

## Then & Now

SO much interest was aroused by this event that a much bigger coverage has been given to it than is usual. The 'NOWS' are represented by Rodney McComb whose competitive appearances are all too rare nowadays due to pressure of business, nevertheless he still manages to turn in some good performances in his Min-Cooper. And to balance things the Results Officer gives his view (he prefers, on safety grounds, to remain anonymous).

Editor

### As I saw it by Rodney McComb

IT is a little difficult to write a report on the Competition from the point of view of the "NOW" team as opposed to the "THEN" because the two were frequently difficult to tell apart. It was not until afterwards, for example, that I realised that the members of the two teams took alternate turns and it took some concentrated thinking and guessing to decide which team certain 'players' were in. The difficulty was increased by the actions of some drivers, who while obviously in one team seemed to be doing their best to help the other!

The tests, presumably to accommodate the bigger cars to which one tends to graduate on becoming a "THEN" member, were rather more open than usual, but were nevertheless good tests of skill. The fourth, for example, which was a 'straight out, see-saw, and back to a flying finish through a curving channel' - type, could have been really tricky but the channel, one felt, was hardly curved enough and the smaller cars could drive almost straight through. Even so, everyone arrived at the finish line virtually sideways and the test was by far the most spectacular.

There were a few noticeable absentees from the starting line but the club must be congratulated on choosing so skilfully a date which enabled them, with the help of a non-starter in the "NOW" team, to field two exactly equal teams with 23 cars in each. So coincidental is this that fears are felt for the safety of that non-starter. He may have been nobbled just to level the thing up.

In the competition itself, Old Man Hopkirk, I am told, took delivery of his fast and noisy M.G./Sprite around 5.30 on the evening in question, and promptly put an end to the long list of successes enjoyed by that up and coming youngster Dr. Thompson Glass in his Special. In fact a poorish sort of time by Thompson in the last test let veterans Wilson and Sloane in their respective Specials in ahead of him and even Papa Molyneaux pipped him by 0.2 second in the Cooper. Coming up strongly in support however were Trainees Robert McBurney, V.W., Michael Johnson, Sprite, and Reggie McSpadden also if unexpectedly, Sprite-mounted. As Michaels Sprite is perfectly standard, the results back up the long held opinion that he is a driver of the very greatest ability if and when he remembers to go the right way round the pylons.

Again, Ernie Robb showed that great skill and experience are helpless in the grip of a bad memory when he did two of the tests quickly enough, yes, but wrongly. Actually the whole affair hinged on the vexed question of memory, and the "Cadets" cannot take too much pride in their win as a perusal of the results shows that where-as they had only one 'maximum' the "Old Lags" had six, yet lost by less than 5 marks. This surely points a moral somewhere.

I think it can be said that everyone present enjoyed the event and thought it a good idea. It would be well worth repeating as it gave an opportunity to see driving which is not only fast but smooth with the polish which can be gained only by long experience. In particular it was good to see such unusual and exciting cars as the Automatic S.P.250 Daimler of Ted Maguire and the Lancia sported by Desmond Titterington.

If the taste of competition should persuade some of those no longer actively engaged in motor sport to return to it, the event will be responsible for a great service to the sport and it is to be hoped that the Club will be encouraged by the enthusiasm and close results to experiment with further "novelty" meetings of one sort or another.



Works driver P.B. Hopkirk giving the new works Midget 'the works'! *E. Crawford*

#### **As I saw it by the Results Officer.**

ON Tuesday 28th July a new competition was held for the very first time. The idea behind the 'exercise' was to try and attract some of the older members who had competed in the days before 1955 to do battle with those who started competition thereafter.

Altogether 47 entries were received, with one starter this left, believe it or not, 23 on each so one's worry of the small band of officials who organised the event was dispelled.

It was unfortunate that there were no lady competitors as the idea of this event came from Mrs Margot Kirk when she was Publicity Officer of the Club.

The weather which had been perfectly lousy all day, decided to cooperate two hours before first man away Paddy Hopkirk began to show his paces at the first of the six well designed driving tests. This was Paddy's first appearance since the announcement that he was now a Works Driver for the B.M.C. organisation, so appropriately enough he was in an M.G. Midget, and in his hands some extremely creditable times were recorded. It does not seem to matter what that man drives, they all seem to go a little bit quicker when he is behind the wheel.



Frank Robinson handles the VW 1500 just as well as he did the 'beetle'. *E. Crawford*

In rapid succession the 46 cars executed the first three tests and what memories were revived for those of us who are getting slightly "long in the tooth" as the names of yester year showed that they had lost little of the skill which made their names appear on the results sheets with the regularity of the Boyds, Woodsides, McBurneys and Glass to mention only a few of the large number of exceedingly competent drivers in the motoring scene of to-day.

The half-way stage was reached and while Donald Gamble, Douglas Dewdney and John Watt with their respective teams created three new Tests, over the loud hailers came the exciting news that only 1.33 marks in favour of the 'NOWS' separated the two teams. Believe me it was very exciting for us in the results van as we worked out such close half-way figures. Terry Brunton and Brian McCormick added much to the enjoyment of the spectators by announcing each test time, name of driver and as much additional information as they knew and several people expressed their appreciation of this quite unrehearsed part of the proceedings.

In the second half, however, the "young lads" piled on the pressure (or the "old ones" got tired) and increased their lead to 5 marks to run out worthy winners.

By the courtesy of the Ulster Flying Club the club rooms at the Ards Airport (which was the venue) were made available to all taking part and Hon. Sec. Tony Houlton and his staff left no stone unturned to make us feel at home, and let the inquests go on in a comfortable and convivial atmosphere. The speech of welcome by Tony was much appreciated by all present and our Chairman Harry Catchpole returned thanks on behalf of the U.A.C. both for the welcome and the facilities, for without such excellent co-operation the event could not have taken place.

Eric Boland, in his **first** essay in the precarious role of Clerk of the Course was very successful and in his own quiet way, a very efficient organisation was set in motion, the hold-ups being reduced to barest possible minimum.

It is to be hoped that a return match will not be long delayed and that many more members and friends will come and support the competition - who knows, maybe the B.B.C. or U.T.V. would even consent to cover the event and provide some decent coverage of a sport that now has more adherents than some sports which seem to have a monopoly of local sound and vision sports time.

Finally was the absence of quite a few of the present day 'names' due to lack of interest in driving testmeetings, holidays or just plain "not interested"?

## Sleepless Nights

by John Sprinzel

### A RALLY MAN'S GUIDE TO EUROPE

published by Motor Racing Publications, Ltd.,  
62 Doughty Street, London, W.C.1.

THE subsidiary title to this book - A Rallyman's Guide to Europe - describes the contents more accurately, as not all the "sleepless nights" were caused by the driving of rally cars! A wonderful book, exceedingly readable, giving an insight into the highly competitive field of rallying in "works" teams and written in a language known to "rallyists" the world over.

John Sprinzel is a vivid commentator on the rallying scene and critical of some of the organisation of the International Circuits. For that reason it would have been useful to have had a full comment on the Circuit of Ireland other than an inaccurate mention of the number of times our own Paddy has won the event.

Lavishly illustrated with photographs and cartoons, the latter by Andrew Christianson - it should be read by all who take part in or organise rallies.

Thanks John for an exceedingly amusing book, which provides a lot of enjoyment - and for the acknowledgement, I quote, 'And to Marshalls and Officials who give up hours and hours of their precious spare time in order that we may enjoy the wonderful spirit of rallying.'

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MESSRS Newnes & Pearson Ltd., Tower Street, Southampton Street, LONDON W.C. 2 announce the addition of three new titles to their Pearson Motor Car Maintenance and Repair series. The new books are Morris Minor 800-1000 Cars, Austin Mini and Morris Mini Minor Cars, and Your Car and The Compulsory Test. This brings the number of books in this series now to 21 currently available. These Pearson books cover every aspect of on-the-spot maintenance and repair - fully supported by easy-to-follow diagrams.....decarbonisation; electrical and ignition systems; fuel systems; gear boxes; brakes; clutches; steering and suspension; lubrication etc. are all dealt with in easy to read and understand language which should present no difficulty for the motorist who likes to tinker about with his own car. Each book costs 12/6 or 13/6 by post. Full range of titles available from the publishers at their address above.

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The car to watch is the car immediately behind the one in front of you!