Mike Pearson receives congratulations from Clerk-of-the-Course Ed Nickel. Clair Oakes reports on page 4.

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**Norton Street Lane** Byway - A long straight climb on loose stones with the left hand rut getting deeper towards the summit, straight run through for all classes.

IT WAS DRY AGAIN THIS YEAR SO THERE WAS PLENTY OF GRIP. The challenge was the rutted area at the top where the lower slung cars needed to be cautious in the interest of their under sides. Ted Holloway was the only failure when he got his rear engined Mini Special sideways and wedged across the track.

**Cress Beds** Byway - Short well surfaced climb up a tree-lined gully.

NO PROBLEMS HERE AND EVERYONE WENT CLEAN.

**Water Tower** Byway - Water Tower starts straight across the road from Cress Beds. It's a long section, starting with some very muddy ruts, then climbing through a tree lined gully.

ONCE AGAIN THE CHALLENGE OF WATER TOWER WAS THE MUDDY RUTS AT THE BOTTOM, which were avoided by most people and again everyone went clean, on the hill at least!

**Kensworth** Special Test.

A NICE SIMPLE SPECIAL TEST SAW DUNCAN WELCH SET FASTEST TIME. This was to be very important at the end of the trial as it was to decide the event.

**Edlesborough Hill** Two sections on Private Land, both sub-divided. The dry conditions gave plenty of grip on this notoriously slippery surface when it is wet.

DRY CONDITIONS MEANT THE SECTIONS COULD USE THE FULL EXTENT OF EDLESBOROUGH, which is not possible when it is wet. The first section explored the ups and downs through the trees at the back of the hummock with a tricky restart for classes 7 and 8. This caught out both Fred Gregory and Roger Dudley who were to battle for 2nd in class 7 all day.

The second section utilised the steep bank at the far end before going up one of the tracks through the trees, back down again before a restart and going on through the trees. The Front Wheel Drives and the Trojans had problems with the bank at the start. Thomas Aldrian stormed up in his little Austin 7 and most of the others made it OK as well, vindicating the organiser's decision to re-use this route after many years. In the Class 7 battle Fred Gregory got away from the re-start, but Roger Dudley failed and so did Richard Irvine in his newly completed Liege.

**Brickhill** Two sub-divided sections on Private Land.

JOHN PARSONS HAD PROBLEMS SETTING OUT THE BRICKHILL SECTIONS as the ground was still cut up from the 4 x 4 boys. Both were easily on for most of the entry provided they didn't understeer off on the tight sandy turns.

The early numbers were able to watch the action by the later numbers as this was also the lunch break. Unfortunately there were a couple of retirements here. Christopher Jones didn't continue with his Wolesley Hornet and Keith Pettit retired with clutch problems.

**Ivinghoe** Special test and Section on Private land, the section was all about a steep bank at the start and a restart for 3 to 8.

IVINGHOE SET-UP THE LEADERSHIP RACE FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE TRIAL as a number of clean sheets went by the wayside and only Jim Mountain (Dellow Mk1), John Groves (Escort) and Thomas Aldrian (Austin Seven) remained on



- Ted Holloway about to be rescued by the marshals on Norton Street Lane.
- Reg Taylor on Cress Beds in his latest Trial Iron, a Ford Ka. His Anglia has been sold to Mike Furse.
- Peter Manning on the lower reaches of Water Tower.
- Last year's winner Keith Pettit at Edlesborough before retiring with clutch problems.
- Tim Dennison at Brickhill. Tim had the misfortune to miss the last two sections at Bingham's.



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zero. The section was preceded by a special test and Jim Mountain presented his credentials for a win by setting the fastest time, both on this one and for the two together, so if he remained clean the win would be his.

### Hawridge Lane County Road - Clean/Fail

UNFORTUNATELY CLERK OF THE COURSE ARNOLD LANE HAD TO CALL OFF the new Ostrich Hill as the Ostrich's were on heat! Nearby the established Hawridge Lane was there to trap the unwary. Ted Holloway failed the restart and so did Roger Dudley, dropping him behind Keith Oakes and Fred Gregory in the Class 7 battle.

### Beetle Drive Clean/fail with restart for Class Eight only. The first of three sections in woods on private land near Potten End

The lower reaches of Beetle Drive followed the route of last years Falcon's Folly, on reaching the cross track though it continued up into the trees, up a new bank discovered by Verdun Webley during the January working party and cleared by Mike Pearson and his chain saw.. The bank itself was covered with leaf-mould and 7's and 8's had a restart just before to slow them down. Car after car failed the bank and it looked impossible until Duncan Welch came along and stormed up. This put him in an equal lead of the trial as Jim Mountain, John Groves and Thomas Aldrian all failed here.

### Falcon's Folly Clean/Fail with a restart and deviation for classes 3-8 and a second restart for classes 7 and 8.

The second section in Bingham's Wood was changed only slightly from last year, complete with a tricky 7 and 8 restart on a tree root. Higher up there was a new deviation for 3 to 8 and they also had another restart right up at the summit. It was the re-start on the tree root that was to prove difficult. The four leaders all succeeded and so did a delighted Fred Gregory, Peter Crawford, Roger Dudley and Keith Oakes. For the others it was curses, tyre smoke and a deeper hole for next year!

### Bingham's Warren Clean/Fail with a restart for Class 8 only.

The lower reaches of the final section started by going up the bank that it went down last year. Crossing the track it then wound up a new track created with Mike Pearson's chain saw, sharp left and then exited alongside a disused compound. The left hander was very tight and there was an "impossible" restart here for class 8.

The left hander proved a real challenge. It was possible though and was cleaned by a varied selection of cars, starting with Steve Potters Trojan then Roger Dudley, Keith Oakes and Thomas Aldrian. John Groves failed to get round so there were now three cars tying for the lead on six. Along came Jim Mountain, who like all the preceding class 8's, couldn't get away from the restart. So it looked as if overall victory would go to an Austin Seven. The problem was that Duncan Welch hadn't read the script, stopped on the line and just pulled away, turned the corner and went on to clean the hill.

This stunning performance put him in a joint lead of the trial with Thomas Aldrian on 6 marks, so it would be down to the special tests.

### The Finish

Back at the A5 truck stop the computerised results showed that Duncan was fastest on the special tests and won overall. Jim Mountain won class 8 for the second year. Keith Oakes won class 7, with Roger Dudley just pipping Fred Gregory for second place.



- Keith Oakes on "Verduns Bank", only climbed by Duncan Welch.
- Jim Mountain, seen here on Bingham's Warren was one of the contenders for overall victory.
- Matt Robson on the lower reaches of Beetle Drive.
- John Groves showed he has lost none of his old skill. Now where's that Troll?
- Frances Webley presenting Duncan Welch with his trophy.



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**Michael's Musings**

The March Hare was a closely fought event, deservedly won by Duncan Welch when he got away from the "impossible" re-start on the last hill.

I was marshalling in Bingham's Wood which is turning into a fantastic venue. It was such a shame that Mike Pearson wasn't well enough to be out and about on the day as the new sections were mostly down to a lot of hard work with his chain saw earlier in the year. Not forgetting that we were only there at all because of his relationship with the land owner.

A few weeks later we had another successful trial at Edlesborough when Clerk of the Course Ed Nikel was rewarded by a great entry and good trialling weather.

I missed Edlesborough as I was at Snetterton with Neil in his Capri. It was a great event, results wise, with a class win putting him ahead in the championship. Not the greatest organisation though with scrutineering and qualifying on Saturday and the race on Sunday. This either meant a lot of hanging around or two trips which is what we did in the end.

As usual news, pictures etc, always welcome - mleete24@hotmail.com

Michael Leete

*(Murray's March Hare, Continued from page 3)*

**Looking Back**

This was a very exciting March Hare with tremendous drama during the second half and the result decided on the last hill. Particular mention must go to Verdun Webley who assembled more than 50 marshals on the day; To Mike Pearson who worked very hard to create the new sections in Bingham's Wood only to be ill to participate on the day; To The local Herts VW Club who provided a marshalling team at Brickhill. Thanks guys 🚗 🚗

Overall Winner	Duncan Welch (Austin Healey SS)	6
Best Falcon	Roger Dudley (Marlin)	22
Class Winners		
0	Martin Halliday (Fiat Panda)	29
1	Chris Clarke (VW Golf)	32
2	Thomas Aldrian (Austin 7)	6
3	John Groves (Escort)	17
5	Peter Manning (Midget)	18
7	Keith Oakes (Dutton Phaeton)	12
8	Jim Mountain (Dellow Mk1)	12

**Mike Pearson wins Edlesborough Trial**

by Clair Oakes

A heavy spring shower and eleventh hour cancellation of the chuck wagon at Edlesborough Trial didn't stop 20 competitors driving 14 cars in another friendly well organised event.

Junior driver Mark Tompkins is improving in every pct and will be challenging Richard, his Dad, for number one driver in the Hillman Imp. Steve Heath a new convert to trialling for the first time (Land Rover Owners Club member) was passenger to Keith Oakes. Steve enjoyed it so much that he might look for a trials car.

Another competition took place.

How many drivers/passengers can you get into the marshals tent during torrential rain in the lunch break? I don't know as I was at the very back!

This left the sections very slippery and muddy which to the cost of Falcon Club treasurer John Newberry, who was marshalling on hill 6. He's now very proficient in down hill mud rolling!

The day finished in brilliant sunshine which made the cherry on the cake to over all winner Mike Pearson for his return to trialling after missing the March Hare due to flu 🚗 🚗



Left - David Alderson co-drove Mike Pearson's Dellow. Right - David Holmes was the winner of Class A in his Nova