

# TRACKROD

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF TRACKROD MOTOR CLUB LIMITED

R.A.C. Registered No. 1230

102 April 1979





## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- APRIL 7th - Plains Rally: BTRDA  
& - Raylor Rally: York MC Trackrod are running Gail Hill see R Mackinnon or N Drayton  
7th/8th - Ribble Rally Spring Hill Map 97, 98, 102, 103  
& - Marlboro Moonraker Rally Motoring News  
21st/22nd Moonraker Rally: North Humberide MC Shell League  
28th/29th Ridings Rally Trackrod invited club. Marshalls will be wanted
- MAY 5th - South West stages Rally BTRDA  
6th - Autotest Trackrod Restricted  
12th/13th Barrett Oak: Woolpack Otley Maps 98, 99 104  
13th - Trackrod MC BCT CJ.  
19th - Weatherill Centurion Rally BTRDA.  
19th/20th Trackrod/POAC: Lookout Novices Rally Maps 100, 104, 105.

## CLUB NIGHT VENUES

- April 10th-----Mercury Motors Inn, Garforth  
17th-----Crest Motel, Oulton
- May 24th-----Shoulder of Mutton, Kirkby Overblow  
1st-----Square and Compass, North Rigton  
8th-----The Castle, Spofforth  
15th-----The Royal, Boston Spa, FILM SHOW.  
22nd-----Treasure Hunts Organised by Ron and Lindsay McKinnon  
start at car park behind BEJAM Cross Gates finishing at  
the Mercury Motor Inn Garforth
- June 29th-----Shoulder of Mutton, Kirkby Overblow  
5th-----Square and Compass, North Rigton  
12th-----Watermaggin, River Wharf at Otley, organised by Steve  
Smith, afterwards the Lawnswood Arms  
19th-----LADIES AUTOTEST, Crest Motel.  
27th-----Shoulder of Mutton, Kirkby Overblow.....

## ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CAR CLUBS

Production Car Trials; Nominations for events are invited. Registration forms and further information can be obtained from: Ken Waddington, 74, Otley Old Road, Adel, Leeds LS16 6LQ

Road Rally; Registration forms and further information can be obtained from: John H Richardson, 67, West Park, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 0JN Phone: Selby 702048

Autotests Registration forms and further information can be obtained from: Richard F Ineson, 4, Moseley Wood Drive, Cookridge, Leeds 16 Phone; Leeds 679329

Autocross; Registration forms and further information can be obtained from: Peter Nicholson, 17, Lansdown Hill, Fulwood, Preston. PR2 3W'D Phone; Preston 863240

Stage Rally Nominations for events are invited. These should be forwarded to Frank Stuart-Brown, 75, Woodpark Drive, Knaresborough, North Yorks. ; (0423) 863776

### CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We are very lucky this month to have two C.C.'s this is due to Charlie's postman not delivering last months in time to be typed, I believe he delivers things when and where he feels like it.

#### MARCH

Not alot has happened this month due to the weather, quite a few events have been scratched - and even the Moroting News series has been badly hit.

On a club note, a disgustingly poor response to the questionnaire in February's issue of the Newsletter/Magazine can only mean one thing, only a handful of members are bothered about the organisation outlook in the club. The rest cannot or certainly don't seem to be bothered about organising, competing or indeed it seems anything. Bearing in mind there was a prize draw for those involved, it really seems to be a waste of time - IT IS YOUR CLUB. Secondly, the Social Committee are organising a series of raffles for club equipment, I am sure they would be pleased to hear from anyone who can donate any prizes. They will also be selling tickets, why not buy some, you could win something special (or your own prize back - the ED).

May I take this opportunity to endorse Charlies comment with regard to Ian Brown who, as many of you know has gone back to his stamping ground in Cheshire, all the best for the future Ian, Trackrod will miss you. Despite the waather, we have a busy month ahead of us events wise and the organisers of the respective events will probably be calling on you for help, make yourselves available.

#### APRIL

"What happened to last months Chat" you might have asked, or then again, you maybe didn't notice it was missing! ... you did? well that is comforting to know, at least I have one reader. It really wasn't my fault, nor indeed was the fault at the Editorial door. What, really was the problem, the G.P.O. were unable to find the Editorial door with my copy in time for publication, despite a clearly typed address first class stamp et all!

However, enough of that, now to more important stuff. Sadly we were unable to run our March PCT which had been ably set up by Ronnie Moore and Peter Walton. Despite the winter weather Peter and Ronnie had quietly carried on with the organisation, they had secured over twenty entries and just a few days before the field was in excellent condition. Then as many of you will know, two days of rain and Thorpe Farm became a quagmire resulting in an inevitable cancellation. Very disappointing for both competitors and the organisers.

Their disappointment rather pales into insignificance when compared to the terrible blow to the Costa organising team as it becomes clear that this years event cannot take place due to mile upon mile of the moorland roads being blocked by up to ten feet of snow. I know that many of you have put in a great number of hours in both administration, planning and outside Public Relations work and it must be a very sad situation you now find yourselves in. Whether the Costa will run this year or not rather depends on many unknown situations, at the moment no one can say. I can only commiserate with you and thank everyone who has been involved, on the clubs behalf, for the tremendous effort that has been made, particularly over the last few weeks.

Finally let me end on a bright note, the Rallysport Forum at the Mercury was a tremendous success with the Ford people going away very impressed. Again I know th quite a few people were involved in the organisation of the evening, but surely a special vote of thanks should go to Jim Stoker who originated the idea in the first place.....'Nice one Jim'.

JOHN H. RICHARDSON



## MINTEX '79-FORCE MAJEUR??

The Mintex '78 saw Messrs. Airikkala and Nicholson take overall honours in their Chevette 2.3 However, the '79 Mintex saw 'Flying Finn' Pentti Airikkala teamed up with fellow countryman Risto Virtanen, whilst Mike Nicholson partnered the likeable Scotsman Jimmy Mcrae. Bearing in mind D.T.V.'s recent fortunes in the Swedish rally and nearer home on the Gwynedd rally the question seemed to be could the strong looking D.T.V. duo repeat their past success's?

As you can imagine, confidence within the D.T.V. team was running pretty high before the Mintex. Last year of course I had won the event with Pentti and so far this year he had achieved a 3rd overall on the Swedish rally (dominated always by Swedish NOT Finish drivers) Jimmy and I had just won the Gwynedd rally in somewhat arctic conditions using the single cam S.M.T. Chevette. For these reasons we had good cause to be confident - it took just 24 hours to bring us back to earth with a bump!

Due to the close proximity of the Swedish, it fell upon me to organise the service schedule, mark up 6 sets of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and 1:50000 series maps completely and make ready all the tyre schedules (we have eight different types of tyres to choose from) a task which took three solid days work!

So, Wednesday came, the day of the event, because of my diligent three days work, all administration duties had been done. I could relax, knowing that only the odd amendment could change plans, which in a rally of this status is inevitable. Oh dear how wrong can you be! Firstly we were told that the whole event would be put back 24 hours, and a completely new route would be devised. So, with rubber in hand I rubbed twelve maps clear, ready to await the restart. Our car, now sporting about the same power as on the last years event, arrived with a noisy diff: this was the second diff to go in this axle, so the entire unit was changed.

At last the rally started and most competitors felt this spoilt what was rather a nice social weekend! Stage 1 - Bramham Park was due to be run on the long route, but at the last minute this was changed to the more usual 2 miler (although the organisers forgot to amend the 4m 30 secs. bogey time!) This unfortunately left several hundred spectators with the frustration of standing on the long route (the original one), only being able to hear the cars, not actually see them.

We managed to hit a snow bank and spin, destroying yet another Chevette HS spoiler- we lost about thirty seconds, but this was to prove academic before the end of the rally. We were second fastest on the next stage, Manton Quarry, a mere 1 sec. behind Blomquist, but the rest of the southern loop was fairly uneventful, apart from the experience of tackling Cadwell Park racing circuit in the dark and on thick snow.

So far then so good, and we left Bramham Park a second time, lying a handy 6th overall. We were really looking forward to the Yorkshire Forests where our snow experience in Wales, due to the Gwynedd could be put to good use. Wrong again! The snow was incredible - 50 yards in from the start of the first forest stage (Was 1) our Chevette shod with high profile Dunlop 'Hakkapellita' (Sic.) snow tyres, became firmly bogged down in the ruts (which were some 12" deep) with the floor pan jammed on the had packed snow. Neither Jimmy or I could get out because of the high snow banks, and we lost a precious 5 minutes whilst the marshalls ran from the start line armed with shovels to dig us out, "Force Majeur" said the organisers.

The next stage was Catterick Airfield, and no snow! It was 100% dry tarmac. (It was definitely a tyre choice nightmare) we ran on soft compound hand cut slicks, which were alright and we weren't blessed with any moments. Boltby was next, and this stage saw us lose another 5 minutes stage time due to Graham Elsmore blocking the road. Poor old Captain Culcheth, until then enjoying a good run in his Group 2

MINTEX '79-FORCE MAJEUR?? contd.

Kadett, tried to get around him, but found himself terminally parked in a snow covered ditch. Graham Elsmore couldn't stop apologising, Brian's response was an inevitable shrug of the shoulders - a sad end to the old campaigners rally. It cost us another 5 stage minutes - 'Force Majeur' said the organisers and so we went on. We lost four more minutes in Dalby 1 when George Hill and Peter Clark got stuck on a hill (Force Majeur said the organisers) another 5 minutes on Dalby 6 when George Hill went off again, 3 minutes on Staindale 3 when we spun and wedged between the snow banks and so on and so forth.

We arrived in Scarborough after the second forest loop dejected and annoyed at losing over 20 minutes stage time due mostly to other peoples errors.

Olivers Mount was an exciting change from the snow filled forests, providing an interesting mixture of tarmac, muc and ice. These freak conditions caused a few hair raising moments in a total of two consecutive 3rd fastest times. The rally then looped down to Lincolnshire for four stages, all of which were easily cleanable, and therefore, rather pointless.

We managed to finish at Least, albeit in a lowly 11th place, WHICH WAS important all the same to the team, as Pentti had dropped out of second place with a broken cam belt. The first three places were filled with Scandanavians of course, which in view of the weather conditions was hardly surprising. I do not personally think they are that much more skilful in the snowy conditions, than their British counterparts, but they are supremely confident in their own ability and therefore, they do not lift off where British drivers would. This was something that came over to me with my year alongside Pentti - they hate lifting!!

The organisers must be praised for their unstinting efforts to ensure that the rally ran, despite the appalling odds. Stuart Saddington told me that in the five days prior to the event he had managed to get just nine hours sleep and most of that was in a standing up position. This year the Mintex was difficult to assess, but never theless, that it was run at all must be considered a success!!

MIKE NICKOLSON

If you've a lack of amusement, or just short of something to do,  
go to Great Orme or Clocaenog, it'll beat what's at Chessington Zoo.  
Oh, yes I'm a rally fanatic, and have been for many a year,  
my house is full of thermos's and all my marshalling gear.  
I pride myself on my marshalling, I'm a marshall quite profound,  
you'll find me in the bitterest weather and my R.A.C. bars hang down to the ground.

I've marshalled all over the country, in Wales and Ireland too,  
I've marshalled on snow covered stages 'til the end of my fingers turned blue.  
I marshalled the R.A.C. one winter, when the snow and the ice took it's toll,  
my quartz digital died of exposure, and I lent Jim Porter a hot sausage roll.  
They were the best were my marshalling moments, golden memories to me,  
the mother in law thought I'd gone loopy when I timed her and the wife making tea.

The wife wanted to go to Majorca, but to me that just sounded dull,  
so I pawned the three airline tickets, and dragged her and the kids up to Mull.  
The same trouble when we had our youngest, she wanted to call the lad Sid,  
but I intervened at the Christening - I reckon Stig's not too bad a name for a kid.  
But she's the same with her knitting, now it's really hard to laugh,  
when she did me a scarf for the Scottish, you'd think it had been made for a giraffe.

But tragedy struck one evening, when she smashed the thermos I'd won in a draw, before you could say Ari Vatanen she'd packed her bags and waled out of the door. She said she was tired of this rallying, and any more she just couldn't stick, and as for Peter Ashcroft and Ford, she said they made her feel sick. So off she went to her mothers, the one who thinks Pat Moss is a plant, she'd gone as far as the street corner, and through the echoes you could still hear her rant.

I thought that that was the finish, at last we'd gone OTL,  
I thought that was the end of the nagging, was it? was it hell!  
She was round the very next morning and she'd brought the dragon in tow,  
and with a wave of a pick axe handle she pointed to the door and said - go.  
I packed all my gear together, and with a shrug of my shoulders looked round,  
'Cos I'd got the worlds greatest treasure, my R.A.C. bars that hang down to the ground.

---

contd. SANDTREKKER SIX-WHEEL DRIVE LAND ROVER

#### Plenty of Fuel

Provision was made for 58 gallons of petrol. For 4½ gallon jerricans were carried behind a heavy cowcatcher built over the front bumper, four jerricans were carried on the roof rack and an additional tank was fitted under the front passenger seat, 30 gallons of water were carried in two tanks.

By this time, having lost all sense of proportion, we coated the floors with thick Wilton carpet, built specially contoured seats for driver and navigator (though the bear passengers made do with seats from an old Britania) and pampered ourselves with luxury trim and separate heaters for front and rear. The generosity of Smiths instruments gave the facia almost aircraft appearance.

On the morning of 3rd March, 1967, we put Sandtrekker into gear for the first time under power, and set out three days later for Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

To our surprise, everything worked perfectly. It seemed that we might reach Africa after all. The first dramatic episode occurred in Europe while climbing the Pyrenees. The altimeter was showing 12,000 ft. and the weather took a turn for the worse. Driving snow necessitated the use of the heated screen and the wipers were set to full speed in an effort to see through the swirling mists. High above us a noise like thunder brought us to a sharp stop and a few seconds later the road in front was struck by a falling mass of snow and ice. There was a mile long queue of traffic waiting for the snow plough when we finally decided to climb over the obstruction in six-wheel drive.

#### Customs delays

Most of the main roads from Tangier to Egypt have been surfaced since Rommel's day and although today many stretches are in bad need of repair, the innumerable forms at the many customs posts provide headaches for the North African traveller.

For us, this part of the journey was both colourful and interesting. It also provided an opportunity to test Sandtrekker in the sand from which we named her. These tests were successful beyond our wildest dreams and hopes and so it was with confidence that we moved on to Egypt. Cairo proved to be everything we had expected of it; dirty, romantic, disorganized and intriguing, a bewildering pattern of sight and sound.

contd. SANDTREKKER SIX-WHEEL DRIVE LAND ROVER

We managed to leave Egypt and the Sudan before war with Israel was declared, We had to leave the Sudan by sea as the frontier was closed and in the Yemen we were kept prisoners in our cabins. Our guard was armed (rather impractically) with bazooka. Fortunately the ship was Yugoslavian and so it was allowed to proceed.

The British Ambassador in Addis Ababa strongly warned us against continuing south. Not only would the imminent rains make the roads impassable but the Shifta bandits were laying mines on all the roads into Kenya. With a war raging behind us there was no alternative but to go on and in Addis at least we were safe for a while. Mobil Oil were our hosts and gave us the time of our lives. For a fortnight all our problems were forgotten.

The rains started just outside Dilla. The road was incredibly bad, huge boulders and great potholes with the occasional 3ft crevice crossing the road from side to side. After about a mile we met our first real mud. In places it was feet deep on either side of the track it was as high as the vehicle. In low range six-wheel drive Sandtrekker found grip where it looked impossible and, after two minutes, we were through. We were all thrilled by the way our vehicle performed and felt we could tackle anything, but after 200 miles of it we were not so sure. They took us four exhausting days. We could generally pick the stretches where the mud was only axle deep but we sometimes made mistakes. We also found we could hire a whole African village to dig us out for just 12s8d!

After Yobellow the mud diminished as we moved under the influence of the East African climate.

Taking a risk

During the previous week 10 people had died trying to get through from Mega to Moyare but the day we arrived in Mega an army convoy had successfully covered 75 miles in the opposite direction. In theory all we had to do was travel in their tyre tracks. The driver of a big Beryl five-tonner was willing to make the run so, rather than hang around for three weeks waiting for the army, we decided to join him. The local governor tried to persuade us to wait until the situation had improved but we decided to push on because the longer we waited the greater was the chance that the Shifta would lay a new set of mines, this time in the freshly made tracks of the army convoy.

We used most of our camping gear to pack around our legs in an attempt to lessen the explosion, should it come, then reluctantly drove off in the wake of the bus lorry driver.

The going was slow and the path difficult to follow, the road was unbelievably bad. Great crevasses split its surface, there were again pockets of mud and steep ridges of rock suddenly appeared out of deep sandy holes.

After an hour of travelling we came across a wrecked Toyota in which a man and a woman had lost their lives. Some miles farther on the remains of a tyre and a few fragments of twisted metal scattered round a deep crater were all that remained of a Land Rover in which eight people had been travelling. The hours dragged painfully past until we finally drew into Moyale, miraculously intact.

We took 200 days after leaving England to reach Port Elizabeth and everywhere we travelled Sandtrekker aroused considerable interest. She was eventested by the Armed Forces of both South Africa and Rhodesia. We were impressed by the friendliness and open handed generosity of so many of the people we met and this made our time in Africa most enjoyable. Now only one relic remains of our memorable experience ... does anyone want to buy a Land Rover???



### TROPHY POINTS.

With regard to Marshal's trophy points, we have changed the rules about this, up until now members could only score points on Trackrod events. However, now any event you marshal on either rallies, PCT's or autotests etc. for any motor club, you can claim trophy points. REMEMBER: IF YOU DON'T LET ME KNOW, I CAN'T PUT YOU DOWN.

RON MOORE (TROPHY POINTS SEC)

### WINTER SPORTS. (MARLBORO NATIONAL RALLY)

After a date change a petrol scare, and a few other problems the Tavern motor club along with Newport car club brought their national rally to the fore. The route was 210 miles long, out of which there were only 75 miles of stages and all around the Somerset area. Seeing how the rally was being run at the early end of the season many crews took advantage of doing the rally to put newly fettled motors through their paces-by the end of the event many wished they had'nt. The entry list was full of celebrities, such as Jeff Churchill, Terry Kaby, Tony "you need hands" Drummond, George Hill, Peter Clarke, and eventual winner Geoff Simpson. The only other top seed usually found on Castrol/Autosport rounds was Brian Culcheth, but the Opel Manta did'nt materialise at the start.

Brendon Hills saw the start of the action, with a total of nine stages up there. Stage one, aptly named Slowley Wood saw the organisers come under fire, being accused of dubious arrowing. Because of this Terry Kaby overshot a junction. David Stokes had his fair share of problems, suffering a plug lead coming adrift. Meanwhile, deep in the wooded Somerset countryside, George Hill was slipping and sliding about like a fat lady on rollerskates-he was using a wrong tyre choice.

Stage two, and into Whitswood 1. Not alot going on here, the weather had everyone on their toes, even the local wildlife. Wood mice and Badgers went scurrying for their lives when Geoff and Alan Simpson went off into a ditch and back out of it as fast as they went into it, causing quite a few untimly grey hairs. (Mind you, there were quite a few near misses, so there would be quite a few albino wood mice around the Somerset area.) Most, if not all the competitors buckled down to the fact that it was'nt worth going like hell, because of the snowy conditions, and the fact the event was so early on in the year it would be pointless to wreck their cars. The general feeling therefore, was the 'live to fight another day' attitude. This was not the case of Tony Fowkes, who came to grief on SS8, Charget Wood. A long right hander was the culprit, and a soggy ditch the reason for retirement. Mr. Fowkes hurled his escort into the bend, and realising he had taken a wrong line became resigned to the fact that there was nothing he could do except maybe have a word with the almighty, the almighty, probably busy with similar request. From about sixty nine other competitors refused to answer his call, with the end result being Tony Fowkes, escort and co-driver ended up bogged down to the axles in finest Somerset mud.

Meanwhile, Terry Kaby seemed to be holding out at the top of the field, but had suffered some punctures, causing him some time loss, co-driver Brian Rainbow had said that this was nothing to do with the tyres, but that the punctures were caused by rock-type objects etc.. Robin Farrington and Ian Parry had been having a good mornings run except for a frightening incident on SS8, Charget Wood. This time it was a hairpin that was causing the problems, and Farrington, whose speed was slightly excessive for the conditions was forced to negotiate most of the distance to the hairpin backward.

After the morning stages, the only mechanical failure to come from anybody in the top seeds was Geoff Simpson, whose clutch was coming out of trim, and was slowly begining to be non-existent. The route now went east for fifty or so miles (to use some fresh stages) and so everyone ended up at Kingswood Warren, refreshed and ready to carry on the rally, except for Tony Drummond, whose alternator packed up on the run out to Kingswood. (Whilst on the subject of Tony Drummond, it might be worth mentioning the fact that he was trying out some new bits on his escort, namely a much "Drummondised" and modified Lucas fuel injection system, and a quite different Quaife five speed gear box.)

WINTER SPORTS CONT./

Kingswood Warren saw George Hill speed up (havin had his tyre problems and break problems sorted out) Another man getting on with the job in hand was Robin Farrington who, with the minimum of fuss started creeping up the field.

Terry Kaby, who had just taken delivery of his works owned TR7 a week prior to the event, was getting used to the extra power very well. (Mind you - I think that Brian Rainbows eyes lighted up with pound note signs every time Mr. Kaby tackled a tight bend. The rest of the event was quite uneventful really, except for Tony Drummond's alternate packing up again on the last stage (forcing him to drive to the Minehead finish on just side-lights)

The finish was one of those long drawn out affairs, with protests flying about, mainly due to arrowing resulting in SS1, Slowley Wood being cancelled. There were quite a few comments on the rally, and the stages used, for instance, Kingswood Warren was run twice with thirty seconds intervals between cars. Altogether though, a good event despite the weather cutting up the stages, which forced Tony Drummond to comment - "They were like bloody Anglo-Saxon footpaths!"

R.S.L.

EDITORIAL./STOP PRESS.

21st. April. Elcar Stages Rally. Trackrod are running a stage and it's Langdale. See Nigel Drayton for details.

28th. April. Tour Of Lincs Rally.

-----

Not alot to say this month, except, as you may have read the G.P.O. Have decided to stop delivering letters to me, why I can't imagine - but one theory put forward is the Post Office Auto Club are so jealous of our magazine that they will do anything, even hi-jack reports to stop this magazine going into print - mind you, you can't believe all you hear - can you???

THE EDITOR.

TRACKROD

-----

ENDS.