FOGLAMP

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AMT

John Easson Award

www.2300club.org

Cover and Above Photo: Tony Pond and Ian Grindrod

We trust you enjoyed the previous newsletter. Some items you will see more comprehensively covered on our website www.2300club.org
We would also like to encourage you to circulate this amongst your friends and colleagues and should anyone wish to receive the newsletter on a regular basis then please email the Club Secretary stuartpye@googlemail.com to be included on the circulation list.

Best wishes

2300 Club

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Tony Pond

Author Ian Grindrod

I had first met Tony Pond when we were both members of the BL rally team on the 1977 RAC. It was a four car team of 16v TR7's, Tony was with Fred Gallagher and I was co driving for Marko Saaristo. It wasn't until the later part of 1979 that I was finally chosen to co drive for Tony in the Lotus Sunbeam. When he left BL to drive for Talbot, Fred had decided to stay with Leyland, so Tony needed a new co driver. He had requested to Des O'Dell that he would like me to be his co-driver, but Des replied, "Who? never heard of him, find someone else." Tony went through a succession of co drivers with varying degrees of success, and mistakes, until Des eventually relented and I got the chance to sit in the hot seat from the Manx Rally onwards.

Outside Taff's House

This was 1979. I had just been to Coventry to pick up our recce car for the Manx Rally. The pic above is when I had just returned and was told by a very senior 2300 Club member to take it round to his house so he could see it.

The recce for the Manx was an eye opener for me, as it showed me how dedicated Tony was with the preparation of the pace notes and the amount of hours he would put in, to get them absolutely right.

We had gone over to the Isle of Man with the standard road going Sunbeam Lotus to use as a recce car, and spent twelve hours each day, driving around that island, a substantial part in the hours of darkness, to perfect the notes. We worked for two weeks, then had to leave the Isle of Man and head off to Italy for the Rallye San Remo.

Of course the driver is the star man in any rally car, or so he tends to think, as does the team management, because Tony was sent by air to Nice, whereas I was given the unenviable task of driving the recce car to Nice to pick him up at the airport.

“Oh that must have been fun”, I can hear you ask.

Well let me tell you it was far from fun. The recce car was a proper Gp4 Sunbeam Lotus rally car, with no creature comforts one would expect in a car, on a jaunt to the French Riviera. The journey to Nice was boring and noisy, my only comfort was that there were a pair of headsets in the car for the recce, so I was able to wear a set of those to keep the noise level a little more bearable for the 970 mile trip.

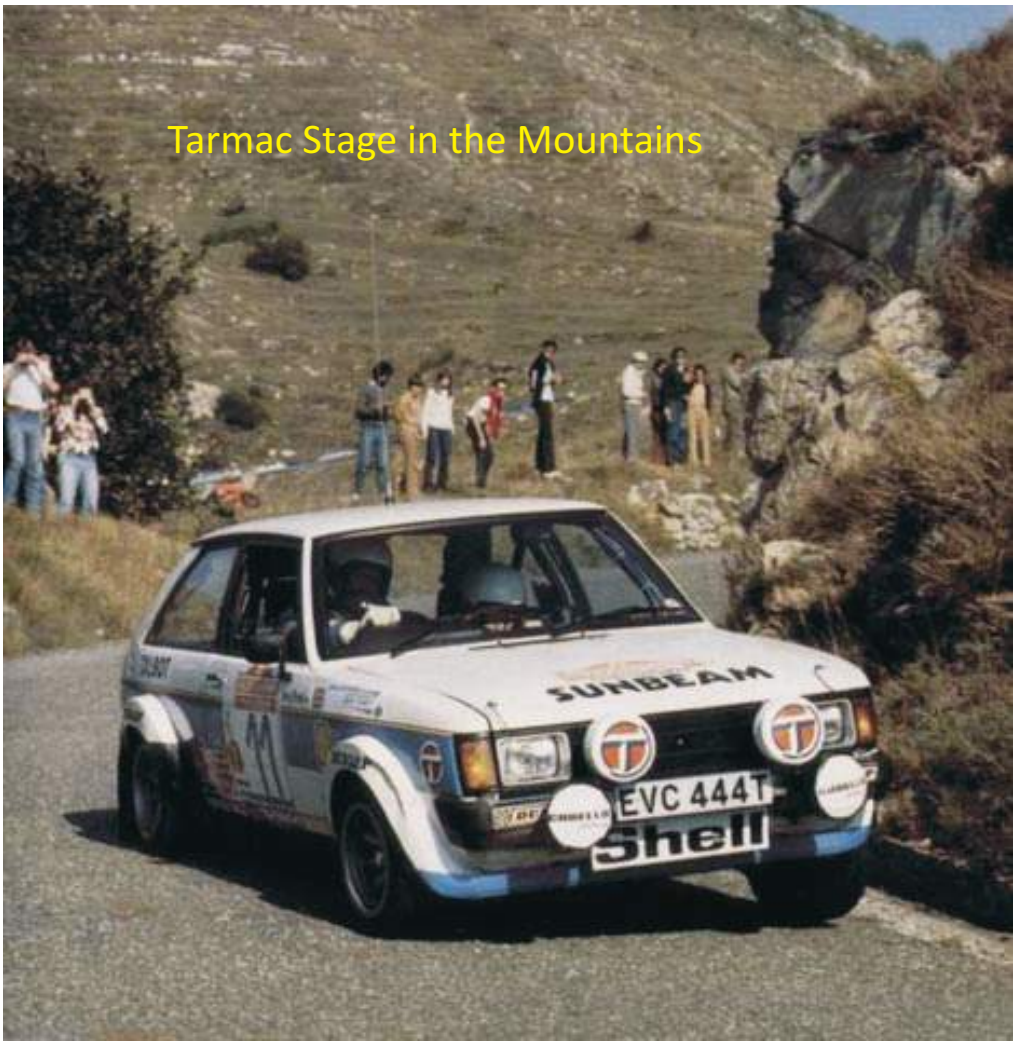
Manx Rally at Brandywell Cottage

I picked up the car at engineer Derek Hughes’ house, as there was an industrial dispute of some kind going on at the factory, and drove nonstop to Nice airport to pick up Tony and then we continued to San Remo where we began our recce the next morning.

Day one was to be a little fraught, we dived into a restaurant at lunch time and partook in a typical Italian lunch. Big mistake for me at least as I spent the rest of the afternoon suffering from Mal de Twisty Road. I have had the malady of travel sickness all my life but gradually grew out of the worst of it and reading maps or pace notes combined with glancing up through the windscreen is not a problem.

However the first day of any recce where my head was down, all the time writing the notes as Tony dictated them was certainly a severe problem for me. By the second day I would be ok and the body gets acclimatised to the twists and turns of the road.

In those days there were no recce mechanic with a van to cover us on the recce, we had two spare wheels and a set of brake pads which was the extent of our spare part catalogue. The recce took 2 weeks. At the end of the recce I was looking forward to two or three days' rest but that was not to be. I was given the task of producing the service schedule for the two car team. Our team mates were Jean Pierre Nicholas/Jean Todt who were in a French built car running on Michelin tyres, whereas we were on Dunlop. The service set up was four chase cars, eight vans and a tyre truck. With service before and after every stage, it took a lot of work doing the schedule.



Tarmac Stage in the Mountains

The rally consisted of 74 stages, the first 16 on tarmac in the mountains behind San Remo, 17-30 on gravel then an overnight halt in Sienna. The next day stages 31-39 on gravel to an overnight in San Marino. 40-51 still on gravel, around the San Marino area. The organisers then decided to cancel the next six stages on gravel because the works Fiat 131's were falling apart. We were told to drive directly through the night to stage 58 near Savona, a distance of 483Km, with a suspension change back to tarmac spec on the way. We were given 13 hours to cover that road section presumably to allow Fiat to find some new cars for Röhrl, Alén and Bettega.

The Fiats were in the well-known livery of Alitalia, white, green and red. Upon arrival at the stage 58 the following day, their main body had pristine white paint, whereas, on the doors, bonnet and boot, the white was more an off white as in it had been used. It is no surprise that those were the body panels that carried the competition numbers and the rally plates. Oh how we laughed! (not)

On one of the fabulous gravel stages in Tuscany

Stages 58 to 65 completed that leg back to San Remo in the evening of the fourth day. The final leg was at night consisting of nine stages in the mountains above San Remo.

We finished fourth overall behind Tony Fassina (Stratos), Walter Röhrl (Fiat 131) and Attilio Bettega (Fiat 131).

The event was the same week as the Tour of Mull and I made sure Tony knew all about Mull. He then spent the whole recce and rally telling everyone, " He'd rather be on Mull you know". Of course no one had a clue what he was on about.

Straight back to the Isle of Man to start the Manx Int Rally. We led for the first 20 stages and then the oil pump let go, and the engine blew up.

Next up and the final event of the year the Lombard RAC

BREAKING NEWS

Tony Pond and Ian Grindrod given the sack mid-event.

The 1979 RAC was the third event I did with Tony in the Sunbeam. We were having a reasonable run and were lying about fourth overall behind a gaggle of Escorts. After doing the wonderful Yorkshire stages we had lost some time to the Escorts of Hannu, Bjorn and either Ari or Russell. More than likely both.

After coming out of Cropton we were servicing at the Yorkshire Gliding Club before going down Sutton Bank to the next stage in Kilburn. A BBC radio crew were doing an interview with Tony, with the usual "How's it going with the race" type of thing. It was being broadcast live on Radio 2 (or the Light Programme).

Tony replied as only he could with something like "Well we've just been blown away by those bloody Escorts on the Dalby straights".

Unfortunately team manager Des O'Dell was sitting in his management car tuned to that very station. Now Des was a great team man and the rally car was never referred to by Des as anything but "My car", it was his baby and no other car was as good as his. When he heard the interview he flew into what can best be described as a rage. He went charging about the service area looking for Tony but the only crew member he could find was little old me, who had no idea about the radio broadcast.

He said "What has that Pond been saying about my car, he's slagging it off and telling everyone that he was blown away in those last few stages by the Fords."

I dared to reply that this was maybe the case and asking Des,
“Who is leading the rally?”
“Mikkola” he said.
I asked “And what is he driving then?”
“An Escort” said Des.
“And who is second?” I dared.
“Waldegard” was the reply.
By now I must have been feeling really cocky because I continued.
“Who would it be in third place then?”
“Brookes” was the answer.
“Well I think that you will find all of those guys are driving Escorts”
I realised then that I had made Des as mad as a dog and he was about to blow up big style.

“Mikkola could beat Tony Pond even if Hannu was driving a Morris 1000” was Des’s retort, and off he stomped looking for revenge elsewhere. Tony had been fortunate enough or more likely clever enough, to have avoided any contact with Des in service and we continued on our merry way to the start of Kilburn.

I was trying to decide whether to tell Tony of the spat with Des, or just to say nothing, but I thought why not turn it to our advantage. On the countdown to the start of the stage, the marshal shouted “30” then “20” and I quietly said to Tony, “Des reckons that Hannu could beat you even if he were driving a Morris 1000” What a wonderful piece of psychology it turned out to be. Tony was as angry as hell. Needless to say we were fastest on the stage! We weren’t actually but it felt like it!

At the next service we coasted to a halt and Tony turned off the engine and tossed the keys to Des saying “Drive your own f****** car then”
That was it. Yet another mad rage.

“That’s it, your sacked. You are a ****.” And pointing the finger at me, “And you are a smaller version of one. The pair of you will never drive my car again” Of course being total professionals and true Brits we soldiered on only to retire after a crash in South Wales.

We rolled down a bank and finished on the roof. It was freezing and we stood there flagging cars down for the duration until the stage opened and the service crew could come in and rescue us. We noticed that none of them were speaking to us, and we found out that Des had told them not to speak to us, he obviously took the view that we had crashed on purpose. The car was pulled onto a trailer and off they all went, leaving Tony and I in the forest!

Luckily our efforts were being filmed for a documentary by the BBC, and they had come into the stage with the service crew. They were kind enough to give us a lift back to Chester.

We never did drive for Des again.

One of the stages that year was called Grizedale 3, better known to all around here as Gisburn Forest. I don't think it had ever been used for a rally before. We came over Bowland Knotts on the road section and I was telling Tony how the road was used on many occasions on local road rallies and that the stage would be marshalled by lots of people I knew from the local car clubs. "Well we better put a good show on then" he said. Good old boy, we were fastest by two seconds, it made my day!

The 7th Feb this year will be the 24 th Anniversary of Tony's death. He sadly died of Pancreatic Cancer at the young age of 56.

Link to the YouTube film:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ3NS17FVvg

Marshalling Trip

By Graham 'Flint' Ryding

On Saturday, the 19th of July, a small team from the 2300 Club set off from Newton in Bowland, Lancashire, to the forest of Dalbeattie, just over the border in Scotland.

The team of four Marshals, Cliff Simmons, Neil Johnson, myself, and our driver for the weekend, Paul Tattersall, in his trusty Discovery, were all looking forward to some great rally action and supporting 2300 Club member Ron Cowan on the RSAC Scottish Rally. Ron was performing Event Safety Officer duties at the event.

We were allocated positions on stages 3 & 6 and only needed to be signed on for 11am.

So it wasn't too early a start with a steady run north, taking in a Greggs breakfast on the way. Not quite the usual standard of Flint's Forest kitchen, but it did the job nevertheless.

On entering the forest we were lucky enough to find a Clootie Dumpling in a bush. Strategically positioned and kindly donated by our friend Bill Sturrock. Thank you, Bill, we all enjoyed it immensely.

We were soon signed on and in position with a brew and a slice of well-buttered Clootie in hand, ready for the action. But so were the midges! The gang all donned nets, but then the midges were gone as quickly as they had come. That was lucky.

The not-so-long-awaited action was a joy to watch with all 55 cars strong performers sliding sideways through the 2300 Club corner. It didn't take long for them all to come through again for stage 6, and it was very enjoyable to watch once more.

All in all, a great day of rallying with no incidents and very few spectators.

On to the Clonyard Hotel for showers, a great evening meal, and a great night's sleep.

It might have helped that we put the world to rights with Ron over a few Whiskies (Ron not partaking in the whiskey just the banter) into the early hours.

My First Rally

By Graham 'Flint' Ryding

This is a new series in which a nominated 2300 Club member will tell us their memories from their first ever rally whether as a spectator, marshal or competitor.

At the end, the writer will nominate a member to write their experience from their first rally.

There should be some interesting ones. I will kick it off!

My first ever rally was the 1989 Lombard RAC rally. Back then, it was a five-day event with spectator stages in country parks on the first Sunday. It would be these Mickey Mouse stages (as seasoned Spectators knew them) that I attended.

I had seen rallying on the TV where it was widely broadcast on programs like 'World of Sport' and ' Top Gear ' with William Woollard. So when I was asked by a lad from work called Dave Freeman, if I wanted to go with him on Sunday to catch a few stages? I snatched his hand off!

Dave and his mate, whose name I can't remember, picked me up that Sunday morning, truck driver early. Not a car mechanic early. They were armed with a spectator information supplement from a newspaper and a MK3 Escort with a big Webber carb. Telling me it was faster than any XR3i. Something told me we were going to find out.

It was still dark and shrouded in mist when we arrived at Wollaton Park in Nottingham. There were thousands of spectators and a great atmosphere for the first stage of the day.

It was the McRae's, Jimmy and son Colin in the 2wd Sierra Cosworths we had come to see, but they where seeded down the field a bit. With the 4wd cars seeded early as usual. I was blown away by the sheer speed of the front-running cars. Seeded 1st car was Juha Kankkunen and he slid his Toyota Celica GT4 wide on the first corner, adding to the drama. Then came the Mitsubishi Galant VR4 of Ari Vatanen looking fast and tidy through the slippery, narrow park roads.

But it was the Celica of Carlos Sainz and Luis Moya up through next that wowed me!
Brake discs glowing, the sound reverberating off the trees, the smell, a combination of burning oil and mud. Their performance seemed higher than the others. Infact they set fastest time for that stage.
An assault on the senses I will never forget and a new life-long Carlos fan was born.

After a meal in the Road King truck stop on the A5 near Cannock, we got to see it all again in Weston Park, Telford. Again it was absolutely superb seeing the world's best crews in the world's best cars head to head while thrilling the many thousands of fans.

Looking back, we only got to see a small part of that five-day event. But it made a massive impression on me. Also reminded me what a great era in rallying that time was. Back in 1989 I didn't know any different!
It was noted that 21000 fans spectated the Chatsworth house stage alone that day. Which seems crazy by today's spectator numbers.

The Event was won by Pentti Airikkala in the Gallant. But it was king Carlos that inspired me to go and watch another rally.
It would be another three years until I discovered The Tour of Mull 'the best rally in the world' and the rest is history.

By Graham 'Flint' Ryding

I nominate Walter Bateson to tell us about his first rally

The Andy Mort Tour 2026
2300 Club's AMT organising team 'The misfits' are all busy creating this year's event.
The 2026 AMT will be the 10th Andy Mort Tour, and the Misfits are promising us another great route, with superb start, lunch and finish venues.
There will also be celebrations on the day recognising the 10th event.
So lots to look forward to!
The 2026 AMT will take place on Saturday the 17th of October.
More information will be published on our website and social media in the coming months.
It is likely that the entry will open in August as usual but will be confirmed nearer the time.

Paul Tattersall's Road to Monaco

2300 Club's Paul Tattersall is beginning to feel the pressure as preparations intensify for the historic streets of Monaco. With just eight weeks remaining, there is still a significant amount of work to complete on the Ensign N179 Formula 1 car.

That urgency is understandable. Paul's entry for the prestigious Grand Prix de Monaco Historique has now been officially confirmed. The 15th edition of the celebrated three-day event will take place from Friday 24th April to Sunday 26th April.

"Although it's all progressing in the right direction now," Paul commented optimistically.

A major milestone has already been achieved: the fully rebuilt Cosworth DFV engine has been returned to its rightful place and is now mounted in the car. In addition, all suspension and steering components have successfully passed rigorous crack testing — an essential step in ensuring safety and performance.

AMT

The team at University of Greater Manchester is currently reassembling the car. Once complete, it will require careful set-up work and, ideally, a test run before being transported to the Principality on 11th April.

Paul will be accompanied by a three-person university team comprising two students and one member of staff. For the students, this represents an extraordinary opportunity — gaining hands-on experience at one of the world's most iconic racing circuits while working alongside some of the sport's most respected drivers and engineers. It promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Alongside the F1 project, the university team has also been working on the Brabham F2 car, although Paul believes it is unlikely to be race-ready this season.

Looking beyond Monaco, Paul is already targeting further outings for the F1 car later in the year, beginning with Monza in late July. Depending on progress, additional events at Dijon and Estoril in September, followed by Mugello in October, are also under consideration.

We wish Paul and the University of Greater Manchester team every success for the season ahead.

By Graham Ryding 22/2/26

Mullin Around 2 and Pendleside Hospice

The 2300 Club have presented a cheque for £1000 to Pendleside Hospice following the success of their 'Mullin' Around 2: The Forum' evening at Nelson Cricket Club in December.

The evening raised £2000 which was split between the Hospice and the Georgia Fourie Butterfly Fund at Holly Grove School in Burnley.

Organisers Arlene Calvert, Pete Kenyon and Neil Calvert handed over the cheque to Leah Hooper, Community Engagement Officer at Pendleside Hospice.

She said: "We are so grateful for the support of the 2300 Club. Each year, we need £6.4m to run the Hospice but thanks to the continued support of everyone in the community we are able to meet that target."

Mullin Around 2 and the Georgia Fourie Butterfly Fund at Holly Grove School

he 2300 Club have presented a cheque for £1000 to the Georgia Fourie Butterfly Fund at Holly Grove School, Burnley.

The money was raised from their successful 'Mullin' Around 2: The Forum' night at Nelson Cricket Club in December, The evening raised a total of £2000 which was split with Pendleside Hospice.

Forum organisers Arlene Calvert, Pete Kenyon and Neil Calvert were on hand to present the cheque to Courtney Fourie, vice-chair of the fund.

The Butterfly Fund was set up in 2009 in memory of Holly Grove pupil Georgia Fourie, and is used to enhance the lives of the 120 children, aged between 4-11, who attend the school.

Said Courtney: "The Fund has allowed the school to buy new equipment, including a seven-seater car to transport them to medical appointments, sporting events and residential trips to Blackpool. We have also set up a Helping Hands Grant to support families in need.

"It is thanks to the generosity of groups like the 2300 Club that we are able to fund and sustain our current provision and help children to lead their best lives."