

January / February 2026

SPOTLIGHT

Newsletter of the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk



Contents

Chairman's Introduction	Martin Newson
Dave Smalley talk	Kings Lynn & District Motor Club
Stuart Turner - some personal memories	Peter Riddle
David Leckie Lyng Trial 2025 Postponed	Howard Joynt / Craig Bennett
A photo from the 1965 RAC Rally	BMC's publicity dept.
John Bray and Darren Styles Stage Rally Championships	Internet
Stage Rallying Round-up	Darren Styles
Salford Van Hire Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park	
North Humberside Motor Club Cadwell Stages	
The Preston Rally 2025	Peter Riddle
SCCON's Christmas Get Together 2025	Nigel Cook / the club Committee
Peter Wright of Lotus - Obituary	Peter Riddle
The Raymond Mays pub in Bourne	Peter Riddle
Countdown Rally Magazines from 1991	Martin Newson / Peter Riddle
Roadworks in Norfolk	Facebook

Chairman's Introduction

Hello again. 2025 was another successful year for SCCON, though the Lyng Trial had to be cancelled due to flooding of the site. I'm also sorry that, due to some health issues in the second half of the year, I wasn't able to participate as fully in club events as I would have liked. So I'm even more thankful than usual to the small army of SCCON committee, club members and members of other local motor clubs who co-operated throughout the year to enable our events to run smoothly and successfully.

Looking forward to 2026, a new team has volunteered to run our Midsummer Classic Run and new faces are always welcome on the committee and to help in running SCCON's range of events - could that be you? A Happy New Year to you all.

Martin Newson, Chairman



Kings Lynn and District Motor Club

Proudly Presents

💧 An Evening with David Smalley 💧

Buckle up for an exciting night of **real rally stories** from the navigator's seat!

David takes you behind the scenes of his latest rally adventures — from the **sun-soaked smooth tarmac of Majorca**, to the **muddy farm tracks of The Preston Rally**, battling the **biting frost of Wales** and the high-speed **closed roads of MOD Stanta**.

Totally different cars, 4wd, front drive and rear drive and different drivers all added to the excitement.

Packed with insight, humour, and unforgettable moments, this is a must-attend evening for **motorsport fans, competitors, and anyone curious about rally navigation**.

 **Wednesday 21st January**

 **7:30pm start**

 **Runcton Holme Social Club**

School Road, Runcton Holme, PE33 0AQ

 **FREE ENTRY**

Bring your friends, bring your questions, and come along for a brilliant night of **stories, laughs, and rally talk**.

Whether you're a seasoned competitor or just love motorsport, **you won't want to miss this!**

Please confirm your intention to attend to – secretary@kingslynndmc.co.uk

Ace Fire

YOUR COMPLETE FIRE PROTECTION SOLUTION

14 Concorde Road, Norwich, NR6 6BW 01603 - 787333 info@acefire.co.uk

Stuart Turner - some personal memories

As I was writing Stuart Turner's obituary for the last issue of Spotlight, I realised that I've had various connections to Stuart and many of the cars he influenced during his career. I'll run through them and I'll add some related tales too.

The first car in which I travelled at more than 100 mph was a 1964 Austin Healey 3000 owned by Bill Evans, a friend of my father. My Dad's company car at the time was an Austin A40 with a somewhat lower top speed of 72 mph. Bill showed me rally reports about Rauno Aaltonen and Tony Ambrose winning the very tough 1964 Spa-Sofia-Liege rally in a Healey 3000 and that started my interest in rallying. Then, in early 1965, I followed the media coverage of the Monte Carlo Rally which Timo Makinen and Paul Easter won in their Mini Cooper S registered AJB 44B. Together, those two rally results sparked my lifelong enthusiasm for rallying.

In July 2025, I went to a celebration event at the British Motor Museum, Gaydon held to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the British Motor Corporation (BMC) Competitions Department. 120 vehicles were on display, mostly ex-BMC Competitions Dept. works rally cars. I met Paul Easter and asked if he'd ever asked Timo to slow down while they were rallying together. He told me that Timo always drove flat-out on events saying that if he went slower, he might lose concentration and 'go off'. Just before I left Gaydon, I was given the opportunity to drive Rauno Aaltonen's 1964 Spa-Sofia- Liège winning Austin Healey around some fairly deserted parts of the Gaydon site. I must confess that I didn't keep to the site's speed limit! Back in 2005, that car was sold by Bonhams at Goodwood for £100,000.



Meeting Paul Easter at Gaydon



After driving the ex-works Healey BMO 93B



Rauno Aaltonen / Tony Ambrose 1964 Spa-Sofia-Liège winning Austin Healey 3000

Co-incidentally I've just read Tony Ambrose's autobiography and, in the 1960s, he and Peter Riley developed the first rally pace-notes, very similar to those used today. He took advice from Denis Jenkinson who had co-driven Stirling Moss to victory in the 1955 Mille Miglia.

In the 1970s I competed on nine Motoring News Road Rally Championship events, mostly in uncompetitive Vauxhalls, but I won the semi-experts class on the 1973 Illuminations Rally navigating for Pete Warren in his Cortina Mkl 1500GT and finished 6th overall on the 1978 Bartley Rally with Roger Chapple in his Triumph Dolomite Sprint, my best-ever rally result.

Regarding the disqualification of the Minis on the 1966 Monte Carlo Rally, the French were convinced that BMC had cheated by running tuned engines in their Group 1 (i.e. showroom spec.) rally cars or by interchanging cars. In 2007 Stuart Turner gave a talk to the Fressingfield Oily Rag Club, and afterwards I spoke to him about the theory that BMC had swapped cars. He said that was a ridiculous suggestion because each car was built to suit its driver's individual preferences and on the '66 Monte the Minis were in 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, so why change any of them? I also asked Stuart if he would autograph my book 'BMC Competition Department Secrets' that had been written by Marcus Chambers, Stuart Turner and Peter Browning, the three managers of BMC's Comps. Department. He agreed and then said, "You really need the other two signatures too. Marcus lives near me so if you give me the book, I'll get him to sign it and I'll post it back to you." Stuart was true to his word, didn't charge me for the postage and a short time later I was able to get Peter's signature to complete the set.



From the left: Stuart Turner, Marcus Chambers and Peter Browning

Like Stuart, I too worked for Ford at Boreham Airfield, but by the time I started there in 1979, Stuart had moved on and was based at Warley. My work was mainly testing Ford's Transit van range and their Cargo and Transcontinental truck models, but when a job became available in the competitions department I applied and was interviewed by Stuart in his wood-panelled office in Ford's UK HQ at Warley. Sadly, I didn't get the job.

In 1985 Boreham held an employee open day and I was given the task of creating a display of historic Ford vehicles. With my interest in rallying, I was keen to borrow FEV 1H, the Ford Escort that Hannu Mikkola had driven to win the 16,000 mile long 1970 London-to-Mexico World Cup Rally. But when it arrived I was appalled at its poor condition. When it was built for the rally, it had no rust-proofing and rust was perforating the body in the usual Escort Mkl places - on the front wings in front of the doors and above the headlights, and also around all the double-skinned areas where the bubble-arch wing extensions had been fitted. Before the open-day, I drove the car round Boreham's rough course to get it covered in mud and we threw even more mud onto the car to hide the rusty areas. Then we displayed the very mucky Escort in a mock-up of a World Cup Rally time control somewhere in South America.

After the open day, I told David Burgess-Wise of Ford's Department of Public Affairs that the car was not in suitable condition to be displayed by Ford. We agreed a deal whereby I would co-ordinate a rebuild of the car at Boreham, using outside contractors as required, and David's department would pay all the costs.

At that time Boreham Proving Ground (Ford's van and truck testing facility) worked a late shift from 6pm until 2am. With the tacit agreement of Ernie Benham, the Proving Ground manager, I worked on the car in my spare time after work and I could get extra work done by the workshop staff during the late shift when there were no senior bosses to see what was going on. We stripped the car and, to make it MOT-worthy, we repaired the chassis rails that were badly crushed behind the sump-guard. We did this using the same method that Boreham Competitions Department (next door) were using to repair their current Escort rally cars. Then, with the car on its side, I wire-brushed and red-oxide painted the whole of the underside of FEV 1H. I sent three quotes I'd received for repairing and re-painting the bodywork to David Burgess-Wise but he replied that his budget for maintaining Ford's fleet of historic vehicles had just been reduced to almost nil. He said "Please put the car back together and it will go into storage". At this point I wrote a letter to John Southgate, Ford's head of Public Affairs and copied it to Stuart Turner. Stuart got Harry Calton to contact me with the suggestion that I should continue to co-ordinate the re-build but at a much slower rate and using Ford's own resources wherever possible, rather than out-sourcing the work.

Then a stroke of good fortune occurred. Ford's Body Engineering team was re-located from the Dunton Engineering Centre to Boreham while asbestos was removed from the roof of their own workshop at Dunton. But they were working on many prototypes of the new 1996 Ford Transit so, although they were very keen to work on the Escort, their priorities were elsewhere. I took a few days off work to watch the Group B cars competing in the 1985 RAC Rally and, while I was away, the Body Engineering team had a brief shortage of Transit work, so six of them leapt onto FEV 1H. When I got back from the rally, the necessary rust repairs had all been completed, some damage to the roof had been fixed, all four of the bubble-wheel-arch extensions had been replaced and the whole car had been painted in primer. Wow!

After a long wait to get the funding approved, I got the Escort re-sprayed in Ermine White. Then I managed to get Peter Tracey (whose Dad had sign-written the car in 1970), to restore the car's original colour scheme. He still had all his Dad's old stencils! Many scale models of FEV 1H have 'FINLAND' written diagonally across the bonnet, but that was only painted on at Hannu's request after he'd won the rally and we omitted it to make the car replicate how it looked during the rally. I was loaned two apprentices, Sean Pasterfield and David Williams, and with help from many of Boreham Proving Ground's fitters, we finished the rebuild just in time for the car to be put on display at the start of the 1986 RAC Rally.



Peter Tracey re-painting the sign-writing



Myself and Sean Pasterfield after the rebuild

With my interest in rallying, I often used to chat with Mick Jones, Ford's top rally mechanic and he told me several 'not for publication' stories! In 1979, Roger Clark entered the RAC Rally in the same car he'd used to win the RAC in 1976 (POO 505R), but his engine failed causing his retirement. After the rally, Comps Dept. fitted a new engine to the car and Mick had to give it a test drive around Boreham airfield. He kindly popped into my office and asked if I'd like to ride with him; it took me milliseconds to say yes! What a ride - Mick drove very fast indeed with superb car control and had the car at all sorts of extreme angles as he raced round Boreham's tarmac and loose surfaces for half an hour; one of the most memorable experiences of my life.



A faded Polaroid of me and Mick Jones in POO 505R Roger Clark with the very adept Mick Jones

I had forgotten the following, but I've just come across some documents that reminded me..... When the 1982 Lombard Golden 50 Rally, the first historic rally in Great Britain, was announced I offered for Mick Jones to enter the event driving my near-works-replica Mini Cooper S and I would navigate for him. He accepted, but then Ford sent him to South Africa to run Escort RS1700Ts in rallies over there, so he was no longer available. Hence I changed my entry and drove the Mini myself with my regular navigator Dave Woodgate.

From my desk at Boreham, I could see some of the airfield and the rough course that was used for testing both trucks and rally cars. Stuart Turner visited Boreham with Malcolm Wilson and Jackie Stewart who were both involved in developing the handling of the Ford RS200. Jackie Stewart drove well on tarmac but, even with instruction from Malcolm, he wasn't very good on loose surfaces and I watched him put the RS200 test car off the road and into a ditch. After that, I don't think he drove the car on the rough course again! A few years later in the mid-1990s I met Jackie Stewart at Ford's Michigan Proving Ground where he behaved very unpleasantly towards me. Though I still admire his racing successes and what he did for the safety of motor sport, I now have a thorough dislike of the man.

Back to Gaydon in July 2025 and Stuart Turner's penny farthing bicycle was on display. Stuart named his houses 'Penny Farthing' so Tony Ambrose's father made him a very accurate copy of an original one. The first time Timo Makinen visited Stuart's home in the early 1960s, Stuart showed him his penny farthing and told Timo he would give him some tips about riding it. Stuart then briefly popped into his house, only to discover when he got back that Timo and the penny farthing had gone. Stuart hadn't been able to warn him about the lack of braking, the risk of 'falling from height' and how to stop the bike and get off it safely. To Stuart's great relief, Timo returned unhurt and with a big smile on his face.

Also at Gaydon in July I met Steve Boyd, one of my old University of Liverpool Motor Club (ULMC) pals and he posted a tribute to Stuart Turner on Facebook saying: "He was a special character of the sort that doesn't come along often enough. He will be greatly missed."

The David Leckie Lyng Trial - 16th November 2025

Heavy rainfall in the days before this trial was due to take place made the site very different from two weeks earlier, with flooding in some places. Access to and from the hills couldn't be achieved and with a forecast of yet more rain to come, organisers Howard Joynt and Craig Bennett had to make the decision to postpone the Lyng Trial to a later date. They informed all the entrants and marshals on Friday 14th November and, rather ironically, the feature below appeared as the leading item in the What's On section of Motorsport UK's 'Revolution' magazine, published on..... 14th November!

David Leckie Lyng Trial 16th November

Cadder's Hill, Lyng, Norfolk NR9 5QZ

The Sporting Car Club of Norfolk (SCCoN) is running the David Leckie Lyng Trial. This is a round of the Anglia Motor Sport Club Trials Challenge. As part of the Motorsport UK StreetCar initiative, the event is running as a Taster Event and is open to everyone to have a go!

www.scccon.co.uk



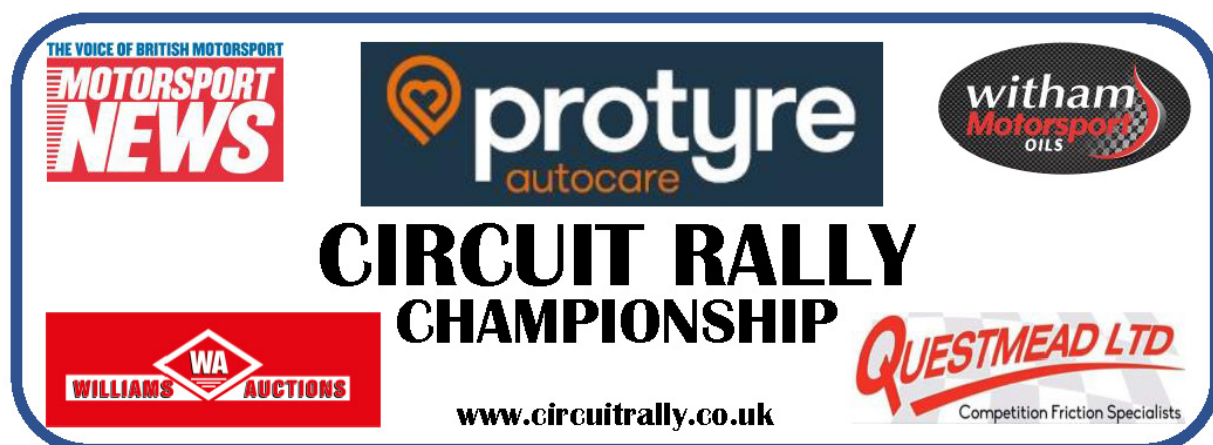
From 2009 when David Leckie took over running the Lyng Trial, it ran successfully every November for thirteen years until 2022 when the site was too wet. Since then, except for 2024 when we had dry weather and sunshine, we've had repeated difficulty with flooding at Cadders Hill on dates in November and January. Last year we tried to run the event in October but there were date clashes with other AMSC trials on the dates that the landowner could offer us. And we can't run earlier than the end of September due to Moto-Cross fixtures. It's frustrating for the hard-working committee members who try to make this event happen. Does any club member know of another site that might be suitable for a trial? If so, please e-mail info@scccon.co.uk



This iconic photo shows the end of the Pickering stage on the very snowy 1965 RAC Rally. It shows Rauno Aaltonen's winning Morris Mini Cooper and Timo Makinen's Austin Healey that finished 2nd. Those who were there said it was miraculous that Timo got his Healey through such a snowy stage. I'm lucky enough to have owned two Austin Healey 3000s and several 1275cc Mini Cooper S PR

Jon Bray and Darren Styles Stage Rally Championships

Jon Bray and SCCON's Darren Styles have had a super run of class results in the Protyre Circuit Rally Championship winning Class F for 1400cc cars.



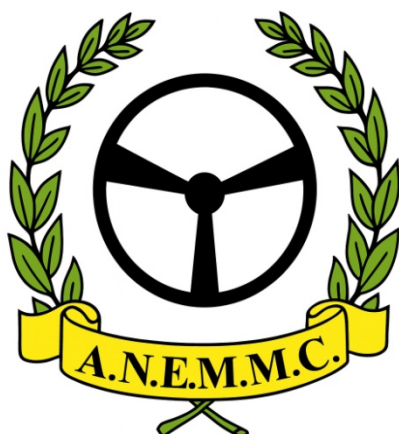
Protyre Circuit Rally Championship 2024 / 25 OVERALL AWARD WINNERS

Champion Driver	Michael Igoe	Champion Co-Driver	Will Atkins
Second Overall	John Griffiths	Second Overall	Emma Morrison
Third Overall	Chris West	Third Overall	Keith Hounslow

Class F	Driver	Class F	Co-Driver
1 st	Jon Bray	1 st	Darren Styles
2 nd	Chris Johnson	2 nd	Rob Johnson

Overall champion was the Irish driver Michael Igoe and his co-driver Will Atkins in their Citroen C3 Rally 2. They gained seven outright wins in the Circuit Rally Championship.

Jon and Darren nearly always finished in the top four in their class and won Class F at both their local events at Brands Hatch and Snetterton. Darren says "2025 has certainly been a good year for us and the MG."



The Association of North East Midland Motor Clubs

2025 Stage Rally Championship

Overall

Jon Bray - 3rd Driver
Darren Styles - 2nd Co-driver

Class 1

Jon Bray - 2nd in Class
Darren Styles - 1st in Class

2025-2026 Circuit Rally Championship

Round 1 - The Salford Van Hire, Neil Howard Stages Rally at Oulton Park

Jon Bray/Darren Styles MG ZR 1400

Round 1 saw us making the trip back to Oulton Park where heavy rain the day before had made the conditions a bit mixed and unlike last year it was even more tricky in places.

The day was 8 stages long, with a mix of circuit, the rally school and the wooded section across from the start-finish straight. Tyre choice for the first pair of stages was tricky; we decided to play it safe and went with wets. This was a good choice as although the track was drying it wasn't doing so very quickly. A good run through the first pair with the only issue being a slide wide in the rally school area was good for us and we sat in a decent 2nd in class.

Stages 3 and 4 were the best pair, as the water splash comes into play, notes were made to make sure the windows were closed after a good soaking last year, the first run saw us put in a good class time on a drying circuit. Stage 4 saw us drop time to others in our class as we were seeded higher and the track was drying rapidly by now.



Photo by John Styles

Stage 5 went well: a move onto dry tyres saw us have a good run through it. Stage 6 was cancelled as we sat in the time control, due to a pair of on-track incidents, so we went back into service and fitted the lights.

There is something really good about running in the dark, and to do two stages with exactly the same time highlighted just how much trust we have in each other and in the car!

Overall a good day, finishing 3rd in class and gaining a decent haul of CRC points; the only issue had been a random misfire which lasted for a few seconds and then cleared itself.

Round 2 - The North Humberside Motor Club Cadwell Stages Rally

The misfire was back, along with an engine that had suddenly started to run very rich, and we are talking the fuel consumption of something with a lot more than 1400cc!

From stage 1 we nursed the issue; the car just wasn't happy at idle but was fine once on cam and moving.

The stages themselves were good fun, we set some really good times and sat 2nd in class all day behind Jon Hudson in his Micra. Apart from a couple of dodgy moments at the hairpin we drove the wheels off what was an ailing little car that we just needed to hold together!

Stage 6 saw the car cut out in the queue to the time control, and it was at this point we discovered it had developed an appetite for ITG filter material

Going into the last pair of stages, we just had to finish. Points make prizes and we got to the end of the day, 41st overall, 2nd in class and mildly relieved!

Darren Styles December 2025

North Humberside Motor Club - Cadwell Stages Rally

16th November 2025 43 stage miles 91 entries



Irishman Michael Igoe / Will Atkins Citroen C3 Rally 2, 282bhp turbocharged 1.6 engine
Winners of the Cadwell Stages 2025 by 4 seconds from John Griffiths' Skoda Fabia R5
Price to buy a new Citroen C3 Rally 2 = 240,000 to 290,000 Euros !



SCCON's Joe and Mark Annison's 1400cc MG ZR

They broke a drive-shaft on the 2nd stage but recovered to finish 61st and by the latter part of the event, they were beating Jon and Darren (who finished 2nd in class) on stage times.
Much better value! - cost to build was under £10,000 for the parts (plus labour to assemble)

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED - THE PRESTON RALLY 2025

2025 was my 15th attempt at 'The One and Only' Preston Rally organised by Chelmsford Motor Club. None of my navigators over the previous five years was available so I put a post on the rally's Facebook page saying I was looking for someone with past experience of the event. Dave Middleditch of Falcon Motor Club and Blackbird Auto Club kindly offered to accompany me, but his Preston experience could barely have been less. He'd only competed on one Preston Rally, last year. He was navigating in a VW Golf MkII but it's RH front suspension broke after only a mile of the first test. However I had already met Dave because he organised Falcon Motor Club's 75th Anniversary Trial that Dave Saint and I enjoyed so much back in 2023. And all three of us had had a long chat at the end of that splendid event. So I had a navigator very keen to get a finish on the 47th running of the rough, tough, car-breaking and very muddy Preston Rally.

Last year I was lucky to finish the Preston, with Simon Hawken in the LH seat, because one rear damper pulled out of its top mounting on the final timed section. The banging noise was horrendous but we were only a mile from the end of the section so I carried on and we finished 9th overall. I replaced the top washers on the rear suspension with thicker ones of much larger diameter so that problem wasn't going to happen again. And, because we'd had so much rain recently, I raised the front suspension by 10mm during the week before the rally.

At the start I was surprised to find ourselves parked next to David Lewis and Allen Copeman's 998cc Nissan Micra. David had posted on the Preston Rally's Facebook page that he'd had to withdraw "due to having broken ribs". But the pain had eased a bit so he reinstated his entry. He would be running two cars in front of us at number 17. He said he'd be driving a bit gently, aiming for a solid finish.



Peter Riddle and Dave Middleditch on the 2025 Preston in their 1400cc MG ZR at Abrey Farm

I met up with Dave at the start and the only problem we had at scrutineering was a failed brake light bulb that was easy to fix. There were no route amendments to worry about and the weather was kind to the marshals, being fairly warm for the time of year and there would be no rain all night long. We set ourselves the target of finishing in the top ten and hopefully better than I managed last year.

After a long-ish run out the first test, Harrier Airstrip, was the same as last year and Dave showed me where the Golf suspension had broken on a very corrugated section of track. There would be many more bits of rough track like that for my recently re-conditioned GAZ shockers to cope with.

We were reeling off the sections without any problems until a knock developed in the steering near the end of section 8, Peddars Way. I thought the nut holding the wheel to the column might have loosened so for the short Abrey Farm section I pushed down on the steering wheel to make sure it didn't get worse. After the section Dave spotted that the circle of small M5 countersunk screws that hold the flat part of the steering wheel onto its central boss had come loose. So we drove gently to first petrol where I tried to borrow an Allen key to tighten the screws. Rob Palmer and several other people lent me their sets of Allen keys but none of them had the right size. Eventually I borrowed a key that didn't quite fit but it did enable me to tighten those screws a bit. We were lying 10th overall at first petrol.

I usually get good times on the very rough Foxpin test and last year I was 12th despite losing about 30 seconds following a much slower Suzuki Swift. But this year I was only 26th fastest. Maybe I was thinking too much about the 'not-100%-secure' steering wheel.

Next was Euston, which hasn't been lucky for me because that was where my Nova's suspension failed in 2019. This year there was a 'hairpin left' junction with two exit tracks and we took the wrong one. Apparently there were arrows on the correct exit, but we didn't see them. Fortunately Dave realised what we'd done, re-routed us, and that mistake only cost us three minutes, whereas missing just one Passage Control or Route Check would have incurred a 5 minute penalty. That error dropped us to 13th place and allowed Jon Bray / Ian Graham to get in front of us. We had another issue near the end of the Euston test when we landed nose-down after a big jump. One of the Cibie spot-lamp lens-reflector units became detached, appeared over the bonnet and then disappeared past the RH A-pillar. Fortunately, because it was a dry night, our lamps hadn't been getting as muddy as they usually do on a Preston Rally and we hadn't had to stop nearly as often to clean our lamps. Luckily, our progress on the rest of the rally would be relatively unimpeded by the reduced lighting.



This is after Euston because the RH spot-lamp is missing. Dave is smiling at Andy Manston's camera

By second petrol, back at the BP station on the Thetford by-pass, the steering wheel had come loose again. But this time I was able to borrow a correct Allen key and got those pesky little screws good-and-tight.

On the first test after petrol the car developed a loud squealing sound from the RH rear brake that we attributed to a stone getting wedged between the disc and the calliper. Fortunately the brakes still worked fine so it didn't cost us any time. After the test, we jacked the car up and took the wheel off to have a look, but there was so much mud that we couldn't see anything. Then, on the way to the next test, the noise stopped. The last timed section through Tottington,

was the longest of the rally at over 15 miles and near the end of that test, the noise came back.

The screws on the steering wheel stayed tight and despite the missing spot-lamp, we had a cracking run over the final six tests, progressively climbing up the field to finish 8th overall - mission accomplished!

Without the three minutes that we lost in Euston, we'd have been 6th, but for a crew who had never rallied together we were still pleased with our result on such a tough event.

Peter Riddle December 2025
Photos by: Andy Manston

Other crews with SCCON members (past and present) finished.....

Jon Bray / Ian Graham	MG ZR 1800	6th o/a	
David Lewis / Allen Copeman	Nissan Micra	21st o/a	(driving with broken ribs!)
Jordan Weavers / Stephen Baldwin	Toyota MR2	25th o/a	
Rob Palmer / Jonathan Stimpson	MG ZR 1800	29th o/a	(failed alternator and broken front suspension top mount)



SCCON's 2025 CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER

The year ended in style with SCCON's traditional get-together at the White Horse in Trowse. Our private room was well filled with more members attending than in recent years and Jordan Weavers brought his young family all the way from Carlton Colville.

Savoury food, hot and cold was provided by the White Horse and Christine Newson and Lauren Rapley kindly supplied a variety of super home-baked cakes. There wasn't much food left at the end so the quantities had been just right.

Nigel Cook ran a 20 question quiz with a total of 30 points available. Jon Fry cleaned up, but with a somewhat suspicious 100% correct answers, had he gained some outside help? Had he used his phone?

The quiz results were:-

1st	Jon Fry	30 points
2nd	David Mann and Stuart Hall	21½ points
3rd	Andrew Lawson	18 points
4th	Craig Bennett and Lauren Rapley	17 points
5th =	Mark Annison	15½ points
5th =	Peter Riddle	15½ points
7th	Andy Sutton and Chris Woodrow	14½ points
8th	Sam Carter and Dominic Pearson	14 points
9th	'Fast Eddie' Timperley	10 points

Peter Wright

1946 - 2025



Peter Wright who was a leading light in the introduction of ground effect aerodynamics for F1 racing cars, died on 6th November at the age of 79 after a short illness.

While studying Mechanical Sciences at Trinity College, Cambridge, Peter decided that he wanted to work for the B.R.M. Grand Prix racing team. Tony Rudd offered for him to spend seven weeks of his summer vacation at B.R.M., before his final year at university, in an unpaid role to learn about Formula One motor racing. After his interview, Tony sent Peter to meet Raymond Mays, the founder of B.R.M. who lived next door to the Bourne works, and he was invited to tea by Raymond and his wife.

After graduating, Peter was taken on by B.R.M. where he worked initially on cooling systems and suspension geometry before moving on to work on aerodynamics, using scale models of F1 cars in Imperial College's wind tunnel.

After Peter's mentor Tony Rudd had left B.R.M. to become Director of Powertrain at Lotus, Peter moved to Specialised Mouldings in Huntingdon. They were the UK's leading supplier of composite body panels for racing cars, and he persuaded them to construct their own quarter scale wind tunnel that he designed and built himself. The first customer to use the tunnel was Eric Broadley of Lola Cars and Peter also worked on racing powerboats to reduce their risk of de-stabilising aerodynamic lift.

After four years at Specialised Mouldings, Peter was interviewed by Tony Rudd (again) along with Colin Chapman and he became General Manager of Technocraft, Group Lotus's Composites research company. He developed techniques for the moulding of Lotus road car bodies and for the hulls of Chapman's Moonraker boats. He was also asked to run Team Lotus's aerodynamics programme using Imperial College's wind tunnel "in his spare time".

The fruits of the latter were the Type 78 and Type 79 Lotus F1 cars, the first to feature full ground effect, and the 79 won both the 1978 F1 World Championship for Manufacturers and the 1978 F1 Drivers Championship for Mario Andretti. When the Type 78 started to exhibit its improved performance, a rumour began in the F1 world that Lotus had developed a new type of differential. So Team Lotus mechanics started to carry a device, hidden under a cloth, that they would pretend to fit into the Type 78's gearbox. The secret device was actually a tea-pot!

And Peter told a super story about developing the flexible skirts for the F1 car's side-pods by bolting alternative designs onto the rear bumper of a Renault 4 van. He would then lie on his stomach in the back of the van (with its rear door open) and watch how well the different skirts maintained contact with the ground while the van was driven round the Hethel test track as fast as it would go.



Peter Wright with Mario Andretti and Colin Chapman in the late 1970s

Peter also devised the concept for the clever 'twin-chassis' prototype Lotus 86 built in 1980 that led to the innovative carbon-fibre monocoque Lotus 88 of 1981. They both featured a very stiffly-suspended downforce-inducing 'chassis' connected to the wheel hub uprights and a separate softer-sprung chassis to provide good mechanical grip at low speeds and better comfort for the driver. Unfortunately for Lotus, the Type 88 was banned by the FIA before it had even raced.

Peter was also at the forefront of data collection in F1, initially using a light-beam oscillograph. That type of data recorder used a moving mirror with very low inertia to direct the beam onto light-sensitive paper. Hence it has much faster frequency response than the moving coil type of recorder. By coincidence, at around the same time, I was using a light beam oscillograph in 1977 to record the instantaneous pressures inside the Hydragas suspension units of the Austin Allegro.

After discussions with David Williams, Head of Flight Instrumentation at Cranfield Institute of Technology, Peter proposed to Colin Chapman that Lotus should develop a fully computer-controlled suspension system to which Colin immediately agreed, providing a budget and a Lotus Esprit Turbo test car and he set a target for Peter to prove the concept within six months. Hence Lotus Active Suspension was born. Working closely with John Davies, the Esprit demonstrator was duly built and it was driven mainly by Elio de Angelis, and also by Colin Chapman. It performed well enough for Active Suspension to be fitted to a 1982 Lotus Type 91 F1 mule-car in 1981. Chapman died in December 1982 so he never got to see an Active Suspension Lotus compete in a race, but the fully-active Type 92 was raced by Nigel Mansell in 1983 though without success. After Chapman's death, Peter Warr took over Team Lotus and he forsook the complexity of active suspension at the start of the turbo-era in F1 - that was another whole new learning curve.

Wright moved to Lotus Engineering, working on the development of active suspension and he managed the build of active suspension demonstrators for several much larger car makers. At a time when selling Lotus road cars was not very profitable, this venture was fundamental to the finances of Group Lotus.

In 1987 Lotus reintroduced active suspension to F1 on their Type 99T car, and Peter was heavily involved in getting active suspension to work well with Honda's 1.5 turbo engine. But there were trade-offs between the improved chassis stability and reduced tyre degradation that active conferred versus its extra weight and the power (approximately 40bhp) it used. Ayrton Senna concentrated on his race set-ups rather than qualifying, winning two Grand Prix and gaining three second places in the 99T. Lotus finished 3rd in the 1987 Manufacturers Championship and Senna was third in the Drivers Championship. Lotus didn't use active suspension in 1988 for cost reasons.

Later in F1, Williams GP team used a much simpler active suspension to control the ride height of their 1992 and '93 F1 Championship-winning cars, before it was banned for the 1994 season.

In 1988 Peter was appointed to be managing-director of Lotus Engineering, overseeing about 500 engineering staff. In this role, he joined the Lotus Product Policy Committee, a group comprised of the directors of Lotus and led by Mike Kimberley (MJK), that made all the key decisions affecting the specifications of Lotus Cars products. I was the (non-director) secretary of that committee and saw some of Peter's insight and wisdom at first hand.

MJK and Peter gained work for Lotus Engineering from Japan, Korea, China and Malaysia and this led to the purchase of Lotus by Proton in 1996 which secured Lotus future until 2017 when the Chinese Geely Group purchased a share of Proton which included a controlling interest in Lotus.

In 1994 Peter had joined the FIA as a Technical Advisor and he was soon appointed to Professor Sid Watkins' Safety and Medical Commission where he worked to improve the energy absorption of F1 cars in frontal and side impacts and to introduce ADRs (Accident Data Recorders) for F1 cars.

He was also a founding board member of the road safety organisation EuroNCAP that was set up in 1996.

From 1996, Peter investigated drivers' head decelerations during accidents and he helped to negotiate for the HANS (Head and Neck Support) device to be developed by Mercedes.

Peter then turned his attention to the safety barriers at racing circuits leading to the introduction of the 3-layer Tec-Pro barrier in 2006. It dissipates the momentum of a vehicle that hits it progressively, thus reducing the peak deceleration level, and its ease of repair and replacement allows races to continue without compromising the safety of drivers and spectators.

From 2009, Peter worked to reduce the vulnerability of drivers' heads in open-cockpit F1 racing cars. Various ideas were explored until a concept devised by Mercedes led to the introduction of the AFP (Advanced Frontal Protection) device, more commonly known as the 'Halo', in 2018.

Another of Peter's significant contributions to international motor sport was his work on 'Balance of Performance' (BOP) regulations. In the late 1990s, GT Racing was starting to become a technology race in which only the wealthiest teams could succeed and there was a spending race from 1996 to 1998 that led some manufacturers to move to the less expensive GT2 class and some to leave. BOP rules are applied to cars' weight, engine power, and aerodynamics to even up the performance of different cars. It has stopped costs running away and with the merits of BOP proven, GT Racing has continued under various names and now runs as a European Series. Peter said "manufacturers don't really like it which is probably a good thing".

Peter Wright wasn't solely devoted to motor sport; he enjoyed flying gliders and he, along with his friend Vic Long, rebuilt a 1930s De Havilland Tiger Moth bi-plane and Peter gained his Private Pilot's Licence. In his retirement he built a Type 51 Bugatti with a new Crosthwaite and Gardner supercharged 2.3 litre straight-8 engine. After selling the Bugatti, he took a joint interest in a V-twin racing GN and then bought a Jaguar C-type replica built by D-type Developments run by Jerry Booen who had worked with Peter as a chassis engineer for Team Lotus and Lotus Cars.

In 1995 Toyota Team Europe used an illegal system to by-pass the turbo restrictor on their Celica GT-4 model, and they were banned from competing in the 1996 World Rally Championship. Max Mosley said that Toyota's cheat mechanism was "beautifully made" and "the most ingenious thing I've seen in 30 years of motorsport". After Peter had given a talk at Classic Team Lotus in March, I congratulated him on writing the only description I've read of how Toyota's system worked that was both technically correct and readily understandable. He said that Max Mosley told him that the world's motoring journalists hadn't properly grasped how the system worked and Max asked Peter to write an accurate technical paper. He told me, "I was greatly helped when Max lent me one of Toyota's illegal intake systems!"

What a life, full of so many innovations and achievements! In conclusion Patrick Peal, who worked with Peter at Lotus and later ran the East Anglia Air Ambulance, has posted on Facebook that Peter Wright was "My best boss and a thoroughly lovely man."

Peter Riddle November 2025

THE RAYMOND MAYS PUB, BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE



Mention of Raymond Mays in Peter Wright's obituary leads on to the Raymond Mays pub on North Street in Bourne. It's relatively new, having been opened by Wetherspoons in 2022 and they've named it after local hero Mays, the racing driver who went on to found English Racing Automobiles (ERA) and British Racing Motors (BRM). Late in his racing career, he was British Hillclimb Champion in 1947 and 1948. The pub sign shows Mays' Type 13 Brescia Bugatti, nicknamed 'Cordon Bleu' with its left hand rear wheel missing. This recalls the famous photograph, reproduced above in colourised format, taken when Mays' Bugatti lost a wheel during a hill-climb meeting at Caerphilly in South Wales in 1924. Mays had two Brescia Bugattis, Cordon Bleu and Cordon Rouge, named after the French brandy and the French champagne respectively. Despite their nicknames, both cars were light blue/grey in colour and he fitted them with superchargers developed by Amherst Villiers.



THE RAYMOND MAYS

Thomas Raymond Mays
CBE (1899–1980) was born at
Eastgate House, in Bourne,
into a prominent family in the town.
One of the foremost local employers,
the firm TE Mays was a merchant of
animal feedstuffs, hides and skins.

Educated at Oundle School,
Mays spent his youth racing and went
on to found English Racing Automobiles
and, later, British Racing Motors (BRM).
His own driving career ended in 1950.

The pinnacle of his achievements,
and a moment etched in the town's history,
was the BRM team winning the
World Grand Prix championship in 1962.

These premises were
refurbished by
J D Wetherspoon
and opened in
March 2022.

COUNTDOWN MAGAZINE

Late 1980s / Early 1990s

**Produced by SCON member
Keith Evans**



We've been looking through some copies of 'Countdown' that was a publication produced and edited by SCCON member Keith Evans in the late 1980s / early 90s. It covered Stage rallying in the East of England and was a tremendous undertaking by Keith with each issue having 70 to 80 pages of which about 10 were devoted to adverts of interest to the rallying community. It included a calendar of upcoming rallies, news from the rally scene, comprehensive rally reports, championship standings and some very professional cartoons by Alastair Loxon. At the back were two pages of 'Freebie' Classified Ads including cars for sale, rally parts and a matchmaker section for drivers & co-drivers seeking to pair up with someone in the other seat.

Countdown magazine Volume 4 Number 1 is from mid-1991 and it includes a report on the Carquip UK Rally that was a co-promoted collaboration between Eastern Counties Motor Club, Kings Lynn and District Motor Club, West Essex Car Club and the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk. It was a single venue event held on Watton Airfield and it attracted 64 entries. The rally was won by West Essex Car Club's Chris Wood and Martin Woods in their 2-litre Ford Escort Mark II from the similar car of Robert Moore and Jane Newman.

That same issue featured several more stage rallies that had been won by Mk II Escorts, but also wins by a Metro 6R4, a Sierra Sapphire Cosworth 4x4, a rear-wheel-drive Mk III Escort, an Escort Cosworth and two different Darrians.

The second issue we looked at was Volume 4 Number 2, published later in 1991 and it included a huge ten-page report on SCCON's 'Countdown Midsummer Stages Rally' that attracted over 130 starters. The majority of the stage mileage was on Sculthorpe Airfield, still occupied by the USAAF at the time. The Americans gave the rally a tremendous welcome with a massive free barbecue for all the competitors, service crews and marshals. It was a multi-venue event with a couple of shorter stages at Shipdham Airfield and a farm track at Cranworth. At the latter an electricity pole was felled when the Peugeot 205GTi of Barry Richardson and Stephen Evans went off, necessitating the cancellation of the stage. As well as his own summary of the event, Keith Evans garnered tales from over fifty competing crews. Roy Gillingham / Stuart Larbey won in their Triumph TR7 V8 with Chris and Roger Bown second in their 2-litre Vauxhall Chevette. Best SCCON were Robert Close/Chris Dwornik who were seeded at no. 126 in their 1600cc Toyota Corolla but finished a very creditable 11th overall, winning their class. Henry Fairhead (who many of you will remember) came 54th and said "What a brilliant event; one of the best we've ever done."

Countdown was an amazing achievement while it lasted, but it was perhaps too much work for just Keith, (plus his fictional Sub-Editor Greg Airious, his Art Editor Hugh Jorifice and his Editorial Secretary Norma Stitz - not very PC, but times were different back then!)

And who took the majority of the photos in those issues of Countdown? It was Andrew Manston. He advertised his M & H Photography services in the magazine especially for events, promotional work and for brochures but he also said..... "Anything but Weddings!"

Martin Newson and Peter Riddle

Norfolk right now

**You see those vehicles taking
an alternative route over there?
We need to start some road
works over there too.**

