

CLASSICAL GAS

March 2006

About Classic Trials and Falcon Motor Club Events and Personalities

Barrie Back at Brickhill

Clerk of the Course John Parsons battled with very difficult conditions at Falcons Brickhill venue. There had been a 4 WD event the previous week, followed by a lot of rain, making the paddock and the big bank very muddy indeed. The first round caused a few moans and groans amongst the rear wheel drive brigade as they really struggled to get to hills three and four, let alone do anything special on the hills themselves. Earlier the top FWD drivers had done much better and Barrie Parker cleaned hill three and Robin Howard hill four. At the end of the round Barrie had only dropped 18 with Neil MacKay on 23 in his Fiat Panda. Falcon's Robin Howard and Cliff Morrell were on 26 and 27 respectively in their Citroen AX's, Robin running ballasted in class B and Cliff un-ballasted in Class A.

The rear engine class was very close with Falcon's Simon Benoy and Richard Tompkins in their Imps and Dave Harvey in the ex-Mike Stephens VW 1302S all within a point, and Mark Ibbotson only just behind.

JP eased some of the more difficult hills for the second round but they were still a problem as the muddy ground on the hills leading up to the paddock became increasingly cut up. Again, the conditions didn't trouble the leading FWD boys too much and Barrie Parker, Neil MacKay



After a year with a big Audi 80 Barrie Parker was back in his Peugeot 104 and won Falcons round of the year opening BTRDA and MSA championships.

and David Holmes all went round in 10. Cliff Morrell slipped back after his good start, dropping 12 on hill four and picking up a 9 on hill seven where quite a few went clear.

Richard Tompkins had pulled out a nine-point lead from Dave Harvey in the rear engine class, where Simon Benoy and Mark Ibbotson were slipping behind with engine troubles with their Imp. Amongst the kit cars

Tim Lakin had a good lead in his Marlin, over Howard Blackwell in his Liege. This wasn't to last as Tim's diff let go immediately after lunch and he had to retire. Roger Dudley was having problems as well, getting a puncture and bending the steering when his Marlin hit something a little to hard.

Barrie Parker got straight down to

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Simon Groves pictured on Nailsworth Ladder during The Cotswold Clouds. Simon won his class making it three in a row, following up his class victories on The Clee Hills and The Exmoor.

Simons Hat-trick on Clouds

Local man Ian Moss won a closely fought Cotswold Clouds on special test times, tying on three with Andrew Martin and Bill Bennet. Behind came Dave Haizelden, Simon Groves and Bryan Phipps all on four. The class 8's were well out of things with their tough start line on Highwood 2. To many the moral victor was Kelly Thomas who cleaned all the hills but failed to complete the second special test properly.

Stroud's long running Cotswold Clouds rejoined the ACTC championship this year and was well and truly over-subscribed. Some of the reserves came to the start but were turned away, notably Harvey Waters, who spent the day spectating after his long journey up from Cornwall.

The route followed a well-trodden path, via a nice easy Crawley Wood, through Dursley to Crooked Mustard, or Breakheart as it was once appropriately known. The dry conditions meant there was plenty of grip and it wasn't until Roland Panes came along at number 10 that the usual big crowd of spectators saw their first failure.

As Andrew Brown said last year, the hill is more a triumph of engineering over driving for the nimbler class eights, with their high power to weight ratios and ability to chop and change direction at will. For the rest it was very important to get the line just right as there is a big step on the inside off the final right-hander. For any except the class eights going that way meant certain failure. Even if you did avoid the step. Crooked Mustard still demands a good power to weight ratio and Giles Greenslade was the only Beetle to go clean.

In class four both, Ian Moss and Bill Rosten mastered the conditions. The question was would the fragile Imps hang together. In class one, the amazing Dave Haizelden humbled many "more suitable" cars as he flew

up in his VW Golf.

There was plenty of entertainment for the spectators. Harry Butcher was definitely the star of the show, getting near to vertical as he "wall of deathed" around the left hander, losing speed and nearly toppling over as he tried to repeat the performance on the following right hander, oh so nearly stopping before getting it all back together and clearing the section.

Some of the Escorts were spectacular, throwing themselves at the

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section but with very little control, getting a bad line and failing in the process. Well done to Richard Hayward, Kelly Thomas, Tristan White and Simon Groves for using their brains, driving fast but smoothly, taking a good line and going clean.

A rather dry Axe didn't present any problems but Nailsworth Ladder certainly did. The lower classes were allowed to blast straight through so the step didn't present any problems, apart from Stuart Deacon who broke a half-

shaft, couldn't get the end out and ended up having to change the diff, missing a couple of sections in the process.

The yellows and reds had a restart right on the step. Giles was the only big Beetle to get away and two thirds of the sevens and eights failed. Amongst the Falcon contingent Ian Davis was the only one to succeed as neither Geoff Hodge, Keith Oakes nor Peter Mountain succeeded. Talking of Peter it was nice to see Mike Young, the builder of Martin Allen's Racecorp, in the passengers seat.

At Ham Mill the deviation was used again, with a cunningly positioned restart, right on a sharp corner where the ruts dragged the inside wheel up against a bank. This caught out even the experienced Simon Woodall and Adrian Dommatt amongst others.

After a dry wicked Juniper came Freds Folly with another restart to catch the unwary yellows and reds.

Merves Swerve attracted the usual hoard of spectators and with differential start lines and restarts presented a real challenge. Just getting to the restarts was a problem. As ever, the start lines were such cars couldn't really get a run at the hill. If they got away from the start. OK non restarters could throw their machinery at the steep bank, leaping in the air and hoping to regain some sort of control on landing. It was all very hairy. Passengers had to hang on for dear life and Sara hit her head very hard in the

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back of Simon Groves Escort.

It was here some of the class 8 challengers fell by the wayside. They had a very tough re-start, positioned right on the bank and Paul Bartleman and Ian Davis lost their clean sheet. Eric Wall may have failed Nailsworth Ladder but here he was master of intelligent positioning. Stopping his Mk1 Dellow well over to the left, minimising the rise up the bank and pulling away without any wheel spin.

The Highwood complex lay just up the road. There were two sections and two special tests and this is where

the trial would be decided. The fearsome Highwood Two was where it all happened. All but one competitor lost their clean sheet. Only Kelly Thomas came out of the top to go into the overall lead of the trial. Simon Woodall was the only car to come close, dropping one in his buggy now repaired after its Cleve Hills engine problems.

Kelly's lead was to be short lived as tragedy befell her on the second special test where she stalled, couldn't restart and had to be pushed over the line, incurring a penalty of six marks

and costing her overall victory. This put Ian Moss, Andrew Martin and Bill Bennet into a joint lead, all on three marks with Dave Haizelden, Simon Groves and Bryan Phipps just behind on four. It ended this way as they all cleaned an easy Climperwell and the tricky Bulls Bank restarts. It all came down to special tests times and victory went to Ian by less than a second. Kelly's problems pushed her down into 3rd place in class three. Class honours going to Simon Groves, making a hat trick of ACTC wins for the hard charging Ely driver.



Left - Geoff Hodge coming off the Ham Mill restart under the eyes of local spectators.

Left Bottom - Peter Mountain putting the welds on his A frame under stress coming over the bump on Merves Swerve.

Under - Simon Groves and Ian Davis on Crooked Mustard.



Michael's Musings

Its been a very busy start to my Motorsporting year with only one week-end "off" so far. It's been mostly trials with the exception of a trip to the Historic Motor Sport Show.

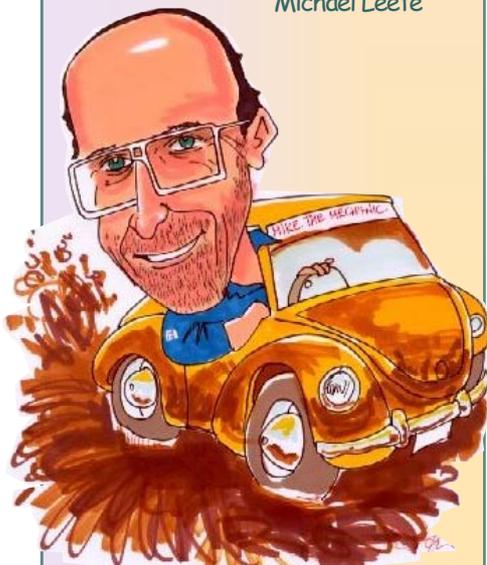
Next month will see the start of Neil's racing season in the Capri and there's a test session at Silverstone planned for early in the month. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that goes OK after the last one!

In the Classic Trials World Simon Groves is a leading contender in the ACTC Crackington championship with maximums on the first three one day trials. What with that and being a triple contender there's no pressure on Simon!

Falcons season opener at Brickhill looked as if it was going to be disaster when we turned up, the place was such a mess. I have never seen it so bad in the 35 years I have been going there. However, JP sorted it all out and by the end of the day even the moaners were enjoying themselves.

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

Michael Leete



(Brickhill—Continued from page 1)

business after lunch, fighting off a challenge from Neil MacKay, who had an atrocious last round. Barrie ended the day with the lowest overall score and best on index. In class, B Robin Howard had an excellent afternoon to beat Chris Smith.

Dave Harvey could not get to grips with his Beetle in the afternoon and with Simon Benoy and Mark

Ibbotson having continuing Imp problems Richard Tompkins ran out the Class C winner.

When Tim Lakin retired that put Howard Blackwell in the lead of the kit cars. However, John Ludford started to go better and better in his Marlin and overtook Howard on the last round to win the class in his Marlin.



Robin Howard ran his Citroen AX with ballast and won class B.

Richard Tompkins was the winner of the Rear Engined Class



Simon Benoy and Mark Ibbotson has all sorts of technical problems in the afternoon but managed to finish in their Imp.

Martin Cheshire and Arnold Lane drove Martins Peugeot, grappling with a puncture and a leaking water hose that Arnold fixed with a bike pump!

