

OUTPOST

The North West Region Newsletter

JANUARY 2022



Clapham North MOT to sponsor BMMC members' overalls in 2022



Clapham North new sponsorship deal boosts BMMC members' overalls subsidy.

The British Motorsports Marshals' Club (BMMC) is delighted to announce it has secured a new sponsorship deal with Clapham North MOT that will further boost the BMMC members' subsidy for PROBAN overalls.

The new deal comes into effect for the 2022 season and will ensure BMMC members ordering ready-made overalls will continue to receive a 100% subsidy, while those ordering made to measure will receive an equivalent grant of £102 thanks to the support of Clapham North MOT alongside existing sponsors.

"This new agreement is a great opportunity for Clapham North MOT to cement our commitment to supporting the men and women who work tirelessly week in, week out and in all weathers to help us all enjoy our racing safely."

JOTTINGS FROM THE CHAIR

By the time you read this, the Northwest training weekend will have been safely delivered by Bill Gray and all the trainers. The event has taken a lot of effort to put together, not withstanding the recent relaxation of Covid 19 rules and Plan B regulations being lifted. Please take time to thank them for their efforts along with the committee as they have all worked hard to make sure that we were able to meet up face to face, rather than waving and pulling funny faces on Zoom!

With the Plan B rules being lifted as of the end of January 2022, will we see a return to some form of normality? Let's hope so. However, I would ask you all to remain vigilant and respectful of others with regards to the wearing of face masks and social distancing.

We will be providing members with feedback with regards to the recent survey and there have been some interesting comments given. The committee will have their work cut out for them this year, so watch this space. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your comments and suggestions are helpful and we are looking at all the responses

Car clubs have been busy putting their calendars together and hopefully, we should see a full season at Oulton Park and Anglesey. There seems to be a great deal of variety on offer in 2022, along with some changes. These include HSCCC bringing their races to Oulton Park at the end of July 2022, and the August

Bank Holiday promising both MSVR and CSCC races. BTCC and British GT's go back to their traditional June and Easter slots respectively and with a healthy dose of BRSCC NW and BARC NW events to look forward to there is a lot going on! So, have you put your dates in the calendar yet? Are your overalls clean, are your flags ready to be waved vigorously and post chiefs, are you poised for those inevitable reports?

World Rally has burst back into life in Monte Carlo and the new generation of cars are more than a reminder of the heady days of Group B. It promises to be a classic season and worth the effort to go and see them live. Will F1 do the same with the next generation of Grand Prix cars? Or will it be the same head-to-head with Toto and Christian? Who knows!!

Me, well we have the Legends coming to Oulton Park for the first BARC NW meeting. What more do you want?

We will continue to communicate as fully as possible with you all, using mainly electronic (email etc) along with social media. The BMMC North West Marshals is a private group for marshals only on Facebook. So if you have not registered yet, please do so as this will be a vital source of information to you as the season progresses.

I will admit that the last two years have passed by in rather a haze and I am looking forward to seeing you all on the bank this year.

Mike Broadbent - NW Chairman

COVID and Me - Paul Newns

There's no doubt, the pandemic affected us all in so many ways, and is still changing the way we do things. I've worked from home since the first lockdown and won't be going back to office working, for one thing.

So how did COVID effect my marshalling? In some ways, it didn't.

Flagging was still flagging. Fewer people on post meant most days I was flagging solo, but that's nothing new.

I was fortunate enough not to be turned down for any of the meetings I wanted to attend.

I even did both Grand Prix at Silverstone.

That was different. No spectators meant no traffic. Home by six o'clock both times! Wonderful and the campsite was on the flat. This year was back to normal, although a new traffic plan seemed to get us away quicker than we used to.

I've been marshalling a long time, and over the years it's changed in many ways but one thing that was a constant was the banter and social interaction. COVID did change that.

The drink at the end of the day, chatting with old friends, was one of the highlights of any meeting. No matter what the weather, we'd stand around talking. I did, and still do, miss that. I hope we can get that back next season.

Lockdown gave me time to reflect, and I realised what I most missed was the friendship of my orange family.

The challenges of COVID meant new ways of doing things had to be devised.

Online sign on. No, I don't like it. A necessary nuisance I'll admit, but why can't there be one simple system? I know, clubs are commercial organisations and they can't be dictated to about what software to use but if some clubs can make life simple why can't they all?

Sending written reports by e-mail I can live with now I've got a decent 'phone. That was a consequence of COVID, too. I needed one for the Grand Prix so I swallowed hard and

forked out for one. I'd only had a basic 'phone before, it must have been at least five years old, probably older.

COVID stopped me travelling last year, too. I only went to Oulton. No Anglesey because Mr Drakeford wouldn't let me, and I did miss that. It's been good to be back again this season, even if I have had to camp out.

Donington, Mallory, and everywhere else had to wait but I'm back on the road again. Normal(ish) service has been resumed.

Good things came out of not being able to marshal for a while, too. I discovered walking, and baking. I needed the walking to offset the calories from the baking! Living where I do, walking is a pleasure, even if it is uphill whichever way I go, but in all of the years I've lived here I hadn't explored the area. It felt good to get out and walk the lanes. My scones and bread are getting better, too.

So, how did COVID effect my marshalling? It gave me a new perspective on what's important and what it is I marshal for. Sure, the racing is a big draw but if that was all it was, I could be a spectator (or probably not after being a marshal for so long). No, what matters most to me is being back with my friends. See you all next season.

Paul Newns - NW Region Secretary



JONES WINS A THRILLING 2021 ST-XR CHALLENGE

Chris Jones' ambitions to win the 2021 ETSL ST-XR Challenge were severely dented at the very start of the season - just like his car! - but he went on to clinch the title at the final round after a tough year of racing. It was the first time that Jones had claimed the overall championship although he had taken a few class titles in the Noughties.

Photo: Jon Elsey



Jones headed into Croft's opening round of the year full of confidence having gone faster and faster during testing on the Friday before the meeting. However, on his final flying lap during qualifying the nearside of his Fiesta ST was badly damaged when a slower car moved off-line to allow Jones through only to lose control on a dirty area of the track and smack into him.

Jones didn't think that the required repairs could be made in time for him to take part in either of the weekend's races but those around him had other ideas. His friend, Matt Williams, helped him to fix the mechanicals while fellow driver, Mark Robinson, knocked the front wing back into shape. He repaid their hard work and optimism by getting his championship campaign off to the best possible start with a double victory.

Robinson and his wife Kerry have been friends with Chris for a long time - indeed, they are so close they were due to be Godparents to his kids but sadly they did not survive childbirth.

Chris got to know Mark in the early Noughties when he was building a Ford Escort XR3i to

take part in the XR Challenge - as it was known back then. He was a regular visitor to Demon Tweeks, where Mark worked, to buy parts. Robinson went on to become a stalwart competitor in the series himself, regularly racing alongside his brother Simon. So close is his friendship with Mark, Chris has become a member of the Robinson Motorsport "family". They all park up in the paddock next to each other and collaborate on preparing their cars between meetings. The trio have won 12 championships between them.

Jones' father had been a regular at Oulton Park since the circuit opened in the early '50s and when Chris was young he used to go with his dad to watch "anything and everything" car-related at the Tarporley track which was a short distance from where they lived.

One of their favourite categories was the XR Challenge. At this time, there were enough entries for the Fiesta XR2s and Escort XR3is to run separately. Depending on how the timetable panned out, Chris and his father would happily wait until the end of a meeting to watch their favourite championship from their preferred vantage point, the top right of the Lodge grandstand from where they could see part of Druids.

Time passed and in 2002 Chris found himself helping Paul Dobson when he was competing in the series. Jones thought to himself, "I could build one of these..."

...and so he did... which is how he ended up raiding the Demon Tweeks catalogue with the help of Mark Robinson to build an XR3i.

Photo: PS Images





Jones made his debut in the XR Challenge during 2003 and two years later he took his Escort to the first of 3 class titles in 5 years. The last of these was particularly exciting as, having not taken part in the first 8 races, he ended the year tied on points with Chris Flynn and only won on count back.

Jones competed in the XR Challenge through to 2012. During this time, there were 2 instances where he raced in another category. In 2007, he borrowed an Alfa 33 for an outing in a single-marque series which was very competitive at the time. He qualified third and finished second despite his 8 valve car competing against others that had 16.

Then in 2009, Chris took part in a CSCC race at Oulton Park where he shared his Escort with Jason Hennefer. With the duo well on the way to winning their class they were thwarted by a broken exhaust.

More recently, there was another foray away from the ST-XR Challenge at the start of 2021 when he once again teamed up with Hennefer for another endurance race. This time Jones' ST was entered in a Clubsport event at a very wet Croft.

At the end of the 2012 season, the Escort was sold to Jonathan Wells who raced it for the following 2 years, claiming the title at the second attempt.

Jones then bought the car back and fully rebuilt it in time for the 2020 ST -XR Challenge- this was of course delayed by the Covid pandemic. Usually, drivers can drop their

worst scores when the final championship standings are calculated but due to the truncated calendar all 9 rounds counted. Despite missing a Triple Header meeting, Chris finished runner-up in Class B just 4 points behind his old friend Hennefer.

Up to 2020, points were awarded according to the driver's on-track finishing position regardless of class which meant you really needed a car that ran in Class D - for Fiesta STs - to stand a chance of winning the overall title and so Jones took the decision to put his trusty Escort to one side and switch to the more recent model (although the rules then changed for 2021 with the points scored in each class deciding the overall champion). The XR3i is "turn key" ready and Chris may enjoy some track days in it next Summer.

He believes the older XRs are more of a racing car than the STs as the latter can be taken by the scruff of the neck and hurled into corners - his Escort would never allow such liberties to be taken. On the other hand, the XR3i is now old enough to have become a classic which means parts are difficult to obtain and very expensive when they become available.

Jones has always prepared his own cars at Mill Lane Garage in Kingsley where he has worked for the owner, Phil Starkey, since he was 17. Chris is very grateful to Phil who has always supported his racing endeavours allowing him to use the facilities to prepare his racers in the evenings and on Sundays.

"With race cars you need to repair them before they break," explains Jones, "so after every meeting the brakes get stripped down and inspected along with the suspension. The



Photo: Jon Elsey



tyres are checked and are replaced or turned on the rims as required. The engine oil and power steering fluid are changed regularly. Before every race I check and double check the set up for each individual circuit. Finally, I give the car a good polish and clean. All this work is quite time consuming but the garage is only 1 mile from my home." Of course, his friend Mark Robinson is always available if he needs an extra pair of hands - for example, when accident damage has been sustained.

After a hard season of ultra-competitive racing against several talented drivers in the ST Class, ahead of Donington Park's final round of the season Chris was one of 3 competitors who were in contention for the title. Jones had won the first 4 rounds of the year but Michael Blackburn built up his speed as the campaign unfolded taking 5 wins.

Blackburn was thwarted at the final meeting of the season by an understeer problem which he couldn't get to the bottom of whereas, despite not having the ideal set up, Jones coped best with the slippery conditions that

drizzle produced for the final round which was staged as dusk fell on a cold November afternoon.

After an early Safety Car period, Jones managed to get some XR cars between him and the rest of the ST runners to cruise to a fairly comfortable victory as the track dried and became more suited to his set up.

As he hadn't raced at the venue since 2005 he was delighted to secure the championship with a win and fastest lap especially as he later found out that all the other drivers in the Top 6 had taken part in pre-event testing.

Jones has enormous respect for all those who take part in the series but especially his closest challenger, Blackburn, who he regards as a fierce competitor. Chris always has to bring his "A Game" when he races against him. The pair finished the year tied on 5 victories - the two wins with his battered car at Croft proved crucial to Jones coming out on top in the overall standings.

As was the case when he was winning Class B in his XR3i, Jones began the season with no thoughts about winning the championship. As a club racer, his goal was to make at least one overtake, avoid finishing last and generally enjoy his motor sport. Ending the season with the title meant his racing exploits in 2021 far exceeded his expectations!

Dave Williams

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**GRADING REPORT JANUARY 2022**

**UPGRADES:**

Trainee to Track:

**Darren Lewthwaite**

Experienced to Incident Officer:

**Stuart Fielding**

Post Chief to Examining Post Chief:

**Nadine Lewis**

**Rob Mugurian - NW Grading Officer**



Photo: Jon Elsey

## 2022 FORTHCOMING EVENTS?

### RACE MEETINGS

|        |                   |          |
|--------|-------------------|----------|
| Apr 02 | BRITCAR           | Oulton   |
| Apr 09 | BRSCC             | Oulton   |
| Apr 16 | F3 & GT's         | Oulton   |
| Apr 18 | F3 & GT's         | Oulton   |
| May 06 | Ferrari Challenge | Oulton   |
| May 07 | Ferrari Challenge | Oulton   |
| May 14 | 750MC             | Oulton   |
| May 14 | CSCC              | Anglesey |
| May 15 | CSCC              | Anglesey |
| May 21 | Equipe            | Oulton   |
| May 28 | BARC NW           | Oulton   |

### SPEED EVENTS

|        |              |               |
|--------|--------------|---------------|
| Apr 02 | BMMC         | Curborough    |
| Jun 12 | MGCC         | Three Sisters |
| Jun 25 | MGCC         | Aintree       |
| Aug 27 | BMMC         | Curborough    |
| Aug 28 | Lotus 7 Club | Curborough    |

### HILLCLIMB EVENTS

|        |       |            |
|--------|-------|------------|
| Apr 02 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| Apr 03 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| Apr 16 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| Apr 17 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| May 14 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| May 15 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| Jun 11 | HDLCC | Loton Park |
| Jun 12 | HDLCC | Loton Park |

Please consult the BMMC volunteering database for a list of available events.

## REGALIA PRICE LIST

| <u>Description</u>                                                                              | <u>Price</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 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.          |              |

### NEXT NEWSLETTER

Next Copy Date - 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Publishing Date - 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### 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.

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Paul Bloxidge      | Aberdyfi          |
| Oli Waldock        | Aberdyfi          |
| Sue Cameron        | Corris            |
| Adrian Pye         | Corris            |
| Stephen Holmes     | Newcastle-u- Lyme |
| Michal Szczepanski | Preston           |
| Alan Skipp         | Northenden        |

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