

TDC Turbine



An intermittent missive of random rants, reports and reviews

www.tdcireland.com

August 2009

Chairman's Chatterings

The two Beginners' autotests run so far have seen a number of new faces, which is, of course the object of the exercise. This is terrific.

The website continues to be an integral element in the life of the club. Apart from fostering interest in our own events it seems also to be influential in stimulating our members to go further afield, e.g. Alan Dorman's QUBMC Summer Lanes Rally at the end of July. Once again, Piers deserves a mention for the enthusiasm and drive he brings to this.

Don't forget at the end of this month.



Abberley Court Hotel, Tallaght
Saturday 22nd August
See website for details

Declans Multi-Venue Autotest

Sunday 23rd August, Blessington

Joe

MEMBERS MOTORS



*Due to pressure of space, there is room only for this brief glance at Robert Bolton's fleet.
Full justice will be done in the next issue.*

News

In order to clarify the ambiguity which has occurred with regard to 'auto test "Beginners"', the committee came up with the following at the last committee meeting which will be applied next year. **Beginner status shall be defined as 'an autotest competitor who has never competed in any autotest at any level, whether a stand-alone event or forming part of a multi-discipline event (e.g. retro trial)'.**

In the TDC Beginners' Championship, competitors will only be eligible for the duration of the year's championship in which they competed in their first event. TDC Autotest Beginners status is a classification for the 'raw' first-timer, not an acceptable status for the occasional competitor.

TDC committee discretion shall be final in designating the status of any competitor

Liam Cashman won his class and was second overall behind Paddy Power in the Cork MC autotest in Togher at the beginning of July.

Damien & Bonnie Phillips's younger daughter, Eve, shows so much enthusiasm for driving that they have to keep all keys well secured when she is in the vicinity of any of their cars. Their older girl, Kate, is more trustworthy.

Piers MacFheorais and Trish Denning took Piers's Mazda Trackday/race car for a spin in the Carlow CC Speed weekend

– Bagenalstown Hillclimb and Moate of Ardsclull Sprint – during the June Bank Holiday weekend.



A good time was had by both.

Damian Roddy was third in both Stryker races at the 500 MRCI Kirkistown race Meeting at the June Bank Holiday weekend.

The Loughgall Festival of Motorsport at the end of May is estimated to have raised thousands of pounds for Macmillan Cancer Support and other Lions charities. The Historic Rally Car Challenge, Apple Blossom Autotest and a fantastic array of static classic and historic car displays provided an abundance of entertainment for the spectators.



The Historic Rally Car Challenge provided the main feature of the Festival, with more than 50 crews setting the

Overall winner was Seamus O'Connell & Philip Hunter. Our interest was provided by John & Michael Byrne's Sunbeam which was a creditable sixth overall. John's flamboyance obviously proved to be effective on the day. Andy Hennessy was also there in an Imp.

David Fagan has completed his computer studies degree with a commendable II₁. Now Vincent has to start saving up to fund a post-graduate course.

Richard Pain is occasionally known as Jim. He might also be styled Sam given that he is, in full, Richard James Samuel Pain.



Dermot Carnegie availed of Paul Bosdet's navigational expertise on the Three Castles Welsh Classic Trial at the end of May. They were 22nd overall which, given the expertise of both of them, seems a little further down the order than one would have expected. However – thereby hangs a tale!





The 21st Classic Marathon

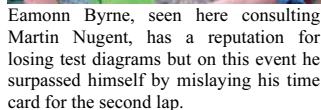
A white Lancia Prisma rally car is shown driving on a paved road. The car has a black roof rack, a black front bumper, and a black rear bumper. It has a black Lancia logo on the front grille and a black license plate that reads "C 3752". The car is driving towards the camera on a road that curves to the right. The background shows a green hillside and a wooden fence.



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Keith Slowey was in what looked like his granny's Mini. His highlight was at the finish of Test 2 where he had a pylon and followed this through with an attempt to knock over timekeeper Steven Bolton (what is the penalty for this?). Fortunately, Steven's nifty footwork saw him avoid permanent damage.



Another "mea culpa" on this event was the classification of competitors. There had not been sufficient thought put into what precisely constituted a beginner. A more rigorous definition, yet to be decided, will be applied at a future date, also yet to be decided. (*See News - Ed.*)



RESULTS

A portrait of a man with short, light-colored hair, wearing glasses and a blue button-down shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

Class winners:

NOVICES:

Damien & Stefan

2 Stefan Walsh (Starlet) 473.1s,
3 Owen Murray (Starlet) 496.5s.

Class winners:

Stefan Walsh, Piers MacFheorais
(Starlet) 498.1s.

EXPERTS:

1 Chris Grimes (Mini) 409.8s,
2 Eamonn Byrne (Starlet) 427.5s,
3 J J Farrell (Starlet) 439.5s,
4 Daniel Byrne (Starlet) 453.8s,
5 Eddie Peterson (Starlet) 462.8s,
6 Joe Doran (Corsa) 467.3s.

Class winners:

A man with grey hair, wearing a blue collared shirt under a dark blue zip-up jacket, is smiling and holding a yellow bag of OxiClean laundry detergent. He is standing in front of a green metal frame, possibly a gate or a piece of equipment. The background is dark and indistinct.

A photograph of four people standing outdoors in front of a green wall. From left to right: a man in a red shirt, a man in a light blue shirt and sunglasses, a man in a dark blue shirt and sunglasses, and a woman in a red jacket and glasses. They are all smiling and have their arms crossed.



A silver MG convertible car is parked on a paved surface. The car is a two-seater with a black soft top. It has distinctive round headlights and a simple front grille. The background shows green foliage and a building with a red roof.

A photograph of a red Mini Cooper, a small two-door hatchback. A person with dark hair is sitting in the driver's seat, looking towards the camera. The car is parked on a dirt or gravel surface. In the background, there are some wooden structures and a fence. The car has a silver grille and a single round headlight visible on the left side.

A man with grey hair, wearing a plaid shirt and blue trousers, stands with his arms crossed next to a car with its hood open. The scene is set in a barn with green and red striped railings.

[illegible]

Why don't a few more of you get your pencils out?

***JJ's Multi-Venue Autotest
5th July***



Showers were forecast and they duly appeared. It was warm though. An early start at Beaulieu House where we received a great welcome and were looked after very efficiently by Malcolm Clark and Gabriel König allowed the almost 40 entry to get through their sixteen tests before six o'clock.



Such is the structure of the event that you tend to interact only with those running in your immediate vicinity. I had the misfortune to be running just behind Will Corry, both of us in white Midgets.



Will

Which was where the resemblance ended. He ended up first in the class. I was sixth so my ineptitude was clear for all to see on each test. Despite the humiliation I thoroughly enjoyed myself – maybe that's where I went wrong. Unlike my last outing on this event last

year, I had no fails. Indeed, I only had one pylon and one line. Both of these were incurred simultaneously and, I felt, very harshly – a pylon would surely have been sufficient punishment. The five seconds I might have saved wouldn't have been quite enough to catch fourth Midget, Tom Devaney, who finished a mere 48 seconds ahead of me!



Tom was in particularly ruthless form.



He began the event with Brendan Flynn as his navigator. When Brendan failed to avoid a haymaker en route from Test 4 to Test 5 (Tom had no hood) he was promptly evicted and had to prevail upon John Golden to offer him asylum.



I know navigators like to give the impression that they are infallible but even they (except Rory Dooley maybe) would not claim to be able to cope meteorologically as well as terrestrially.

To minimise the impact of JJ's strict 'No Ultragrips' tyre rule, the Starlets run what are known as CBTs (Cheating Bastard Tyres) on the front.



These are very soft Yokohama 'wets' with lots of cuts and seem to cope well with slurry and related substances.

I was tailed for much of the event by friends of John from Manorhamilton. I met them at lunch and remarked that I was flattered by their confidence in my navigational ability. Their response was that they didn't mind who they followed as there would always be somebody who would happen along who they could trail to the next test.

There was more excitement in my vicinity when Keith Slowey failed to arrive at Test 13.



His sister, Yvonne, who was his passenger suffered an "other right" experience.



A phone call from John Maher saw the situation retrieved. Keith didn't allow the hiccup to upset his driving and he went on to beat my good self in the titanic battle for 24th place by 0.2s. I was devastated.

The Petersons had an exciting special test after lunch. Clive spent some time ensuring that Adrienne was securely

belted up. Unfortunately, her door was not properly shut.



The offending door



The offending Adrienne

As they approached the first pylon it opened. Contrary to Murphy's Law, Adrienne managed to close it quickly enough to avoid a five second penalty and given the Peterson will to win this was probably more important than avoiding contact with the adjacent wall. Just so it didn't feel deprived, Kevin Fitzgerald's Escort did make its acquaintance with the masonry later on.



Liam Cashman's Starlet succumbed to clutch and gearbox woes on Test 10. John McAssey's Mini which was being double driven by Ben Deithrick suffered terminal bearing noises early on and they had to call it a day.



Ben

Ben said that he was driving very sympathetically and that it definitely was not his fault.

Probably the most noteworthy mishap was suffered by the Starlet of Piers MacFheorais and Trish Denning. Piers being ultra conservative reckoned they needed some fuel to complete the event. Trish reckoned they had enough but, to keep Piers happy, she agreed to go and get some while Piers finished his lunch. Despite using a green line with a nozzle which fitted into the petrol filler pipe, she half filled the tank with diesel before she realised. Both Piers and Trish "enjoyed" a taste of diesel as they removed the offending liquid. To their credit they managed to complete the event. If you are in need of a few gallons of petrol/diesel I am sure that Piers could satisfy your needs at a fraction of the normal price.



Below is Trish's "web confession" which will give you a complementary flavour of the episode:

Aah, the shame of my blunder. Well, put it this way: it involved Jerry cans and a

piece of garden hose to sort it out and a very red-faced me at the prize giving. A special thanks to JJ and Carol for finding the equipment mentioned above.

P.S. I don't like the taste of diesel ...

They were afforded a degree of consolation with a special award of cans of oil at the prize giving.

Joe Reynolds had to cry off at the last minute. All those vegetables must have lowered his resistance to the attentions of an unfriendly intruder to his digestive system.



Andrew (apparently undergoing a metamorphosis courtesy of an inadvertent camera setting)

His son, Andrew, still wanted to go so Ronnie Griffin took over Joe's seat – very effectively too as he ended up fourth.



Ronnie

The navigation wasn't a problem for either of them – they just followed people.

Frank Lenehan's Jeep was observed with some minor damage to its nether regions. Apparently during the week when preparing for this event he forgot that his Starlet was minus its engine.



It doesn't look too terminal to me
When unhitched, the consequently unbalanced trailer attacked the back of the Jeep.

Best of the Starlets was Eddie Peterson despite his exhaust emitting ominous looking gases/vapours at worryingly regular intervals which suggested that retirement was imminent.



Remedial action looks like it is required before Declan's event at the end of August.

Encouragingly, there was some TDC website forum activity after the event, which included messages praising all those involved organizationally and, in particular, JJ. Hear! Hear!

The event turned out to be a Mini benefit as you can see from the top three in the results below. I have gone beyond the top ten with these to make sure that everyone (particularly myself) gets a mention.



James

RESULTS

TRIALS DRIVERS' CLUB MULTI-
VENUE AUTOTEST AT BEAULIEU
HOUSE, DROGHEDA, CO LOUTH:
5th July

1. Eamonn Byrne (Mini) 886.4s
2. Robin Lyons (Mini) 897.0s

3. James Wilson (Mini) 909.9s
4. Ronnie Griffin (MGB GT) 922.9s
5. Eddie Peterson (Starlet) 933.4s
6. Will Corry (Midget) 943.3s
7. Dermot Carnegie (Mini) 946.0s
8. Frank Lenehan (Starlet) 946.3s
9. Simon Echlin (Starlet) 947.6s
10. Harold Hassard (Sunny) 954.5s
11. Clive Peterson (Mini) 955.7s
12. Noel Cochran (Midget) 968.8
13. Daniel Byrne (Starlet) 968.8
14. Andrew O'Donohoe (Midget) 980.0s
15. Declan Hendrick (Starlet) 991.0s
16. John Maher (Starlet) 1026.8s
17. Roger Fynn (Midget) 1040.3s
18. Tom Devaney (Midget) 1042.7s
19. John Golden (Mini) 1053.7s
20. Owen Whelan (Starlet) 1069.4s
21. Damien Doran (Mini) 1074.2s
22. Michael Kehoe (Peugeot 309)
1083.6s
23. Roger Gordon (RX5) 1084.9s
24. Keith Slowey (Starlet) 1090.1s
25. Ian McCulloch (Midget) 1090.3s
26. Mike Adair (Midget) 1094.0s
27. Mark Nugent (Starlet) 1096.2s
28. Liam Cashman (Starlet) 1104.1s
29. John Byrne (Sunbeam) 1105.0s
30. Martin Nugent (Swift) 1115.4s
31. Patricia Denning (Starlet) 1126.6s
32. Piers MacFheorais (Starlet) 1128.0s
33. Kevin Fitzgerald (Escort) 1181.6s
34. Shay Crawley (BMW) 1183.5s
35. Andrew Reynolds (MGB GT)
1197.2s
36. Colm Flynn (Sunbeam) 1203.4s
- John McAssey (Mini) Retired
- Ben Deithrick (Mini) Retired



What the hell is she trying to do now?



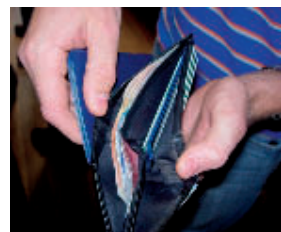
*The living proof of “like father, like son” —
Christopher & Christy Grimes*



Paul Phelan processes Mike Adair



Andrew O'Donohoe & Ronan White



Owen Whelan prepares to unpick his communion money to settle his overdue account with Timmy Faulkner



Damien Doran



JJ Farrell tells Eamonn King where to go



Frank Lenehan & Noel Cochrane



Graham Crawley continues to have difficulty keeping dad, Shay, under control



One experiences a superior variety of loo at Beaulieu



Coutoure Co. Meath pylon



Dermot Carnegie & John Golden



Daniel Byrne finally gets over his camera shyness



The Byrne girls, Emma & Zoe, at lunch



Could this be a cannabis nursery? Note the suspicious looking take-off from the ESB pole



Roger Fynn prepares to go grass-tracking



Carol Farrell



Gabriel König



Simon Echlin & Paul Blair

RESULTS

TRIALS DRIVERS' CLUB
BEGINNERS' AUTOTEST AT
MONDELLO PARK, CO KILDARE:

1 Damien Phillips (Starlet) 647.8s,
2 Christopher Byrne (Starlet) 667.3s,
3 Robby Brunkard (Starlet) 668.7s,
4 Andrew Pain (Nova) 681.8s.

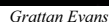
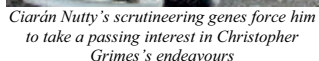
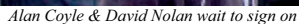
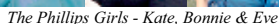
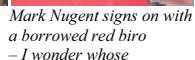
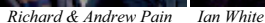
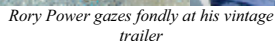
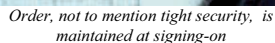
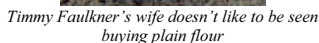
Christopher Byrne, Andrew Pain.

1 Ger Lawlor (Starlet) 534.7s,
2 Piers MacFheorais (Starlet) 540.4s,

3 Damien Doran (Mini) 553.2s,
4 Stefan Walsh (Starlet) 576.2s,
5 Patricia Denning (Starlet) 587.0s,
6 Grattan Evans (Starlet) 620.8s.

Damien Doran, Ronan Hussey (MGB)
833.0s, Stefan Walsh, Ger Lawlor.

- 1 Ian White (Mini) 484.9s,
- 2 Alan Coyle (Mini Special) 529.8s,
- 3 Richard Pain (Nova) 534.8s,
- 4 Chris Grimes (Nova Special) 549.4s,
- 5 Ciaran Nutty (Locost) 613.4s.





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Summer Lanes Rally

25th July

The Summer Lanes Rally run by QUB M.C. in the person of Alan Dorman attracted quite a few of our members. Any event with a Dorman at the helm is bound to be well run and so it proved. Having Paddy McCollum doing results was another “plus”. The main excitement was experienced by Piers MacFheorais & Ronnie Griffin’s son Shane who ended up with the Starlet on its side in a ditch. Fortunately, they were towed out quickly and were able to proceed as briskly as before. On reflection, probably more exciting a time was had by Trish Denning who was sitting with Ronnie in Joe Reynolds’s MGB.



To beat Robert Woodside Jr in a Frogeye Sprite by 57 seconds would

suggest that Trish had an exciting ride. Second were Karl O'Donoghue and Ciara Wong in Lene's endurance MG Rover 200. Frank Lenehan, with Nikki Doran in the hot seat of the Starlet, was fourth. Similarly equipped, Owen Whelan & Joanna Doran were eleventh just ahead Shay & Graham Crawley's BMW E30. Also competing were Andy Hennessy & Peter Murphy in their Anglia and Noel & Patrick Broderick in their Golf.

The above report is my version, following a conversation with Ronnie Griffin. Subsequently, I have ended up with two other perspectives, which I include below. for your edification.

Trish's Story



After hearing great reports of the 2008 event, its first running, we were all really looking forward to having some great fun with fast sections, plenty of loose and no reversing.

Following Piers's hijacking of my favourite Starlet I decided that I'd console myself by heading to the Limerick Autotest for the weekend. But things changed quickly when Piers reported that Ronnie was planning on doing the event. Joe Reynolds had bravely (madly?) offered him the loan of his MGBGT. I offered my services as navigator to Ronnie and kept my fingers crossed. Luckily for me Citroen's Daniel Elena was busy at a WRC Rally that weekend so I got the hot seat. Piers had successfully recruited rookie navigator in the form of another Griffin in the form of Shane.

We were on the road by 6am and, on the way up to Belfast, I was given a crash course in navigating during which Ronnie suggested that I should check out the evening Belfast – Dublin train timetable in case I sent him in the wrong direction or failed to read code boards at

90 mph. Ronnie repeatedly announced that it was going to be maximum attack out of the blocks and flat out for the rest of the day! I wonder does Loeb have confidence inspiring chats like these with Elena on their way to the first stage..... Owen Whelan & Joanna Doran, Frank Lenehan & Nikki Doran and Shay & Graham Crawley made up the rest of the TDC mob. It amazes me that there are so many old Starlets still around.

Special thanks is due to Joanna and Nikki for having endless patience with two rookie navigators (me and Shane), spending lots of time showing us how to decipher the road book.

Frank & Nikki were going very well all day and only reported a couple of moments, the first being on a fast downhill finish where they couldn't see the finish line due to the long grass and they went left / right / left before successfully coming to a stop. They also reported losing the back-end (car's, not Nikki's) and having a very close encounter with a farm building. I'm glad to report that no contact was made and that the red Starlet is fully intact. I believe it took all of Frank's not inconsiderable skill and experience to hold it together. Well done Frank. They were lying in 3rd place at lunchtime and they seemed pleased with that. Frank was even able to enjoy a few chocolate biscuits while sipping his coffee in very laid-back fashion. They finished a very creditable 4th overall just missing out on 3rd spot by 9 seconds to the hard-charging Karl O'Donoghue and his rookie navigator, Ciara Wong. Karl is a great competitor as are all the O'Donoghues. He is an experienced driver and has been very successful in various forms of motorsport including karting and circuit racing. He used to enjoy great battles with my brother, Liam, when they both raced Unos. He also finished 2nd in the tough three-day Lombard Rally last year, just missing out on the top spot on the podium by a small margin.

Shay was his usual flamboyant self and announced at lunchtime that he was having a ball and loving the tests. The immaculate red BMW was at full tilt, firing on all cylinders. He received, and rightly so, lots of applause from the crowds for his entertaining rwd action. On this occasion Shay's son, Graham,

felt no need to complain about his dad's driving.

Noel and Patrick Broderick were pushing hard all day and put in some good times in their Golf GTI. They were very unfortunate to suffer some sort of incident on Test 18, which saw them accrue huge time penalties thus scuppering their hopes of a good finish. At lunchtime Piers and Shane were both smiling and in 8th position, full of praise for the tests. Following some encouragement from Ronnie they made a strategic team decision to push on a bit in the afternoon.

Owen and Joanna were giving it their all and despite a minor off which didn't seem to bother either of them they were lying a very satisfactory 9th at lunchtime. They put in some very fast times on some of the afternoon tests and they had the black Starlet at some alarming angles in doing so. They set the second quickest time on the last long loose test which resulted in a self-satisfied smile on Owen's face. There are rumours of a works drive for Owen and I believe Ford's Malcolm Wilson is looking for his number.

Ronnie and I were lying second at lunchtime and I thought I might need to have a quiet word with him and tell him to up the pace as I felt he lacked a bit of speed and commitment in some of the corners.

The afternoon started with more fun fast flowing tests and there was one test in particular which was flat out down to the finish line on the loose and as we approached the finish, in Ronnie's normal exuberant style, one of the lady marshals fearing for her safety cleared the nearby wall in Olympic fashion. In many of the later tests Ronnie received applause for his spectacular driving style. Piers and Shane were on song all day pushing hard in the afternoon, albeit a bit too hard on one test where they ended up on their side in a ditch. They were given a "maximum" for the test which effectively put an end to them finishing in the top ten. Full marks to this rookie crew for their resilience as they promptly got towed out and were back on track with minutes. They went on to set some of their fastest times of the day after that. Piers later commented to Ronnie that he doubted he lost a millisecond when he came around the corner to see them

stranded in the ditch. Ronnie confirmed Piers' assumption.

I thoroughly enjoyed myself and I'm sure all of the other TDCers would agree. I probably did have the best seat in the house, so thank you Ronnie for that. We won the event by 57 seconds despite a few errors from myself and we were both thrilled with that.

QUBMC are a very hospitable and friendly club and they should rightly be very proud of the way this event was run. The day was a great success from every point of view - the tests were brilliant, the roadbook was excellent. We would like to thank all the timekeepers / marshals and the landowners who very kindly let forty odd cars tear about their property. Piers would especially like to thank the lady in the golf buggy and he is very sorry about the fence post.

Alan Dorman and Paddy McCollum deserve a pat on the back for running this unique event. Last but not least I would also like to thank Joe Reynolds who generously lent Ronnie and I his robust (necessarily so) MGBGT for this event.

As Arnold Schwarzenegger says "I'll be back", along with a few others in tow I suspect.

Owen's story



Saturday started at the ungodly hour of 5.00 a.m. It was made more bearable by being dry and bright. Joanna took over my usual job of sandwich preparation and we hit the road. Having just joined the M1 Frank and Nikki happened along and we formed a northbound convoy. Frank's piloting of the Landcruiser was an indication of his intentions with the Starlet later on. Having fitted a new steering wheel without a spinner coupled with my by now perennial lack of handbrake the first few tests didn't go as well as I'd like. I had to have a couple of cuts at getting around a particular cone

and tried to push on the second run through the circuit. This proved to be my downfall as on the penultimate test before lunch I overcooked a tight left hander, locked up and went straight off the road and hit a wooden fence post. The car was beached on the roadside bank and nose down against the fence. Neither myself, nor Jo, could get out of the car but luckily there were a number of spectators on hand to rock us back up the slope and we were on our way. The only damage done was 50 seconds lost, a cracked indicator lens and a bent front valance. As noted by Shay before the event I was bound to bend the valance as I'd just fitted it the day previously. Running that same test in reverse after lunch I took it a bit easier but the spectators were cheering us through having fully recovered from their earlier exertion. Overall we had a great day and despite the off managed to pull off a second in class which we were delighted with. The tests were fabulous with the last of all being an absolute cracker. Great event and roll on next year and hopefully keeping it between the ditches.

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Tour Auto
21st – 25th April

Well, we made it to the finish.....but
what a saga!



As the song says 'it started out in innocence, the way that most things do'. Well it did really, while competing on the TDC classic rally last year I spotted Gabriel König's late sixties Vauxhall Viva GT for sale. Although fairly tired (the Viva, not Gabriel!), I knew she had competed successfully in races and rallies abroad with it for over 15 years. I liked it for several reasons; firstly it was a little bit different from your usual Escort (I mean they even run an entire rally for Escorts ONLY these days in Carlow) and also because, as the Viva

was introduced in '67 it could possibly get into events which have a pre '68 cut-off date to exclude the Escorts (Hmm....the Tests?). Most importantly, Gabriel had entered Tour Auto '97 in it (brakes failed going into a hairpin on one of the race circuits and it tried to mate with an Austin Healey 3000 unsuccessfully!) which would give it an automatic entry to Tour Auto again !!!!.

For those unfamiliar with it, Tour Auto is THE classic motor sport event in France, designed on a similar format to the Tour de France cycle race. Very similar to Italy's "Mille Miglia", I had wanted to compete in it for some time but most of the cars entered cost at least £100k with many in the million plus region. The two transporters with the English entrants had £20 million worth of cars on the back this year! Here was my chance to gain an entry to this very exclusive event at a 'realistic' price level, I thought.

As usual the initial purchase was the easiest part of the project! A six-month total body refurbishment was next on the agenda (costing about as much as the output of a small third world country) *{like Ireland – Ed.}* including sourcing some rare, hard-to-find Viva parts which meant we weren't in a position to start the mechanical re-fit until early in the New Year ('09) still plenty of time before the April 21st start date!

A Historic Technical Passport is a requirement for this event so we set about finding out how to get one in Ireland. No one in Motorsport Ireland was very familiar with them and they had not previously been issued in the Republic. Eventually it was agreed that several cars would be inspected on the one day with a scrutineer from Finland, familiar with the process, in attendance. This led to a shock; the only way the car could be issued HTP papers was for it to be strictly as per the specifications in the original homologation papers. When we bought the car it had a beautiful hand-built exhaust system in place and a useful set of Weber carbs but these had to be replaced with a standard manifold and Zenith carbs. To comply with the only papers we had, for Gp2 Touring class. As a result, the car had about as much power as the average lawnmower

..... but it did handle a little better! You would really wonder why the need for HTP papers at all. We had assumed they were a 'snapshot' of the spec. the car had evolved to during its 40 year life and designed to make sure that things like 16v heads and the like weren't in use. Anyway, we did end up with the papers albeit at great trouble and expense. Scrutineer, Nicky Strahan, was very helpful during this painful process.

All of these shenanigans left preparation guru Peter Geraghty with less time than he would have liked to complete the car.

By now I had managed to convince my good friend, Frank Fennell, to come along and share the driving (well, we needed SOMETHING extra!). We had been partners in various cars from '78 to '86, usually pretty successfully, ultimately competing for Dealer Opel Team Ireland together in a Kadett alongside Billy Coleman and Austin McHale before I retired from co-driving. Whilst remaining great friends and regularly holidaying together he had gone on to greater things winning regularly in classic events abroad (and becoming European Champion) while I had begun to try and learn how to do things in the driving seat. We had not competed together since 1986 so it would be a real trip down memory lane for both of us! We had agreed to share driving and navigating duties so my only concern was that he might fall asleep when I was driving and how my nerves would stand up when he was; I know how fast he can go!

Service crews are allowed on this event but as the type of classic events we both now do don't usually allow them, we felt we could manage without. Our plan was to have our flying service man, Joe, drive the car via Rosslare to put it in Parc Fermé in Paris on Sunday night. Frank and I would then get the early flight on Monday morning and pick up a hire car which Joe would use during the event. Come Saturday departure time Murphy's Law made itself felt. I was abroad and Joe had planned to go by Frank's house to collect luggage, helmets etc. Murphy started making inroads into the time available so I suggested that they link up on the M50. Frank duly waited on the

road with the gear but the deadline came and passed. No car, it still wasn't quite ready. A last test drive was arranged with Frank putting the car through its paces as Peter sat alongside, horrified at the treatment his creation was going to suffer! Change of plan now meant Peter's jeep and trailer would be needed to go via England and Dover-Calais instead. "Just load the luggage so and away we'll go" "Eh, where's your luggage Frank?" Still on the M50 where it was left !!! Visions of the locals in Tallaght having a fancy dress party with racing suits, helmets and Frank's favourite pink trousers flash before my eyes! A quick trip (very, I'd say) back to the spot establishes that the luggage has gone. Some ace detective work by Joe locates them in Wicklow Garda station where a kind passing motorist has dropped them off! Send a taxi there then!

Whilst all this is taking place I am on my way back to Dublin getting updates at airports en route. Arrive back late Sunday and am away again early on Monday am to Paris, with a spare set of carbs in my bag as the ones on the car are misbehaving.



The scene at scrutiny is AMAZING! The 280 cars are lined up in the gardens of the Tuileries Palace on the banks of the Seine, more like an open air exhibition or a museum than a rally! This is where Marie Antoinette famously said "they have no bread, let them eat cake." If she was here today she would have said "they have no Toyotas or Nissans, let them drive Ferraris." The cars are beautifully organised with the various marques together. I count 15 Porsches of various types, 8 Ferrari Dinos, 8 Ferrari 275s, 6 Ferrari 250s, 3 Lancia Stratos, 3 Aston Martins (2 of them are the rare DB4GTs worth 3 or 4 million apiece) and 2 Ford GT40s, Lamborghinis, E-type lightweights, Maseratis and

I Vauxhall Viva GT! The combined value is close to the Irish National Debt! All surrounded by sponsors' hospitality tents and the Champagne suite of supporters Lanson. The sponsors' entourage travels ahead of the rally each day and is fully set up when you arrive in the next city each evening!).

Am brought back to reality though, when the car does not pass Scrutiny. A brake balance adjuster and hydraulic handbrake are the offending items. As the only Irish crew (and not too many English either) it is hard to be understood. A Stewards' Meeting is convened, but no one speaks English so there are more delays while they try to find an interpreter. Eventually, one is found. We explain that we have no interest in cheating and that these items were passed on its Inspection. They say "Non". During the afternoon we have been in touch with the ever-helpful M.I. scrutineer, Nicky Strahan, who confirms that all is in order. But still, they say "Non". Nicky even rings us back in the Scrutineers' tent with specific details of the page and paragraphs that cover it. Still they say "Non". Bearing in mind that we are less than 50 metres from F.I.A. headquarters, we really don't think we can win on this one so we disconnect the handbrake and break off the handle of the brake adjuster, handing this to the Scrutineer who says "Oui". However, a bigger disaster has now befallen us; it is now after 6pm (we have been in discussion with the authorities for the whole day) and the Lanson tent has closed, thus depriving us of much needed liquid sustenance, as well as the chance to collect our souvenir bottle of bubbly in its special presentation case Aarghh! (thought I might have heard the sound of some champagne fuelled organisers going home late ... but maybe I was just jealous.)

Tuesday dawns bright and clear and our grid is out of Parc Ferné before 7 am. A short run-out on public roads brings us to the famous old Monthléry banked circuit where there are some delays. This is actually the first time I have driven the car! When we get to the start we realise the reason for the delays: a Mini Cooper is on its roof on the infield at the first corner (a tad enthusiastic for a five-day

event. Our car is slow and we appear to have a leak from one of the carbs which can't be helping. I drive the first stage and am pleasantly and unpleasantly surprised; handling is excellent, very neutral with maybe a trace of understeer but slow "as a wet week in Wexford". I mention this to Frank at the end of the stage but he says he didn't notice any understeer but agrees that the handling could cope with twice the power.



Wednesday brings the circuit at Dijon. Naturally we are keen as mustard heading out onto the track but during the race we lose half what little power we had originally and have to crawl around to the finish. The culprit is soon found; a carburettor jet has fallen out and serious amounts of fuel are leaking. The circuit is in the middle of nowhere but there is one small garage within limping distance. When I enter I am met by a young mechanic who speaks no English but is keen to help. I try to explain our difficulty but it is easier to bring him outside to show him. He is totally taken with the Vauxhall and I am encouraged by photos on the wall showing various 4x4s at amazing angles I think I have been lucky enough to arrive at a motor sport enthusiast's premises. At least it's not the kind of garage where they wear white coats and attach a lead from the engine into a machine don't think the chances of finding a programme for a sixties Viva in rural France are that good actually. We haul out our spare carbs and try to indicate that he might fit them instead but he takes one look at the linkages in horror and says "Non". However, Papa is also here and he is of the old school and shows him what might work. We are now approaching "Mange" a religious time of day in France where all works stop for at least an hour (or maybe it just means lunchtime). After this has been properly observed we get back to work and my young friend somehow manages to cut a

bolt of the right length to wedge the jet from the spare carbs in place and we are off again! As there is a long road section we drive straight through the In and Out controls at the lunch halt and treat the rest of the day much like a competitive section and manage not to incur too many road penalties.

We are so pleased to be still in the event that we are really 'up for it' on Thursday. There are two stages on tight, twisty, Irish type tarmac roads. Frank is really in his element and flying until a right-hander tightens a bit more than the Viva can manage (eh, that's the understeer I mentioned Frank). However, no serious damage is done (she'll probably polish out with a porta-power) and we're not too worried because unaccountably we seem to be making progress up the leaderboard. Don't know how this can be, as on this event a co-efficient system is used to give every car a chance to be competitive. As a 2-litre, our car does not have a good co-efficient compared to the very pretty Alfa GTAs, which also have about 50% more power.



Friday brings the 'real deal' the Formula 1 circuit at Spa, and particularly its legendary corner Eau Rouge! How the F1 guys can drive that flat-out is beyond me; even in the Viva (probably the slowest car on the track) I nearly have to put my left foot down on top of my right to keep from lifting off the throttle. I see so many blue flags waving (warning of faster traffic about to

pass) that I am tempted to buy one to put on the roof of the Viva at least the marshals wouldn't have to work so hard. Frank is in the stand watching (actually, I think he dozes off in the long periods between our car passing the start/finish line). Fellow competitor, Andy Prill, (in a smart Porsche 911 ST 2.5) tells Frank that our car is the only one on the Entry list worth less than the Entry fee. What a cheek we were only two places behind him then and by the finish finished were right behind him. He obviously doesn't appreciate good British engineering.

We finally get through to Saturday and the Finish. I am delighted to have made it and we help the Lanson people get rid of their surplus stock. The event is rounded off with a really impressive prizegiving complete with horses performing incredible feats INSIDE the dining room at a fast canter (can't imagine any Irish Insurance company allowing it – how about it Myles?).

Despite everything which could go wrong, going wrong, we really enjoyed the event. An entry, of almost 300 cars, a P.R. machine that meant an enthusiastic crowd, old and young, on every corner, and all delighted that the event was passing through their area this year. On three separate occasions we had a full Gendarmerie escort with sirens and blue flashing lights to bring us through the traffic without delay. Radar guns were pointed at the ground as competing cars approached and only put up again for any following road car which was being driven too enthusiastically. Going into Luxembourg we were waved over by a motorcycle cop. As we waited he pulled in the two following cars, a lightweight E-type and a Ford GT40.



I was worried as he spoke to their drivers but one of them explained "its rush hour

and it will take an hour to get to the Evening Control in the centre of town. If we wait until his mate comes back he'll get us in there in 3 mins ". And he did! The experience of going flat out (the E-type and GT40 were probably only in second gear) up the wrong side of the road with all oncoming, law-abiding traffic being waved up onto the paths, and the noise of us as we tore through the main Square were unforgettable!

To compete on the event is really special, particularly when the Entry list includes the like of Le Mans winner Derek Bell, (AC Cobra)



and former Monte Carlo winner Jean Ragnotti (Alpine A110). To win the class against Alfa GTAs and the even rarer (and more expensive) GTAM is really satisfying, especially when you are only five places behind Ragnotti and one place ahead of former Belgian and European Champion Marc Duez (Porsche 904 GTS) in the weighted classification. Would certainly go back, especially if the rumoured Gp 3 papers allowing the car to run in competitive trim can be sourced!



Great event roll on 2010!

Tom Callanan

Turbine Teaser

I spotted that well-known car preparation expert, Tony Phillips, at the James Pringle International Trophy Autotest and at the Beginners' event in Frank Lenehan's place.



What is his nickname?

Send your answer to imcc@oceanfree.net
(Subject: Turbine Teaser)

Your reward will be an acknowledgment of your erudition in the next issue of the Turbine.

STOP PRESS

Possible extra event for TDC
Beginners Autotest Championship

Sunday, 30th August
Mondello Park

Keep a close eye on the website
(latest events) for developments