



Stow-on-the-Wold Motor Club Newsletter (Magazine) number 17 June 2026

The Motor Show's nearly here and we're all hoping for better weather than at the last one, so fingers crossed. Please think about writing something up on the Show for the next Newsletter. Two or three reports from different angles worked well last time so I hope we can manage the same this time.

I urge you to have a look at the very short summary piece in this issue on the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs on page 5. Because we're a fully paid-up club, all our members can register and get access to their magazine and lots of other stuff. It's well worth it and extremely easy.

See also the calendar of club events on page 3 – thanks to Andrew for putting this together. And note the high-profile talks that are coming up over the Summer.

Thanks to Roger, Pete, Maggie and John for event reports, two of which are on the recent Flanders tour, and other articles of interest.

And finally there's the usual plea for articles on all and everything for the next issue.

Rob Brown drbchestnut@gmail.com

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Club Merchandise

Andrew Mitchell

The clothing has been specifically chosen for its quality and value for money and comes with the Club logo embroidered on each garment. Available in a range of colours are ladies and men's outdoor fleeces, ladies and men's polo shirts, coveralls and, for your head, a cap!

We have partnered with **Super Lemon** in Bourton to provide you with this package which can be found on the Super Lemon website at:

<https://cotswoldcustomclothing.co.uk/collections/stow-motor-club>

This link will take you direct to the Club clothing from where you make your choice and pay online. You can either pick it up from:

Super Lemon
Unit 29
Old Station Yard Business Park
Bourton-on-the-Water
Cheltenham
GL54 2RZ

or have it delivered for a small additional charge. Delivery is around five working days.

Mystery Driver

Of course, the 1963 photograph featured in the last Newsletter shows Diana White with her Austin Big Seven.



Calendar - April 2026

Events may be amended depending on circumstances. Additional events may be added at any time. Monthly meetings* = committee meeting Social Club @1830 : Speakers @1900

DATE		EVENT
April	18	Visit to Wells Motor Company
	26	Drive It Day - Blackberry Farm CV36 5DL - RV @ Tesco 0945
May	7 - 12	Expedition to Flanders, France
	20	Monthly meeting* Skittles challenge
June	5	Breakfast at Gilks' Garage Café
	18	Monthly meeting* "Rory - The Vintage Wireman"
July	11	SMC Motor Show
	15	Monthly meeting* Ron Warmington - "The Post Office Affair"
Aug	15	Drive the "Cotswold Square"
	19	Monthly meeting* "Borrow a Classic"
Sept	16	Monthly meeting* "Jamie Falvey - BRIT Racing Driver"
Oct	21	Monthly meeting* Skittles challenge
Nov	1	London to Brighton Veteran Car Run
	18	Monthly meeting* Julien Simon-Chauteemps - F1 Racing Engineer
Dec	tba	Christmas Event
	16	Monthly Meeting*

Events of interest run by other Organisations

DATE		EVENT
April		
May		
June	13 - 14	Le Mans 24 Hour
July	3 - 5	British Grand Prix
	3 - 5	Le Mans Classic
	9 - 13	Goodwood Festival of Speed
Aug	23	Coffe and Classics - British @ CMH
	27 - 30	Car Fest Silverstone
Sept	2 - 6	Salon Prive Blenheim
	18 - 20	Goodwood Revival
Oct	3	Upper Rissington Car Treasure Hunt
	11	Coffee and Classics - CMH
Nov	13 - 14	Classic Motor Show NEC
Dec	6	Christmas Party - CMH

Forthcoming Evening Highlights

18th June 2026



STOW MOTOR CLUB
GUEST SPEAKER
18TH JUNE 2026

6:30 Committee Meeting
7:00 Talk Starts





15th July 2026



STOW MOTOR CLUB
GUEST SPEAKER
15TH JULY 2026

6:30 Committee Meeting
7:00 Talk Starts

The Post Office Scandal an Insider's Perspective!

We are delighted to welcome Ron Warmington, a Chartered Accountant and Certified Fraud Investigator to talk about the Greatest miscarriage of justice.

Ron was approached by Lord Arbuthnot to investigate why there were so many Post Masters being taken to court. Ron and his team discovered not only that the Horizon IT System was extremely faulty but there were many cover ups.

Ron appeared at the Post Office Enquiry. His Company's aim "We aim to establish the whole truth regardless of the consequences to us. No matter the findings, our primary allegiance is to the innocent who, without our support, would have stood undefended.

Ron Warmington



19th August 2026



STOW MOTOR CLUB
GUEST SPEAKER
19TH AUGUST 2026

6:30 Committee Meeting
7:00 Talk Starts

Borrow A Classic - Aims to encourage new enthusiasts by putting them behind the wheel for a whole year. It has proven to be successful for nearly 10 years for all involved.

How does it work?
Can you get involved?
Bob will tell you

<https://borrowaclassic.co.uk/>

Robert Wilkinson
'Aka' Bob



Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs – *please register!*

Stow Motor Club has been a paid-up member for almost a year now. We are one of 500 clubs. **It means that all our members can register as individuals**, without charge, to access the Federation website. It's very easy; you don't even have to remember the name of our club as it's on a drop-down menu.

www.fbhvc.co.uk/register.

For the magazine *Historic* go to www.fbhvc.co.uk/magazine Note that Roger receives a couple of hard-copies of *Historic* every quarter and will bring them along to committee meetings.

The Federation has a voice in Westminster and provides routes to influence policies on matters important to us – for instance road tax, low-ethanol fuels and, most recently, Martyn's Law (public events and security).

The website and the magazine keep us informed of events, expert information and stories about classic cars, and offer advantageous deals on, for instance, preferential insurance schemes. Note that, as members, we are encouraged to cut and paste articles of interest from *Historic* to our own publications.

Lastly, several SMC members regularly express interest in encouraging young people into the classic car industry. This interest is shared with the FBHVC Trust which has established the Heritage Skills Academy, organising apprenticeships for young people in classic car restoration Bicester. Perhaps we should look into what we might be able to do as part of this programme?

The Shock of Taking Up Motoring in Middle Age – taken from the Economist (1st April 2026), written by James Fransham

Last month, at the ripe old age of 42, I purchased my first car: a ten-year-old gas-guzzling Skoda. For the first time I'm experiencing the hallowed place that motorists hold in the national discourse. It is a parallel universe of pump prices, parking charges, potholes and tax breaks. Even though I'll spend a good chunk of my Easter bank holiday stuck in a traffic jam on the M25, to me it feels like there has never been a better time to get behind the wheel. If that's the case, why do motorists appear so miserable?

Take the cost of motoring. Since the Iran war began four weeks ago, pump prices have risen quickly to their highest level for more than two years. A similar oil crisis in the 1970s sparked panic among motorists and the government lowered speed limits to save fuel. This time around matters are calmer. That is because when you adjust for inflation and splice in the gains in fuel efficiency, before the war it was cheaper to drive 100 miles than at any time since comparable records began in 1990. Even accounting for the latest petrol prices, it still costs less than 1.5% of the average weekly wage to drive 100 miles down the road.

Cars are far better now, too. Boomers tend to look back at British car manufacturing in the 1970s with rose-tinted spectacles. But most of the vehicles churned out by the sclerotic state-backed British Leyland were little better than rust buckets. Today Britain has all but stopped building cars—Nissan in Sunderland and BMW Mini in Oxford are the only remaining volume producers—but modern vehicles are built to last. My recent purchase already has 130,000 miles (209,000km) on the clock and with a fair wind should achieve a “Star Trek” mileage of 200,000 or more.

Safety has improved sharply, too. Today's cars rarely break down. So reliable are they that over the past decade Britain has felt able to add road capacity by repurposing motorways' hard shoulders as additional lanes. Thankfully, crashes are becoming rarer, too, and less deadly. In 1975 6,366 people died in accidents on the roads. In 2024 1,602 did. Every death is a personal tragedy, but adjust for miles driven and that amounts to a 90% improvement in safety.

Why then does driving appear to be so miserable for so many? In the 1970s motoring was an expanding industry, with thousands of miles of new and better roads being built every year. By contrast, over the past decade, the country has added just 24 miles of new motorways. Starved of money for maintenance, potholes now pepper local roads (I'm grateful I bought a 4x4). And as our tracker of Sir Keir Starmer attests, nothing irks motorists more. So even as vehicles have continued to improve, the system that carries the mostly foreign-made cars is deteriorating.

Motoring may feel miserable because it has lost its joy. By 2035 all new cars sold in Britain will need to be electric vehicles (EVs), one of the fastest switches in the rich world. EVs will make driving cheaper, safer—and duller. Few people are going to fall in love with their BYD SUV EV acquired on hire purchase in the way that someone scrimped and saved in the 1970s for their three-litre V8 Triumph Stag. Driving today is less about identity and far more about function.

So driving is in a golden era with a dull exterior. This Easter 21m journeys are expected to be made to visit loved ones, the highest number for four years. And when they do manage to book a test, young people still want to get their licence. Motoring today may be cheaper, safer and more reliable than ever, but on crumbling infrastructure and in boring cars, it feels a little joyless. My advice: if it is thrills that you're seeking, get a motorbike.

Potholes – in Kent but Could be Here!

Roger White

This is an extract from the latest Mercedes-Benz club magazine written by a new officer of the club which I thought amusing and could equally apply to our roads I think.

"As I settle into my new role, travel has once again been shaped by Kent's award-winning potholes, currently offering more resistance to refined German suspension than Stuttgart ever anticipated. After heavy rain and a heroic number of road closures, it has been rumoured that KCC are constructing a defensive moat around the county. Whether this is infrastructure planning or medieval re-enactment remains unclear but either way, it does add a sense of adventure to every journey. Looking ahead from April, there is plenty happening across Kent and the surrounding areas preferably on tarmac that still resemble roads."

The Stow Motor Club's 2026 Flanders Tour: A Journey Through History

John Barber

The Club's recent Flanders Tour was an unforgettable journey, blending motoring passion with poignant history.



Some of us at Dover



Our convoy set off across and under the Channel, eager to explore the storied landscapes of Ypres and the Somme – areas forever linked with the sacrifices of the First World War. Amongst our fleet, our trusty 1964 Mercedes 230 SL proved a steadfast companion throughout the trip.

Our route took us through Ypres, where the Menin Gate stands as a silent sentinel to the fallen. The daily Last Post ceremony reminded us of the enduring legacy of those who served and our attendance coincided with VE day; and the ceremony was enhanced with a marching band. We continued south, tracing the battlefields of the Somme, where the landscape still bears the scars of conflict. It was here that we paused to remember Captain Wilfred Nevill, a name familiar not only for his heroism but for his unique act of courage—bringing footballs into battle on the first day of the Somme, rallying his men with a gesture both inspiring and symbolic.

Captain Nevill was an alumnus of the same school I attended, a

connection that made his story resonate even more deeply. The tale of the 'Football Charge', where he and his men kicked footballs ahead as they advanced, has become legendary. It's a poignant reminder of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity, and standing in those fields, one couldn't help but feel a sense of kinship and pride.



The Cars at Albert

The tour wasn't solely about sombre reflection; there was plenty of camaraderie and motoring enjoyment. The roads of Flanders and northern France offered scenic drives, and our group relished the opportunity to share stories and compare notes on classic cars and our daily adventures. Our Mercedes handled the route



The Ulster Tower, on the Somme

beautifully, its timeless lines and robust engineering a testament to enduring craftsmanship.

A delightful surprise awaited us in Albert, where we stumbled upon an aviation museum. The collection housed a remarkable array of vintage aircraft, and an eclectic mix of cars, bikes and memorabilia, adding an unexpected dimension to our trip. Wandering among the exhibits, we reflected on how aviation has shaped modern history, especially in times of conflict.

As the tour concluded, we found ourselves enriched—not just by the sights and experiences, but by the bonds forged and the stories shared. The Stow-on-the-Wold Motor Club's Flanders Tour was more than a motoring adventure; it was a journey through memory, heritage, and fellowship. We look forward to next year's tour, wherever it may take us.



*Newfoundland Memorial -
the Caribou*



*An exhibit at the Aviation
Museum, Albert*

Stow Motor Club Flanders Tour - Reflections on our visit to a WW1 German Cemetery

Maggie Deacon

We wanted to pay our respects to all the young men who lost their lives in the horrible slaughter that was World War One. So we decided to visit a German cemetery as well as an Allied one. We envisaged German lads excitedly leaving their homes together just as the Allied boys did. Travelling with their pals from their villages or workplaces and full of a sense of adventure. Their station in life meant that these young men were used to obeying orders without question, even when after a while they knew what fate awaited them when they went 'over the top'.

The British Cemetery was a wide-open space, peaceful even beautiful, although



British and German cemeteries on the Somme



row upon row of white headstones told a very different story to peace and beauty. Many of these headstones just said 'an unknown soldier' or "a soldier".

The German cemetery was very different. It consisted of black wooden crosses, each with up to four names on the cross pieces. Whether it was surrounded by trees, I can't remember, but the whole place felt stark and gloomy. Somehow it was more shocking. Was it more representative of the dreadful slaughter of young men?

Here and there were grey headstones, obviously representing a grave. Were these the graves of officers I wondered? I looked at all of them and each one was the grave of a Jewish soldier, a single name to each stone. I knew that despite the fact that many Jewish young men fought for Germany in WW1, they were not saved when the Nazis took power. Some of them truly believed that their war service would save them, but it didn't.

This also made me think of all the young men who fought bravely for the Allies in both World Wars from countries perhaps equally alien to the young farm and factory workers from Great Britain as Jews became in Germany. Lads from Australia, New

Zealand, India, the West Indies, Asia and the Middle East. We learned about how often these soldiers came to the aid of British battalions and changed the course of fierce battles with so many dying as a result.

My final reflection on the German cemetery was that all of these young men, whichever side they were on probably had far more in common with each other than they had differences.

Life with a Mark 1 Toyota Yaris GR Circuit Pack **Pete Brown**

I have always liked hot hatchbacks, having run an Abarth 500 Essece, a VW Lupo GTI, a Golf R32 , a VW Up GTI, a John Cooper Works Mini Cooper S , two GP1's , a GP2, as well as a racing Mini during my JC Challenge endeavours. But nothing really compares to my GR Yaris CP (Circuit Pack). I am on my second, due to my local Toyota dealer ordering one in the wrong colour (white). They then ordered one in the colour I wanted – red. I was lucky to sell the white one via Motorway quickly as the new one turned up earlier than expected.



Why do I like this car so much?

Unlike many hot hatches this was designed from the ground up to be a rally car – a true homologation special. The last cars to be built with this objective were the Subaru Impreza WRX STI and the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution. Both of these were born from the WRC stages of the 1990s.

continued over page



Toyota GR Yaris CP - key specs and performance [for more info *ctrl,click:* [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]

- **Engine:** 1.6 L turbocharged three-cylinder.
- **Power:** 257 bhp (often reported at 265 bhp plus) and 360 Nm at 3200-4000 rpm.
- **0-62 mph:** 5.5 s. Not that this matters but some tests report 5.0 s and even less. Autocar recorded 5.2 s with two testers on board and with a full tank. The car has a manual gearbox and no launch aids. There are two gear changes before 60 mph. It's 0-100 mph time is 12.5 s. Top speed is restricted to 143 mph.
- **Drivetrain:** permanent 4WD with selectable torque splits - normal 60:40, sport 30:70, track 50:50. I run largely track 50:50 mode.
- **Kerb Weight:** 1,280 kg.
- **Circuit Pack vs Standard Trim:** the 2020 GR Yaris came primarily in standard form, but the Circuit Pack was a highly prized upgrade featuring:
 - Front and rear limited-slip differentials** (Torsen): for cornering grip.
 - GR-tuned circuit suspension**
 - 18-inch forged BBS alloy wheels,**
 - wrapped in Michelin Pilot Sport.

The car was priced at £33k but it was rumoured to cost over £40k to build. And a new engine for this car costs £25k!

In use:

Drives readily into London (note recent speeding ticket for 24 mph), and on longer trips such as the recent SMC Flanders tour.

Tried the Brighton 2002 Speed Trial in my white one but couldn't properly fit in it with my helmet on, and couldn't spin the wheels, so the best time was in the mid 14s, not the mid 13s with 105 mph as per road tests.

Parking – oddly, it's wider at the back than the front, so care needed, especially in a typical small garage – see photo. Fortunately, my garage is bigger.

Amazing grip, especially in the wet (I can remember a BMW M3 following me into a wet roundabout and going sideways trying to follow me through).

Quite “laggy” but quick on boost and no wheel spin. I don't need any more power but tuning can raise power to 400 bhp.

Very noisy on the wrong road and realistically not a long-distance touring car, but I have been to Le Mans in it and got 30 mpg.

I tend to run it with rear seats down like a van with a large X5 rubber luggage cover (as seen in Harry's Garage).

Finally - residual values? Note that a new one, a Mk 2, is now £50k. Mine cost £33k but after 39k miles it is still worth £25k, and it has a Toyota ten year/100k miles warranty. But it has to be serviced every 6k miles, with a £500 big service every 12k miles.

In summary, I've owned two of these things. It's quite something to see how many people come up to chat about them. I have a similar experience with my 1996 Bentley Turbo R which also attracts attention, but I have to say the people and the comments on the two cars are very different!

The Stow Motor Club Visit to Wells Motor Cars John Barber

Robin Wells is a man with a passion. A passion for a small sports car he designed himself and, if you're the sort of person who prefers the words “hand-made”, “custom” and “unique” to the phrase “mass-produced”, then maybe his is a passion for you to share too.

The story of the Wells Vertige dates back to 2014 when Robin sold his successful health business and, being a bit of a petrolhead, decided he was getting fed up with cars that got progressively louder and wider.

Instead, based around a footprint of 4 metres x 1.75 metres and armed with just four 17” alloys and a Lotus Elise windscreen, he set to with a friend to create the car of his dreams.

No, not a fire-breathing monster with a bhp figure that includes a comma in it, but a lightweight mid-engined car with a reliable four-pot engine, good handling and braking, and good looks. The sort of car you want to drive as much as you can but also to look at with pride too.

After all, as he told a group of us from the Club at the Wells factory in Bishops Itchington, Warwickshire, on 18 April, if you're going to make something: “you've got to make something beautiful”.



John inspects the Vertige's clever chassis design



Robin Wells highlights the company's open-door policy....

It took Robin a couple of years working with a friend to create a cardboard and fibreglass mock-up he was satisfied with. At that stage the aim was simply to create a car for himself but, following good reviews from everyone who saw it, the idea of turning it into a business began to grow.

However, Robin is not an engineer and so, in 2016, he looked around for someone who could turn the mock-up into a real car. At that year's Kit Car Show in nearby Stoneleigh he came across engineer Robin Hall. Robin had designed a good-looking beach buggy and before that the suspension for the R50 Mini, a car known for its fine handling and roadholding.

Robin H joined with the proviso they would not cut metal for two years, instead

spending the time creating the car virtually by CAD (computer assisted design) in order to perfect the design.

By 2018, Prototype 1 had been completed and was launched at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in July 2021. It was warmly received and that turned into hard orders. Two years later and now thankfully post-pandemic, the embryo business moved into their current purpose-built accommodation.

Today, getting on for a dozen Vertiges are on the road and the plan is to build up to making just twenty-four a year. To achieve that, most hard parts are outsourced, starting with the well-proven 2.5 litre Ford Duratec engine and six speed gearbox, the Robin Hall designed pressed steel boxed chassis, double wishbone suspension (with Spax coilover dampers) and brakes. The five-part body is also outsourced, although upholstery has recently moved in-house, as has assembling the front and rear subframes before the 'marriage' that brings everything together.

Before the body is attached to the rolling chassis the customer (every car is built to the customer's spec – there are no plans for a standard Vertige) is invited to the factory for a 'naked drive'. Driving the bare chassis means any last-minute changes can be incorporated. Customers are even invited to get involved by, for example, bonding their car's commission plate to their chassis.

As he moves towards full-scale production, the aim is to take seven weeks to get to the all-important IVA test, with another two weeks for fine fettling and testing. A team of nine plus Robin makes up the workforce and Robin has been keen to encourage young engineers into the fledgling company.

With a list price of £85k plus any optional extras, the cars are hardly cheap, but given the quality of the engineering and of the finished product, that looks to be a bargain. The UK has a tradition of bespoke sports cars (AC, Caterham, Lotus, Morgan, and TVR to name just a few) but it's a tough business and Robin is well aware of the traps (it's taken five or six failures to find the right suppliers) and, with a well-



The Stow Motor Club, the car and the owner

capitalised business, with no loans and owning its own premises in beautiful countryside, and now with ten years' experience, the Vertige looks set to become the overnight success it's been destined to be for the past decade.

Big thanks to Robin for the tour and to the staff of The Bell in nearby Ladbroke

(yes the bookies was named after the village) for a great lunch.

To find out more about the Wells Vertige story, look for a feature in April's EVO mag and, later this year, full road tests in both EVO and Autocar. In many ways the Vertige story has similarities with Horacio Pagani's eponymous cars in Italy (even the shop where the cars are assembled looks a similar size) albeit at a much lower price point. A Vertige won't be the sort of car you plan to keep for just a few months or never drive, or buy solely as an investment. But it's all the better for that and, in a world where sustainability is becoming ever more important, the idea of a keeper that's designed for the UK's road certainly appeals.

Getting Involved in Hill Climb Competition at Prescott with Your Road Registered Car

John Barber

Hill climb competitions are among the most thrilling motorsport events for enthusiasts looking to test their driving skills and their car's capabilities. Prescott, nestled in the heart of the Cotswolds, is one of the UK's most iconic venues, renowned for its picturesque setting and challenging course. If you fancy the idea of tackling the famous hill, you'll be pleased to know that you don't necessarily need a purpose-built racing machine. With a road registered car, you can join the action and experience motorsport in its purest form.

To get started, you'll need a few essentials. First, your car must be road legal and comply with the event's safety requirements – these typically include a valid MOT, insurance, and tax. You'll also need a Motorsport UK licence, which for most club-level hill climbs is the RS Interclub licence. This is easily obtained online and is remarkably affordable, making the entry barrier relatively low.

If you enquire with the Bugatti Owners Club (the Prescott organisers) about competing, they will provide a comprehensive set of regulations, so make sure to read these carefully before entering.

Safety gear is paramount. You'll need an approved crash helmet, flame-resistant overalls, gloves, and appropriate footwear – all must meet Motorsport UK standards. At the venue, your car will be subject to scrutineering, ensuring it's fit for the hill. While modifications aren't required for road registered entries, some drivers choose to add basic upgrades such as uprated brake pads for extra confidence.

The challenges of hill climb competition are both technical and mental. Prescott's course is a blend of tight corners, fast straights, and changes in elevation, demanding precision and nerve. The competition isn't against other drivers directly,



but against the clock, so every run is an opportunity to improve. Weather can be unpredictable, adding another layer of excitement, and learning the best lines takes practice – but the satisfaction when you nail a run is immense.

Above all, hill climbing at Prescott is enormous fun. The camaraderie in the paddock is second to none, with fellow competitors and club members happy to share tips and encouragement. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned driver, the rush of accelerating up the hill, combined with the stunning scenery and supportive atmosphere, makes for an unforgettable experience. So, dust off your road car, get your paperwork sorted, and get along to Prescott – you won't regret it!

Postscript: Spotted in the Netherlands at “Hilversum on Wheels” (June 2026)

Rob Brown



1949 VW



1932 Bentley Blower Special



1980 Rolls-Royce Camargue



1957 Lincoln