

OUTPOST

The North West Region Newsletter

DECEMBER 2021



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A SAFE NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

There is a theory which states that if ever anyone discovers exactly what the Universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable. There is another theory which states that this has already happened.

The same thing could apply to our hobby.

We have seen rapid change this year, mainly due to the pandemic and how MSUK and organising clubs have adapted to those changes. Whilst some people have been resistant to change, it is fair to accept that change is necessary and vital in order to ensure that our hobby not only survives but flourishes. It will mean that some old practices may have to be left behind, new methods will be adopted and that we can no longer look over our shoulder and say - 'Well we've always done it that way.'

However, it is how change is managed - that is the key, and your committee is committed to supporting all of you as we continue to evolve and change.

From restricted numbers of marshals, no spectators, mandatory face masks and minimal social contact at sign on at the beginning of the season, to lots of spectators, more marshals, and a general relaxation of social distancing rules. Opposites for some and business as usual for others. However, my advice is that we have to remain vigilant and respectful of others especially regarding social distancing, wearing of face masks etc. Whilst it remains a personal choice for now, who knows what the future will bring, and we may have to revert to previous rules to help reduce the risks and adhere to local restrictions.

2021 saw some excellent racing, brilliant marshalling and more importantly, teamwork. I witnessed some great interactions with Northwest marshals welcoming new marshals, taster day guests and working together to

provide solutions to ensure safe racing and the safety of the drivers. We have had to deal with some fairly major incidents and even though we have been low on numbers, it certainly was made up for by expertise and teamwork. It's fair to say that every day is a school day and I have seen many accidents and incidents this year that I've not seen before or dealt with. The day I stop learning at a race circuit is the day I quit marshalling.

My thanks go to the clubs, stewards, clerks, secretaries and all those people who act and volunteer behind the scenes, often without thanks or recognition. Without their input, we would not have a hobby to enjoy.

Each member of the Northwest committee has brought their skills and expertise to meetings this year, resolved issues and become more visible to members.

Three members of Northwest committee have stood down, and we are currently recruiting for a replacement Social Media Officer and a Regalia Officer. My thanks go to Mark Noble, Dave Smithson and Sam Collinson for their help and support on the committee.

I am proud to see that the National Chair, Treasurer and now National Secretary are Northwest members. Along with National Grading and Regalia, it does seem to be rather Northwest Centric!

To commemorate the marshals we have lost over the years, I put forward a suggestion and the Committee have agreed to use some of the Cliff Hammond legacy to plant some trees at Oulton Park and to have an annual plaque attached to remember our colleagues who have passed away. This will allow friends and family to have a focal point to gather, reflect and remember. We intend to back-date the plaques from 2015 which is when the club received the legacy from Cliff's estate. It will be in the form of one tree per year. The management at Oulton Park are delighted

to have this permanent reminder for the marshalling community that will enhance the circuit for years to come and we are grateful for their co-operation.

The Chief Marshals have had the unenviable task of trying to stretch numbers to cover all posts this year and I am very grateful for their continued enthusiasm, help and support. Some meetings have been very well supported, others less so. However, I am truly grateful that some of you have been willing to undertake other duties often with little or no notice to ensure that race meetings were able to go ahead.

Thank you to all of you who stepped up to the mark and said yes, how can I help. I realise that this meant stepping out of your comfort zone and this has not gone unnoticed. Being a Chief Marshal can be sometimes a thankless task. However, with Margaret Simpson mainly at the helm for most of this year, the Northwest has had a memorable year.

My vision when I took on the chairmanship in late 2018 was to have the committee more accountable, visible, accessible and most importantly - approachable. Hopefully I have done this. Recruitment and retention have had to take on slightly different guises, and again, the adoption of change meant that we were ready for action, motivated and focused on getting the best results from the resources we had to hand.

Finally, my thanks to all the Northwest members for making things happen. I am proud to be part of this region and this club and to be its representative.

As I embark on another three-year term as your chairman, may I close by wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year.

Thank you.

Mike Broadbent - NW Region Chair



Sir Frank Williams CBE - R.I.P.

"Sir Frank leaves behind a legacy in Formula 1 that features 16 world championships, over 100 race wins and a lifetime of pushing boundaries and elevating motorsport to new levels.

"We will all miss Sir Frank's spirit, determination and courage which he displayed both professionally and personally on the world stage.

"He will forever remain an icon of British motorsport and an inspiration to us all. Our thoughts are with the Williams family during these difficult times."

For those wishing to pay tribute, Williams Racing has asked that donations be made in place of gifts to the Spinal Injuries Association.

Motorsport UK Chair David Richards CBE



1987 British GP Silverstone - NW Region Marshals presenting a cheque to Sir Frank on behalf of the Save the Children Charity. Funds were raised pushing a Williams F1 car round the Brands Hatch short circuit at the 1986 British GP.



A RALLY WHERE FIREWORKS ARE GUARANTEED

During the latter part of the Summer it was great to hear that the Neil Howard Stages had been scheduled for a return to its regular date of the first Saturday in November when it ended with the traditional firework display. The 2020 edition of the single venue rally was postponed until May of this year.



The event is the jewel in the crown of all the petrol head-focussed activities that the Bolton-le-Moors Car Club (BLMCC) organises and can trace its roots back to the 1970s. At that time the club, which formed in 1950 and is named after what its home town of Bolton was originally called, ran the prestigious Bolton Midnight Road Rally - a round of the BTRDA Championship - which used public roads in Lancashire, Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

It was decided to add another rally to the portfolio. This one was to be aimed at the Clubman competitor and began as a road rally but became the club's first event to be run to a special stage format in 1985 at a time when

that aspect of the sport was gaining in popularity.

During the setting up of the event the following year, the secretary of the rally fell from a vehicle and was tragically killed. He was Neil Howard and the fixture has been named in his honour ever since.

Having been held at Haydock Park, Aintree Race Circuit, Park Hall and Melbourne Airfield, the event has now found a home where it closes the season for Oulton Park with up to 90 competitors taking up the challenge offered by the circuit, the surrounding service roads and the track used by MSV's Rally School. The event has continually grown in strength being named ANWCC Rally of the Year in both 2012 and 2014.

The vastness of the Little Budworth venue is a real boon as it allows the Clerk of the Course, Darren Spann, to provide competitors with a wide variety of stages. Prior to each event, he and his team usually have a meeting with representatives of Oulton Park to determine which areas of the facility can be used. Furthermore, past comments from competitors and the Safety Officer will be taken into account when deciding which routes the rally cars will take as well as Bogey Times, the probable duration of the stages and where splits/merges can be incorporated.

The aim is to provide an interesting set of stages each time the event takes place by adding or removing features from past iterations. However, a balance also has to be



struck between giving crews a fresh challenge while retaining the features which are popular - in particular the track used by the Rally School and the water splash.



Within the organising club, the water splash is known as "Darcy's Dip" after the long serving member of the BLMCC who came up with the idea. Located at Range Corner from the original 1953 Oulton Park layout it was first used in 2014. The spectacular feature was funded by the car club and constructed by the circuit's staff. It evolved over the years until 2019 by which time it featured height control and a filling inlet. It was a highlight of the 2019 WRC Wales Rally GB when Oulton Park was used as the opening stage.

Putting on an event of the scale of the Neil Howard Stages is an enormous undertaking and necessitates a dedicated crew of people. When the event is held in November, work begins in August with the initial meetings with representatives of MSV and the establishment of the stage routes and the regulations. Promotion takes place via Social Media to generate interest amongst potential competitors in time for entries to open at the end of September.

The month of October is then generally taken up with preparing the road books, competitor packs and stickers. The BLMCC are fortunate to be able to do a lot of the printing themselves, giving them control over quality and reducing costs.

Then the event itself is just around the cor-

ner. The organisers like to send a team to Oulton Park the weekend before the rally to do as much set up work as possible however, often, the track has events taking place right up until the Friday before the rally and so much of the work cannot be done until after 5 pm on the eve of the big day when it's a case of "all hands to the pump!". At least much of the hardware required to construct the stages is held at the circuit which makes things easier and the BLMCC now have years of experience in running the fixture at the venue. When the rally is done and dusted, it is time for the fireworks! These are organised by Oulton Park and were introduced in the very early days to broaden the appeal of the event by making it family friendly. As it usually takes place around Bonfire Night this spectacle is a very apt way to finish the day.

One occasion when there were no fireworks was when the 2020 event was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. After a number of potential dates came and went due to the second lockdown being extended, the rally finally took place in May of this year after a great deal of work by MSV and Darren Spann. Much of the ground work had been put in place during the Autumn - stage plans, entry list, marshal teams, etc - but because the date was agreed so late in the day, there was a very intense period of work required to put everything in place.



It was good to run the rally on a warm Bank Holiday rather than a cold November's day and the team were able to set everything up on the Sunday however, on the downside, all



the paraphernalia had to be packed away on the Monday evening meaning there were some very tired members of the organising team by the time they were able to go home.

As Oulton Park covers such a large area, these events just wouldn't be possible without a huge team of volunteers in attendance on the day and BLMCC are very grateful to all the marshals who ensure everything runs smoothly despite November not being the warmest time of year.

At the most recent Neil Howard Stages in May 2021, there were over 110 in-stage marshals and 28 radio marshals covering 12 radio posts including control. That doesn't even include the medical and recovery crews and officials. "It's a monumental effort!" says Chief Marshal, Ian Swallow. This personnel requirement is far greater than a typical forest rally.

Given that the event provides a day of non-stop action, it is no surprise that it is so popular with marshals.

Dave Williams



The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the BM-MC North West Region took place on 18th November, 2021 at 19:30 via Zoom.

In attendance were:

Paul Newns; Mike Broadbent; Colin Barnes; John Edwards; Duncan Fitzgibbons; Geoff Cooper; Rob Mugurian; Nadine Lewis; Ian Lewis; Margaret Simpson; Mike Thomason; Bridgette Broadbent; Brian Sallis; Tom Carroll; Steve Elder; Steve Woolfe; John Brownlie; Andy Ringrose; Graham Battersby; Margaret Battersby; Henry Battersby; Bill Gray; Ray Sumner; Andy Holley.

Apologies were received from:

Eric Ridler; Jan Williams; Heather Roberts; Dave Smithson; Ian Briggs; Andrew Pratt-Fryer; Sam Collinson

The Minutes of the last meeting were accepted, with no matters arising from them.

Reports

The Chair, Mike Broadbent, presented his report and overview of the season.

Reports were also submitted by officers of the regional committee before the meeting.

Election of Committee Members

Club rules require that Committee members stand down by rote and may offer themselves for re-election.

This year they were: **Mike Broadbent;**

Paul Newns; Eric Ridler; Jan Williams;

John Edwards.

Their re-appointment was proposed by Colin Barnes and seconded by Geoff Cooper.

Two members of Committee, **Dave Smithson and Sam Collinson**, have stood down.

Members' Proposals

One proposal for consideration had been received from Brian Sallis, seconded by John Francis.

Any Other Business

Margaret Simpson; Nadine Lewis; Andy Holley; and Ray Sumner addressed the meeting.

Graham Battersby advised everyone that Margaret Battersby and Gill Sumner had served thirty years in race control.

The meeting closed at 20:20.

If you would like a full copy of the Minutes or the officers' reports, please e-mail the Regional Secretary, Paul Newns, at nw.secretary@marshals.co.uk

The meeting was recorded. If you would like to view the recording, again, please e-mail Paul Newns. You will then be sent the link and passcode.

USA Grand Prix 2021 Trip to COTA Austin Texas

Ashley Harwood, Michael Siddle, Phil Goodge, John Edwards

Here is the story of the postponed trip from 2020 to the USA Grand Prix in 2021 at Circuit of the Americas. Despite a year's delay nothing had got easier in planning this trip, in fact to be honest it had become more difficult to understand the various rule guidelines and opinions relating to travel and COVID. The blog will focus on the time at COTA however just to give you an idea of what went before:

- Travel not permitted so must we cancel trip?
 - Travel permitted under visa exemptions as race officials
 - Can't get visa as UK travel not permitted
 - Visa opened for travel
 - Is AZ vaccination recognised in USA or not? Phone calls and emails to various US bodies including Customs etc
 - No exemption paperwork as its all electronic attached to visa/ passport
 - PCR test required to fly
 - 2-day PCR test required on return
 - 2-day test amended to lateral flow test the week we fly out
 - One PCR test on the Saturday was met in the test centre with "the lady who does the test is off sick today didn't you get a phone call "
 - App problems to check in documents online
 - Questions at Heathrow and Chicago "where is your VISA exemption paperwork copy "-as passports taken away and nervous waiting to see if we are allowed on the plane and then into the USA
 - Aborted landing at Chicago
- You get the picture!!!



Anyway, after all that and more plus a stopover at Premier Inn, Heathrow, a 11+ hour flight to Austin via Chicago which included lots of turbulence and an aborted landing - that was not fun- we finally arrived late and very tired. A quick trip to Walmart - where they have a "gun alarm" as well as a fire alarm we were informed! followed by Ashley brake-testing the hire car in Walmart car park, and a meeting with a spooky neighbour, it was time to get ready for the day to adjust to Austin time zones.

Day 1

Well, the 6-hour time difference really didn't help with sleep as we were all awake at 3am, hence our day of adjusting didn't really work. We decided to get out and about early and do quick trip to COTA to see the circuit, and the office for the weekend -TURN 1. Luckily the circuit was still in preparation mode so access into the grandstand was available for some impromptu photos overlooking the corner and the start finish straight - you really get an appreciation of the steep hill looking down, and a big gravel trap to catch the cars!

From there we went off to do a bit of outlet mall shopping etc for the day, and finished the day off trying to get Pluto tv to work - 20



minutes of me pressing buttons on the remote followed by Michael doing it a first push and watching RUSH to get us in the mood for the weekend ahead

Day 2 Training

We arrived at the circuit at around 9am, parking at LOT M where sign on and accreditation system etc was done, temperature already a muggy and humid 70+. The big plastic tent did not help, with the heat - or the mosquitos. Lots of big American muscle cars in the car park plus a McLaren and UK flag set up next to the entrance lead to some good chats with ex-pats who now lived in the USA. Sign on was very efficient - they even had my details - that's a reference to a trip to Canada a few years ago for those who know!

Swag bags handed out including caps T-shirt's, snoods, tabard etc were a very nice touch. Then down to training, both theory and practical followed by lots of slow motion videos of incidents at previous races.

Kit was handed out at 3 - blue overalls and a very heavy helmet to be worn during all sessions! Dinner followed at 5 which was much needed, chatting with some US Marshals, then a quick start off at the "GENERAL STORE" on the way back - we sent Michael in

as he was the biggest of the four of us! Finally, home to get sorted for practice Friday, including trying the kit on - very funny when the kit you have is 3 sizes too small - you had to be there!! Circuit for 7am next day so early night.

Day 3 Practice

An early start - or so we thought - to get to the track early for briefings and breakfast before getting the buses from LOT M to post, and our first proper view of the "hill". Post set up checks done - roles allocated - however we suddenly realised we were short of 4 intervention marshals! A potentially busy weekend ahead for the team:

- Phil - corner chief
- Michael - Lead Intervention
- John - MRV- aka snatch, with Gerry the JCB driver
- Ash - intervention together with Nick - a local marshal to whom we owe a huge vote of thanks for his help over the weekend

Programme for the day was:

- Formula W practice 1
- F1 Practice 1
- F4 US Practice
- F1 Practice 2
- Formula W practice 2

The F4 Youngsters looked feisty 35 cars but managed to keep it sensible through their sessions. In the final Formula W series of the day car 44 Abbie Eaton spun and stalled at turn 1 in the middle of the track - "C'mon let's go" was the call from Mike and off went the intervention team to turn 1A to get the car recovered down the hill.

A problem with the landline meant that Phil had to give his radio to Ken on Comms for the day - very frustrating! The heat of the day meant the mosquitos were out in force, targeting Michael who ended up with some very nasty bites.

After finishing up at the track a trip into Austin to "experience" 6th street and a beer at Buck Wild, a bar with a bucking bronco, a basketball game and American college football on tv- what more could you ask for? We then treated the "home of fast food" label and failed miserably to find anywhere to eat at 10pm - ending up at Taco Bells drive through, who got the order wrong leaving Michael without any food! Back to the AIRB-NB, and sleep prior to 0530 start



Day 4 QUALIFYING and Phil's Birthday

More of the same from day 1, breakfast, briefings and turn 1 fun, especially with Phil wearing his birthday candle hat. Landline problems continued meaning Phil had to give up his radio again, but allowing him the time to get many happy birthday messages from the crowd

Programme for the day was:

- F4 US Practice Qualifying
- NASCAR demo
- Formula W Qualifying
- F1 Practice 3
- F4 US race 1
- Formula W race 1

With Jamie Chadwick sealing the championship from Alice Powell - nice to hear the

national anthem on the podium - maybe a sign for race day?

The crowd at turn 1 was amazing again, and anyone with a UK flag, or a Liverpool T-shirt was targeted for a chat by John and Ashley. The Liverpool fans made a point of coming back and letting us know the score of the Man Utd game, with big smiles of their faces

No incidents to deal with but another good day. Tea at the LOT M tent was followed by a manic ride on a buggy to the Billy Joel concert to sit and chill and listen to some tunes before back to the AIRBNB

We learnt new terms and phrases over the day - the best one being "clamdiggers" - if you want to know DM Ashley!!!

Race day

Another 530 start, and yet another route to the circuit, lots of police at controlling the numerous muscle cars on the way to the track. Final briefings and then out to post for race day, in an overcast drizzly start to the day. This led to a failed exercise in putting on a Singapore GP issued poncho by John with the conclusion that we would dry in the humidity if it rained! This exercise was then followed by the putting your helmet and facemask on the wrong way round game - John won that one also!

A new JCB driver for the day, Shawn, who we made very welcome, Phil allocated yellow flag and then we were ready for race day

F4 start to the day resulted in 2 laps and a safety car to the end as one of the cars went airborne on the turtle kerbs (sausage kerbs) on turn 1A .





Session 2 was Formula W race 2 - another car airborne on the kerbs at turn 2!!! and another win for Jamie Chadwick Then the build-up to the race began - the anticipation of the crowd at turn 1 was brilliant to experience - lots of Max and Lando fans in the crowd, and we tried very hard to start the obligatory Mexican wave but the crowd was focussed on events on the grid!

Track inspection, with our UK, Wales and USA flags on the track followed by drivers parade, Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders, University of Texas marching band, the parachuting American flag and the military helicopter fly past all came and went too quickly, then it was race time .

Race start, and a couple of spinners but then all through with Lewis gaining advantage on the two Red Bulls. Red Bull pit stop for Max swings the advantage, with Lewis not pitting and then putting on hard tyres. Despite Lewis closing the gap through the later stages of the race it was not enough and Max took the win - to the delight of large sections of the crowd. Track invasion followed so we quickly locked the post down and retreated back to the bus to lot M.

We said our goodbyes and thank you's to the people we had met over the last few days, and who had made us very welcome, then a 2 hour random journey through road blocks and Texan lanes to avoid traffic to the AIRBNB for Talledega nights, a beer and some well-earned sleep.

Post-Race day

A well-earned lie in - although we were all still awake early. A trip out to the outlet mall for Michael to pick some stuff up for home, followed by a mid afternoon trip to a Texan smokehouse called Blacks, and a meet up with Nick, our designated Brit on Turn 1 for the weekend. Blacks is one of the original Texas smokehouses, founded by the Black family in Lockhart. The food was amazing, topped off by Kent Black - the owner coming over and spending half an hour chatting to us about all sorts including the Grand Prix and the story of his family business. An evening walkabout in Austin to see some of the history including the Capitol building and the gardens recognising the history of Texas, and a trip down to the Bat bridge(the Congress Avenue Bridge) . An amazing sight as literally thousands of bats simultaneously came out from under the bridge - it was like a scene from Batman Begins

Last Day

The final day of the trip was topped off with a trip to Oasis on Lake Travis for a chill before back to the airport, short bumpy flight to Houston, then the long haul back to Heathrow, and final leg home for everyone. Thank you Texas for a great experience, especially at Turn 1, with the biggest reported F1 crowd ever at over 400,000 for the 3 days, Ashley for sorting the Airbnb, Michael and Phil for the TURN 1 COTA hoody and cap and the TURN 1 team for the laughs.

John Edwards



MOTORSPORT UK NEW GRADING SCHEME CONSULTATION

As you are no doubt aware, Motorsport UK are in the process of developing a new marshals grading scheme. It is currently envisaged that this will be rolled out to all MSUK registered clubs for consultation in the first half of 2022.

BMMC National Council and the Regional Committees are obviously keen to gain as much feedback from our members as possible. It is currently envisaged that there will be a series of Zoom meetings (arranged on a regional basis) to allow discussions and enable feedback to be gained.

Please keep your eye out for any emails and/or announcements in your regional newsletters regarding the dates and times of these meetings. You can also provide feedback directly to your Regional Committee should you prefer, or if you are unable to attend the zoom meetings.

This is your chance to have your say and help shape the new grading scheme.

Rob Mugurian

BMMC National Grading Officer

REGALIA PRICE LIST	
Description	Price
BMMC CLOTH BADGES, LAPEL BADGES & STICKERS	£2.00
UNION FLAG CLOTH BADGE c/w WEBSITE	£2.00
BMMC GRADING BADGES	£1.00
'HEROES' CLOTH BADGES, LAPEL BADGES & STICKERS	£2.00
LEATHER WELDERS GLOVES	£4.50
HI-VIS ORANGE WATERPROOF GLOVES	£4.50
WOOLLEN SKI HATS - BLACK or ORANGE	£4.50
BASEBALL CAPS - BLACK or ORANGE	£7.00
OUTBACK SUN HATS SP50	£14.50
BMMC UMBRELLAS	£10.00
BMMC SNOOD (Orange or Black)	£3.50
BMMC FACE MASKS (Orange or Black)	£6.15
Catalogue and Order forms can be downloaded from the club website or from Eric Ridler, BMMC NRO	
For details of BMMC sponsored overalls, go to the Regalia section of the BMMC website.	

WELCOME - NEW MEMBERS

The NW Committee would like to extend a warm welcome to the new members below. We sincerely wish you a happy and safe marshalling future.

Harry Evans	Wilmslow
Sean Condliffe	Middlewich
David Clarke	Oldham
Joshua Walters	Leigh
Neil Simpson	Warrington
Joshua Matthews	Wigan
Kieran Oldham	Southport
Charlotte Price	Southport
James Prince	Hankelow
Dean Ruff	Shrewsbury
Neil Marmont	Sandbach
Sarah Parrett-Swift	Widnes
Adam Parrett-Swift	Widnes
Susan Wagstaffe	Buxton
William Brindley	Buxton
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NEXT NEWSLETTER

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