

T A L K

May 2020



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Durham Automobile Club

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Welcome to May's magazine, that's the month, not the Prime Minister before last...just in case your struggling with calendar issues!!

It would appear that a lot is still trying to happen in the motoring world. Paul Gilligan's column is another sobering read and is an indicator of how the longer term was looking. Things change day to day, but I am sure most of you are seeing evidence that as a species we are so locked into to our present way of life that even our own safety is always a compromise, one which many feel has had its day!

Table top rallies are all the rage, along with stop motion die cast rallies that is and Andy shares his experiences in his piece.

Gordon Dundee ran one for DAC and the results are as follows

Andy Brown - 0 fails
Pam Broom - 3 fails
Tony Curran - 7 fails
Lindsay Burnip 9 fails (includes 3 fails for the last section that I didn't get answers for.
Mick Stead - 11 fails

I was unable to take part in any of the events, but I am looking forward to the next rounds.

F1 is looking for a way to restart, the usual jockeying for position already having political ramifications. We cannot divorce the economics of the situation from that of public health and there are arguments on both sides that will satisfy someone, somewhere I am sure!

With some sports that have already begun their seasons we have the faintly ridiculous compromises of them trying to squeeze some sort of resolution to the current season so they can start a new one!

I struggle to see what is so important about the next season that you would seek to undermine the validity of the current one? Surely that undermines the integrity of both seasons?

It would seem the bubbles that elite sports exist in are a little less transparent to the outside world than what we would expect!

I am sure many of you are re-assessing what you think will be the way forward for yourselves, free from the shackles of Elite Sport I have been thinking long and hard yet have achieved absolutely nothing!

I am sure many of us are the chicken and egg scenario. Within the madness we have there's one event that I hope runs, our own Wearside Classic, with its format, it may well be one of the few that can safely run. If not I may well take this opportunity to make some mods to the car with a longer term view to its usage and write off this year.

The last major situation we had like this was the last Foot and Mouth outbreak. Putting aside the devastation it caused Farming communities and livestock, most of the non track based motorsport took a beating. Not only did we lose venues, but clubs, championships and events struggled to ever return to what was a flourishing scene.

In road rallying alone we lost the nascent Endurance scene and affordable Historic events all but dried up, it has only been the Targa events that have saved the day.

We all have our parts to play in rebuilding again, it's that we need to focus on.

Alan Hawdon
Editor



THINGS TO DO IN 2020

CONTINUE DAC MEMBERSHIP



APPLY FOR YOUR

COMPETITION LICENCE

Surprisingly there is not much to report, but for this report I'll include a roundup of events I have been competing on.

Rallies are constantly being cancelled. This weekend the Poker stars rally should have run on the Isle of Man. But the Cheviot stages on Otterburn is still hoping to run in October.

We are still hoping to run the Wearside classic at Nissan in September. Let's hope the government's plan to keep the R value down and return to the "new" normal stay on track.

Here's a message from Motorsport UK to help get motorsport back "to normal" but with some additional measure to protect Officials and Competitors.

Currently motorsport is suspended throughout the UK until 30th June 2020 in order to protect the NHS and save lives. This is in line with practically every sport in the country.

This planning is being undertaken in consultation with a wide selection of stakeholders including the specialist committees of each sport discipline. The organisation is actively modelling how each of the sport's eleven different competition categories could potentially begin to restart motorsport when it is safe and practical to do so.

Motorsport UK CEO, Hugh Chambers commented, "I thank all of the motorsport community for supporting the need to suspend our activities; we appreciate just how difficult this has been for many individuals and organisations. Our goal is to get the sport running again as fast as practically possible."

We are working with the government (DCMS) and have led the development of a detailed plan that can be used by clubs, officials, venues and competitors to manage events safely and successfully.

"We are fortunate that our sport takes place in large outdoor environments, so that with practical measures in place, much of motorsport should be able to resume. We will all need to modify the way we have worked in the past and accept these changes in a collaborative and constructive way. I am sure that the ingenuity and passion of the motorsport community will allow us to navigate the essential requirements to keep everyone safe, but at the same time allow our sport to get going again."

To keep my navigation skills honed, I have been doing the table top rallies organised by the MG Club, Whickham, Hexham and of course our very own Professor of Navigation - Gordon Dundee.

Whickham's table top rally (TTR) organised by Colin Fish was more like a Mensa test. You had a section of map 88 and had to pass under two electricity pylons as many times as you could.

The start could be any of four roads that crossed Grid line 69. The finish was dependant on which route you took. Not sure where we DAC members came in the total results against Whickham members but I think we held our own against the Hexham entries.

Colin also threw in his infamous dirty dog tricks to try and trip you up. But it was very close with the following results. Well done to Pam, Lindsay and also Neil who is all the way out in the Philippines.

Thanks to Simon Jennings for helping Colin Fish to run his TTR for the DAC members

15 passes -
Andy Brown (DAC)
14 passes
Ed Graham (HDMC),
Rob Blake (HDMC),
Pam Broom (DAC)
13 passes
Roy Hewitt (HDMC),
Lindsay Burnip (DAC)
11 passes
Neil Foster
(DACs Philippine member).

The MG Club TTR was organised by Dave Alexander of the MG Club and Hexham DMC. Dave provided 5 sections allowing a couple of days between each section.

Sections 1 to 4 were fairly straight forward instructions. On the final section 5 the way the instructions were worded left some interpretation and of course I took the wrong interpretation.

I queried this with the organiser but his decision was final. However I was happy finishing second behind Lyndsey Proctor of Hexham. I wonder how much help she had from Ali ☐.

The Hexham TTR organised by Ed Graham.
Ed sent out a 5 section TTR, all on one sheet which had to be completed by the next day.

The instructions were fairly simple but in one grid square there were two possible routes (similar length) which could be taken but gave different answers.

As usual I chose the shortest route which was the incorrect route!!! How does that work???? I got 2 errors and finished 5th overall. When I checked and queried the results (in particular a church in Allenheads which wasn't on the newest version of map 87 I was using, I was told by Ed, he had used map 87 version 2009 (i.e.

older version than the 2016 version I was using) and the results stand as the answers reflected the older version he used. But he never published the version that had to be used so the latest version should be used. Hey ho but I'm not going to argue especially when they take the time to organise these things during the current climate of lockdown. ☐

The DAC TTR organised by Gordon Dundee.

I have to give a MAASSIIVVEE thanks to Gordon for letting me twist his arm to put on this TTR for DAC members.

Gordon's TTRs are decided normally by time and the route checks. But this meant to be able to email out a TTR, Gordon would need to adapt his instruction format. Gordon sent out instructions for 5 sections.

Approach and depart Map references, tulips, Herringbone, and two instructions he hasn't used for a long time. These were a box instruction and a point's locations. At the time of writing this report, the TTR was still going on so I'll have results later. But thank you to Gordon and to the DAC members who entered.

Please stay safe especially in these uncertain times of the lockdown and hope to see you all soon at the Honest Lawyer.

Andy Brown
Chairman of Durham Automobile Club





Apologies but again this month there can only be one subject.

The virus dominates life for all of us and every industry. As ever I'm writing on the 13th so much will have changed before some of you read this. Hopefully some things may have changed for the better. Everything depends on progress on arresting the spread of the virus and developing a vaccine or effective treatment, perhaps even both.

Apart from stressing the bleeding obvious that these things are vital, I'm not remotely qualified to comment, and I'm not sure anyone else is currently.

I don't want to appear selfish but I can only report on the effect on this industry, I don't know anything about any other, apart from pubs of course where the situation is sadly all too clear. So for the motor industry what happens next is all about those two great economic rules, supply and demand. Let me look at those now.

All vehicle production plants in Europe and many beyond have been closed since late March. They are just starting to reopen now and in the main on very much reduced rates of production because of social distance regulations and other factors including component shortages.

First past the post was Ferrari, they restarted last week and now claim to be back to full production. That's less than 200 cars a week though!

Ferrari build slowly, I know having been privileged to visit the factory a while ago. It's much more difficult with a mass production facility.

BMW have restarted "gradually", Jaguar Land Rover will go back to work next week and Bentley last week. Nissan have said their Sunderland plant will remain idle throughout May at least. Aston Martin have

begun a "phased return" to production at their St Athan plant which makes the new DBX SUV, vital for Aston who've just announced a £120M loss for the first quarter of this year.

The the stock of unsold new cars and commercials is pretty well exactly what it was when the lockdown started in late March. Some of these are sold and I'm told cancellations are few. In our own little way we had 11 new vehicles that didn't get out in time, all 11 customers are eager to get their new car or van and we're working to get them delivered asap now that the delivery systems are slowly restarting.

With all showrooms closed and no deliveries possible April was about a zero score. In fact somehow 4000 new cars were registered. This gave the media the chance to run sensational headlines about "94% Drop In New Car Sales".

Had all the printing presses been switched off and all shops etc selling newspapers been closed I wonder if they would have run similar headlines about the drop in newspaper sales?

So all we currently have is the same unsold stock that was there two months ago. Showrooms won't open again until June 1st at the earliest but vehicles from the slowly reopening factories won't arrive until July or August apart from rare exceptions. The build up of that supply will be slow.

A factory order that used to mean a 12 week wait will be probably around twice that. A recent What Car survey showed that one third of buyers were willing to wait no more than four weeks for a factory order, and a further 25% wouldn't wait more than 8 weeks. These people will be sorely disappointed. It was always 12 weeks, and as I say will now be much longer.

Today I was told the wait for a new electric Jaguar I-Pace could be nine months or longer.

Dealers are only allowed to submit sold orders so there will be no unsold stock. Therefore the impatient will have to buy what is there, or wait, it's as brutal a choice as that. Supply may be increased by cancellations of rental company orders or decreased if a scrappage scheme is introduced. Both of these possibilities are discussed below.

With used vehicle supply, again very little has been sold in the last two months, so the dealer stock is what it was in late March. There will be more part exchanges coming in as the new cars sold for March which didn't get delivered yet fight their way through the system.

Then there are the end of lease vehicles that were due to be replaced in April and May, but can only be replaced if there is a suitable new vehicle available. Otherwise the lease will be extended.

We're advising our lease customers to do exactly this rather than take something they don't find ideal and in fact we've done that already with my wife's Evoque and my daughter in law's Golf GTi.

All that says used vehicle supply may be tight but again the elephant in the room is the rental companies. They influence both supply and demand and as we're in the middle of both let's look at them now.

My comments here cover cars rather than vans. The van rental business has remained strong throughout the crisis with support for emergency services and more work for those involved in deliveries to homes as remote shopping has increased.

The car rental demand has collapsed. Customers come (or don't currently) from the same sources as the airlines, business travellers and tourists. A high proportion of rentals are from airports. Business travellers and tourists are almost extinct, so the rental fleets sit idle. And there are a lot of them.

Rental companies buy about 10% of the new cars sold in the UK and Europe every year. So for the UK say 250,000 cars a year. The time they keep them for varies but a rough guess is 6 months on average. Which means the rental fleet averages around 125,000 cars and as they had all just built up for the new registration plate and the Easter peak it was probably a good bit more than that in mid March.

90% of those cars are parked up, well over 100,000. Some are due to go back to manufacturers and dealers under "buy back" contracts. Some are "at risk" so down to the rental companies to sell. That doesn't matter, they all have to be sold one day by somebody.

Rental companies have cancelled thousands of new car orders. So demand from this sector is tiny, which will help the volume of new cars available to other buyers.



Manufacturers won't mind because they make little money selling to rentals, discounts are vast. So if they are short of cars why do it?

But the cars already in rental yards with no customers to hire them are the problem. All these are financed one way or another so monthly payments are due which is difficult with no rental income coming in!

Hertz were saved from bankruptcy last week when their funders agreed to wait another month for their money. What chance do Hertz have of being richer this time next month and so able to meet the payments? Very little I'd say.

The great fear is that rental companies are desperate for cash and a vast number of near new cars with very low miles (because they haven't been rented recently) will be released into the market very quickly. Inevitably that will bring prices down. Great bargains for the customer who perhaps can't get the new car they want but can now get a very low miles one for less money. Very bad for the dealers who are holding millions of pounds of similar cars bought a few months ago at higher prices.

If the rental companies slow down the release of their unwanted cars onto the market that will benefit them as prices won't drop so far, but can they afford to wait for the cash?

I have to declare an interest. One of the areas of our business specialises in remarketing ex rental vehicles to trade and business customers all over the UK. In the short term a glut of cars for sale would do

us good, but I'm not sure of the long term. We want our trade customers to survive and that's a risk just now.

Demand is the difficult one. The availability

of new and used vehicles is pretty well clear, so forecasting the supply side is easier. But the \$64000 dollar question is how many people will actually want to buy a new or used car or van in the current situation.

Many people have had their incomes reduced and their savings battered. Many are fearful for their jobs as furlough reduces and eventually ends. Many small business owners have had no income apart from Government grants and loans for two months now, and for some there are months more of the same to come.

Equally there are those who's circumstances have improved, those who've been working from home on full pay with reduced commuting costs, expensive holidays cancelled, no spend on entertainment and so on.

There are certainly signs that there will be strong demand for cheaper used cars as people seek to avoid public transport. There are thousands of cars that have come to the end of their lease or PCP agreements where something has to be done, and thousands more will reach that stage in the next 3-4 months, September in particular.

What Car Magazine have surveyed potential buyers and almost 20% of those currently considering a new vehicle intend to buy just as soon as the dealers re-open with another 6% saying they will buy within 4 weeks. That should get dealers off to a flying start. Certainly in Germany and Austria dealership sales were quickly up to over 80% of the previous levels once dealers were allowed to open the doors. There is undoubtedly a level of pent up demand from people who want to change their car and have been unable to for almost two months now and counting. However one has to wonder how strong the demand will be once these people have done their deal?

Van demand we expect to stay reasonably strong. The courier companies have remained very busy and will continue that as people seek to avoid going to physical shops. It seems likely that the Government will support the construction industry who are great van users, and many in that industry have work to catch up on from the enforced break.

Then of course there will be efforts to stimulate new car demand. The industry both in the UK and throughout Europe is calling for a Scrappage Scheme whereby owners of older and therefore higher polluting cars are given a grant of say £2000 to buy a new car.

In fact this is a no cost deal for the Government because if the customer buys a new £12000 car £2000 of that goes back to the Government as the VAT content in the price. So they can help the industry and the environment at no cost which makes it a no brainer and I'm 99% certain it will happen in June.

The manufacturers all need to get cars and vans delivered quickly, they need the money. One way of achieving this is pre-registration, when unsold vehicles are registered by dealers in exchange for a big discount. The advantage for the manufacturers is that the dealers pay in full on the day of registration, funded by their finance company providers.

So long as the finance companies are prepared to do this and the discount is big enough to persuade the dealers to make this investment in these uncertain times this can work for everyone, including the customer.

How far the manufacturers will be prepared to go depends on their stock levels, their view of sales and how many cars they can make over the next few months. I think if the showrooms open in early June the manufacturers will wait until late June to assess the level of demand and then perhaps push the pre reg button.

Where does all that leave manufacturers and dealers? Damaged in a word, severely damaged. Toyota announced yesterday they expected profits this year to be no more than 20% of last year, if any profit at all.

Toyota expect global sales of 8.9 million vehicles this year which is the lowest for 9 years and compares to 10.46 million last year. Some analysts have said that the combination of weak demand and slow production could bring global sales down by a third to under 7 million.

At that level no manufacturer makes money. No doubt there will be job cuts and factory closures, costs have to be brought into line with reduced sales. Marketing budgets will be cut bringing motorsport spending into great danger.

For UK dealers, forecasts are that new car sales will reduce from 2.25 million to about 1.6 million, a one third drop. That will be extremely painful for the dealers. One senior dealer group executive said this week that he expected a "Darwinian evolution" of the car retail sector. In other words survival of the fittest. He expects 25 - 30% of UK car dealers to go out of business or be taken over in the next two years.

For those that remain staffing levels will be reduced, particularly in the showrooms coming into line with reduced sales volumes. If you're selling one third less cars you need one third less people to be brutally simple. Some large dealer groups have already started the legal consultation process over sales staff redundancies, some have declared redundancies already. This process may be slowed by the extension of the furlough announced earlier this week but I think that will only put off the evil day for many.

We're actually recruiting salespeople and have been inundated with applications from people who expect to be redundant soon. When I read over this I can't be sure if I've been too pessimistic or too optimistic. That depends how the virus situation develops. If new cases and deaths continue to drop as we gradually unlock then I think things will go fairly close to what I've suggested. But if things go the other way and we get the dreaded second wave goodness only knows. All bets are off in that situation.



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We have moved!

After years of planning and a hectic week of unloading office supplies, Great North Air Ambulance Service's new HQ is open for business!



The move to Progress House in Urray Nook, Eaglescliffe, has brought fundraising, lottery and admin teams together under the same roof for the first time. Office staff are excited to welcome the operational team based at Durham Tees Valley Airport to the new headquarters later in the year, while our Cumbrian base in Langwathby will continue to operate in the West.



£120,000

each year

is how much we will save on rent and other expenses by moving to our very own headquarters



395

cubic metres of concrete

has been poured to make the base of the hangar as we get ready for the helicopter to join us

Our new address:

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TS16 0QB



I do wonder if its motorsports fault that I am one of those “over specifiers”

You know the type, they have walking shoes for walking, running shoes for running, Arctic spec jackets for when it gets cold....

So I have a set of winter tyres for both of our road cars, I haven't always had the luxury of that choice, but the last 15 years has seen my cars equipped with summer tyres so unambiguous in purpose that just one four wheel drift over 4 lanes of the M62 late one night made me think....yeah, maybe time to see if winters work!

I have form, the 1986 Mintex, sorry “National Breakdown” taught me a few lessons. This rally, whatever its called, traditionally ran around the third weekend in February, it was either unseasonably warm, or bloody well Baltic, never seemed anything in between, always hard to call.

Me and my then brother in law, had volunteered to Marshal on the second day at Dalby. We had to be there early so I packed a few bags of crisps and my usual snow suit, trolley jacks, maps, flares, compass, whistle and bottle of anti freeze into my the car and off we set in the dark. I hadn't long been married so I was still in my pride and joy, a 78 Escort 1.3 Pop Plus (yes officer, its standard) which was being de-contented at a rate of knots as

adulthood and impending fatherhood made something more sensible a must. It was running a 1.7 crossflow on a Weber, CD6 Springs, Bilsteins, cage and as it was Winter and I couldn't afford to replace the bald Yoko's, a lovely set of Colway knobblies. They bugged up the MPG and NVH but Ideal for my new reality.

6 am saw us awake to fresh snow, a veritable blanket of the stuff, but we set off from Teesside thinking, it will get better...won't it?

Sutton Bank these days is more a test of finding a gap in the traffic so you can have some fun, but for some smaller engined cars still on sale in 1986...yes Rover Mini, its you I am looking at! this uphill challenge was still a strain.

These days we would have mobile devices and a host of information to go on, but as we climbed out of Thirsk towards Sutton I was more excited about driving in the snow than taking any real notice of what the implications. We were the first car up that morning, now it may appear in hindsight to be foolhardy, but let me tell you those Colways were biting beautifully and as I oversteered the hairpin and grappled up Sutton Banks virgin snow I felt like it was just the start of what would be another adventure.

I always loved that rally, it was the first proper rally I ever spectated on away from my immediate area. The 77 Mintex being the first time I had seen rally cars in the flesh in a forest and Dalby, Wass, Cropton, Boltby, Ingleby all became marked up on the old OS

maps that were sold for 10p each by my local library, back ways in, spectator spots, hints tips, all marked on.

It got more serious as one by one me and my mates passed our tests and followed the well worn route of being in stupid places at stupid times of the year.!

For those of you less aged and accustomed to red and white tape, entry fees and rally packs, these rallies were in the main secret, you had an idea but not much more than the dates on a calendar. Yes we had our network of contacts, but you couldnt be too keen as you would end up directing traffic in a car park as a price of that knowledge so it was all a bit clandestine.

There were many reasons for this secrecy, firstly the competitors were in the dark about route specifics, well in theory anyway, and Spectators weren't really catered for, despite millions of the crazy fools tramping around all year long!

I am sure it had nothing at all to do with situations as unlikely as a Blue 1974 Datsun 100A, with a pair of Wipac Hair raisers and new Sp Sports appearing on stage just before the opening car in Dalby on the 1982 Mintex. The driver, following instructions it has to be said, found themselves way past the firetower and going along a track that seemed to have a lot of people stood alongside it...then the crowds got larger and it was apparent that they had better get going as they were now in the bloody woodyard. So they really started to motor until finding a firebreak to scoot

up...the first car came through a few minutes later, we had a great view and the weather was quite mild! It wouldnt have been such a bad thing apart from repeating a similar thing in 93 in my MG Maestro!

So yes it was an adventure and one I fear now is a dim dark distant thing, following the RAC rally around the country, service areas, pubs, Helmsley Chippie all of it lost under the jackboots of progress.

I started taking my son to rallies not long after. The 87 RAC was his first one, the service area at The Eden Arms near Chilton, that was it for that rally, no tours, but it was enough to sow the seed. However it became increasingly less of an adventure, everything was organised and admission prices went against the grain for me as did being stuck in a car park queue for hours with no hope of hopping to the next stage.

Dalby was our venue of choice through until the late 90's, we no longer followed the RAC as it wasn't the RAC anymore. It was on telly and in Wales and as my son grew older and I started competing on HRCR events spectating became something I would do less and less, the internet changed things again.

The internet and mobile phones, if they had been around in 1986 I wouldn't have battled my way all the way to Dalby to be greeted by a bemused Forestry Commission guy who said, the rally was called off late last night due to the snow..FFS!

Alan the Fowl Mouthed Fox



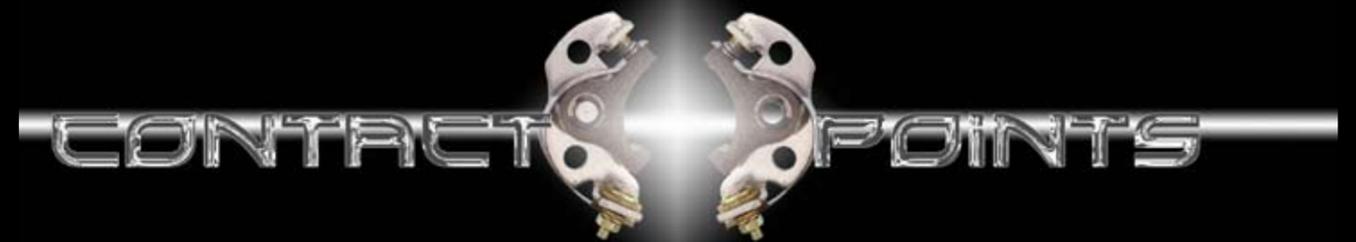
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Please note the presence of a Calendar of events is purely as an aide memoir so you remember what one looked like.....

2020 NESCR0 CHALLENGE

| | | |
|----------|--------|--|
| Sun 16th | August | Blue Streak Spadeadam MCHistoric/Targa |
| Sun 6th | Sept | Wearside Durham ACHistoric/Targa |
| Sun 20th | Sept | Doonhamer South of Scotland CCHistoric/Targa |
| Sun 18th | Oct | Solway Wigton Motor ClubHistoric/Targa |
| Sun 22nd | Nov | Saltire Saltire Rally ClubHistoric/Targa |

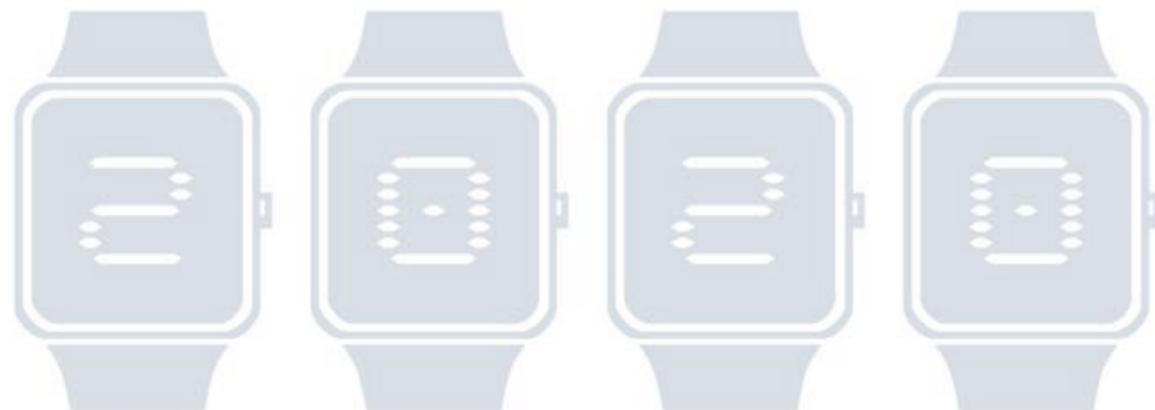
When these events are confirmed they will be added permanently to the Challenge.

| | | |
|----------|-----|--|
| Sun 25th | Oct | Tynemouth Targa NewcastleHistoric/Targa |
| Sun 29th | Nov | Solway Coast Targa KirkcudbrightHistoric/Targa |

North of England Tarmacadam Rally Championship

| | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| May 31st | Jim Clark Reivers Rally |
| Aug 2nd | Tyneside Stages |
| Aug 30th | Pendragon Stages |
| Sep 27th | Cheviot Stages |

Christmas Day Dec 25th (subject to confirmation)



FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

For Sale

1 Pair of OMP 3 Point Harnesses
snap hook out of date
£40



1 Pair of Sparco 3 point Harnesses
snap hook out of date
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Set of BMW 336M Staggered Alloys to fit X5/6
With barely legal Pirelli runflats some marks,
no cracks or buckles
£500



All of the above, contact me, Alan on
07940304242

Many Thanks to the contributions from

Andy Brown
Paul Gilligan