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# FAREWELL AND MANY THANKS TO OUR ENERGETIC COMPETITION SECRETARY

By Geoff Ward

Longton's hugely popular Competition Secretary, Craig Powers, is stepping down after a five-years in the role during which he has helped transform the club's championships and standing on the speed scene. He will be replaced by another regular competitor, determined MGF driver Stephen Norton. He's working with Craig for the rest of this season to ensure a smooth handover before fully taking over next year.



The officials and committee of LDMC wish to record a huge 'thank you' to Craig for the large amount of work he has put into the job and the enthusiasm, expertise and ideas that have led to the rapid growth of the two championships in recent years.

Although he packed in competing in his rapid OMS back in 2012, his open and involved approach to his role has brought him into close contact with the majority of drivers. Descriptions such as 'hugely helpful', 'good advice' and 'nothing too much trouble' litter competitors memories of him.

My favourites from my early days competing were his succinct snippets of wisdom. Two I still remember are: 'Don't drive a car you can't afford to break' and 'If you've got a small garage, buy a single seater'. (These tips probably account for my present Formula Ford!)

## THE CRAIG FACTFILE

- Age 53, lives in Orrell, Wigan, married to Stephanie since 2009.
- Works as a chartered control engineer, designing control systems and writing software for huge thermal power plants like Fiddler's Ferry and Drax. 'These big coal plants are being phased out so I may need to reinvent myself. Any ideas?'
- Started competing and joined LDMC in 1993. His first car was a Porsche 911 3.2L, 'but that cost too much so I packed it in'. Next car was a Megapin ZZR 1100 that he ran from 2003 with a lot of help from the Rev. Barry Whitehead. He switched to an OMS from 2008 to 2012. 'I still have the car but it needs commissioning with a new ZX10R engine.'
- Most successful year was 2010 when he won the LDMC, ANWCC and LAC championships. Looks back fondly at battles with Paul Masters and Glyn Sketchley at Three Sisters and against Eve Whitehead at Oliver's Mount.

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However, it seems best to reprise his years as Competition Secretary in his own words. The Bulletin pitched some questions at him and these are his answers.

*QUESTION: What does the role involve?*

**CRAIG: Compiling the championship calendar. Preparing the championship regulations and SRs for the next season. Dealing with the MSA. Selling Longton events to the sprint community so that we get healthy entries. Promoting the club. Dealing with technical queries from competitors and trying to get their problems resolved. This takes a lot of communication and it is important to reply promptly to emails and look after our customers.**

*QUESTION: How did you come to take on the job?*

**CRAIG: I was persuaded by Graham Malcolm (LDMC Cairman) when the previous two Comp Secs suddenly relinquished the role. I think he understated the workload and the job spec!**

*QUESTION: So why are you quitting?*

**CRAIG: I work away five days a week and I am seldom in the northwest on weekdays. Therefore I cannot get to committee meetings as often as I would like. I am just too busy to do the job properly and to a standard that I am happy with.**

*QUESTION: What do you see as your main achievements?*

**CRAIG: I took over the job with no handover whatsoever because the previous Comp Secs relinquished the role rather suddenly. I immediately talked to a lot of other clubs and championship organisers and managed to boost Three Sisters entry levels from the first year that I took over. This put the club in a better situation than it had been for several years. Nevertheless there is still more to do.**

*QUESTION: What have been the main challenges?*

**CRAIG: The biggest is maintaining sprinting at Three Sisters. The cost of running events is creeping up every year. Entry levels are struggling, not helped by a flurry of MSA rules changes this year. We have to make Three Sisters attractive to competitors and boost entry levels. There has been a suggestion to put up the entry price to help breakeven but I think this would be counter-productive.**

*QUESTION: How would you like to see Longton's championships and the speed scene in the northwest develop?*

**CRAIG: ? I would be more than happy if we can maintain the range of venues that we already have. Clubs are under extreme financial pressure. I fear for some venues.**

*QUESTION: What will you be doing in the future?*

**CRAIG: I need to get my OMS ready to compete again. However I may decide to sell it and do something else. I am enjoying classic bikes for example, but I don't have the space to store and work on them. I am very active with Formula Student and that keeps me busy from February until July each year. The Comp Sec role used to keep me busy from July to January, so I got no rest during the year. Hopefully that will change and I will have more free time.**

*Continued .....*

## **MSA PROPOSES MORE CHANGES FOR SPEED COMPETITORS**

The MSA's Speed Committee has made a series of important proposals for changes to the technical, class structure and safety regulations for our branch of motorsport. These were decided at a meeting in April but not published until the beginning of this month with a short deadline of June 30 for responses.

To add to the dubiously short consultation time the proposals are presented in a pretty confusing way and both the changes and the manner of the consultation have brought some adverse comments on the Uphill Racers forum. They are available at [www.msauk.org/consultation](http://www.msauk.org/consultation) but the Bulletin Editor has summarised them (hopefully, correctly!) below:

Possibly the least contentious proposal is for a Standard Car class to be introduced from January 1, 2017. This will be restricted to mass produced saloon and sports cars under two litres produced from January 1, 2000, with modifications restricted to brake pad materials. Apart from helmet other safety regulations for clothing, rollbars and harnesses will not apply. The forced equivalence factor will be 1.7.

In all other classes it is also proposed to raise the forced equivalence factor from 1.4 to 1.7. Methanol-fuelled cars must use an additive to give colour and smell when burning. More controversially, cars with forced induction cannot run on methanol. This is on grounds of safety because of the power achieved. Implementation date for this proposal is delayed until January 1, 2018.

The other main proposals effect the Sports Libre class, with the adoption of the single-seater standard for roll over bars, specifications for cockpit dimensions and seats positions. An odd class for closed wheel single seaters could be added.

On the MSA website the proposals are labelled Speed Events Committee 1 to 5. Of these 3 and 5 appear to apply to Rallycross only. If you have views on any of these get reading and analysing the implications and get your comments in quickly.

## **A NEW CHALLENGE FOR LONGTON CONTENDERS**

A new venue for the Longton championship – a two-lapper at the Curborough sprint circuit in the Midlands – attracted six contenders on May 14. The layout means that only one car can be on the course at a time, so despite a fairly limited field there was only time for two practice and two timed runs.

Like most of the Northern contingent Stephen Norton in his MG F was having to learn this tricky little track and was caught out on his first timed run, backing his MG F hard into the barrier. Amazingly, the car escaped with scratches, although Stephen was left nursing a sore neck. Despite this, he went out again and took sixth with 75.5 in this busy class.

Nigel Fox in his Caterham was looking more familiar with the circuit, and took second on 62.35. John Davies found his Peugeot 205 up against rapid Westfields and ended up fourth with a best of 72.47.

The single-seater contingent included Stuart Bickley who claimed second in class in his Jedi on 53.74. Geoff Ward managed first in the Formula Fords with a cautious 64.56 after an earlier 'off'. Chris Taylor was up against FTD man Gary Thomas and came second in his Hitech DP with 58.44, whilst Peter Brogden was alone in class in his March F3 and recorded 63.75.

*Continued .....*

## **AND ANOTHER FRESH CIRCUIT FOR DRIVERS TO LEARN**

It might be a bit of a drag to the East, but the exciting and challenging Blyton Park venue attracted 15 Longton competitors on the Bank Holiday Monday of May 30.

For the first time for a sprint the 'Eastern' layout was being used which involves a fairly technical and twisty first half of the lap, followed by some high speed stuff and a very fast blast to the tight final corner. This got mixed reviews from drivers but offers some variety for those also doing the WSCC weekend in July.

A slightly chilly morning saw the organisers – York Motor Club and Huddersfield Motor Club – offer two practice and one timed run before lunch, followed by three more runs in the much warmer afternoon.

The roadgoing sports and saloon class brought an interesting battle between the Peugeot 205GTi of James Kerr and the Honda S2000 of Martin Rowe. It was James who ended up with the win, on 80.48, and Martin second with 81.10. Stephen Norton's MGF was struggling to keep up and he had to settle for eighth, with 88.43.

In the smaller kit car class Andy Taylor took second (79.92) in his Caterham with Leon Franks third with 80.64 in his Sylva Striker. The bigger-engined class saw Nigel Fox take victory in his Caterham with 76.17 with Sean Bourn in the Carcraft Cyclone second on 80.07.

Andy Larton was pushed into second in the up to two-litre modprods, with a best of 78.82. Third went to Robert Smith on 81.58 with car-sharer Tim Burrill next (82.64) and John Moxham fifth (83.62).

Victory in the up to 1400cc class for modified sports car went to Matt Turner in his Westfield Mega (71.18), with Paul Webb's Aries Locost taking third (74.21). In the smaller bike-engined single seaters Eve Whitehead was forced by an oil leak to retire RBS8 after second practice. Geoff Ward's Formula Ford ended up alone in class and he put in a best of 77.39.

## **THE CHAMPIONSHIP FINALLY HEADS FOR THE HILLS**

After a season start dominated by sprints the Longton championship finally went uphill at the Harewood hillclimb on June 5.

The Classic Marques championship had a strong class of its own and included Longton regulars Martin Rowe and Roger Fish in their Honda S2000s. Roger won this particular private battle, taking fourth on 67.28 with Martin two-tenths of a second behind.

James Kerr added to his Blyton triumph with a win in a huge modified road and saloon class, getting his Peugeot 205GTi across the finish in 77.50. Stephen Norton was nineteenth in his MGF (76.58). Leon Franks took first in his Sylva Striker (66.89) in the small roadgoing kit cars. Eve Whitehead in the Barry-built RBS8 was fourth with 61.50 in the small single seaters.

*Continued .....*

# LONGTON'S NORTHERN SPEED CHAMPIONSHIP 2016

*Best 10 events from 19 to count*

Date	Day	Venue	Type	Club
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Sat	Barbon Manor	Hillclimb	Liverpool MC
18 <sup>th</sup> June	Sat	Three Sisters ('LAC' 2 lap)	Sprint	Longton & DMC
25 <sup>th</sup> June	Sat	Aintree	Sprint	Liverpool MC
9 <sup>th</sup> July	Sat	Blyton Park	Sprint	Westfield SCC
10 <sup>th</sup> July	Sun	Blyton Park	Sprint	Westfield SCC
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Sun	Scammonden Dam	Hillclimb	Mid Chesh MRC
30 <sup>th</sup> July	Sat	Three Sisters (Course 2)	Sprint	Longton & DMC
13 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Sat	Scammonden Dam	Hillclimb	Pendle DMC
21 <sup>st</sup> Aug	Sun	Oliver's Mount	Hillclimb	Auto 66
28 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Sun	Harewood	Hillclimb	BARC (Yorks)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	Sat	Aintree	Sprint	Liverpool MC
18 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Sun	Harewood	Hillclimb	BARC (Yorks)
1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Sat	Anglesey (National 2 lap)	Sprint	Longton & DMC
2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Sun	Anglesey (International)	Sprint	Longton & DMC

## LONGTON SPRINT SERIES

*3 events from 5 to count - Separate Trophies & Awards!*

Date	Day	Venue	Type	Club
18 <sup>th</sup> June	Sat	Three Sisters ('LAC' 2 lap)	Sprint	Longton & DMC
30 <sup>th</sup> July	Sat	Three Sisters (Course 2)	Sprint	Longton & DMC
1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Sat	Anglesey (National 2 lap)	Sprint	Longton & DMC
2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct	Sun	Anglesey (International)	Sprint	Longton & DMC

**FULL REGULATIONS ARE ON THE CLUB'S WEBSITE [www.longton-dmc.co.uk](http://www.longton-dmc.co.uk).**

**Invitations** to other events for LDMC members. (There are not championship events.)

- Shelsley Walsh Hillclimb: Saturday, July 2. (Midland Automobile Club)
- MIRA Sprint: Saturday, September 10. (Midland Automobile Club)
- Curborough Sprint: Sunday, October 9. (Midland Automobile Club)

