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START YOUR ENGINES! LONGTON'S SEASON GETS UNDERWAY AT THREE SISTERS

Spring is in the air and hopefully many of you are looking forwards to competing or otherwise participating in Longton's first meeting – and the season opener for many of us – at Three Sisters on April 15.

The event will be held on 'circuit one' – that's the arrangement where the start is on the main straight followed by an adrenalin-inducing rush over the hill to the 'interesting' braking challenge before the pits entrance right-hander. Then it's all the way round paddock bend, followed by the hairpin, the esses and the finish.

No doubts spanners are being rattled in many garages at the moment including your editor's where a bare Formula Ford chassis is still sitting in a tribute to rubbish time-management. If all goes well we should hopefully see some familiar faces with new machinery and I'm told the Rev Barry has a little engine surprise in store.... So, see you at Wigan.

BLUE BOOK ALERT ONE – RACE SUITS, PROBAN IS OUT AND NOMEX IS IN

Just in case competitors haven't been poring over the 'blue book' during the winter – perish the thought - a reminder of two things (which doesn't guarantee there aren't more).

First, race suits. Proban is out from the beginning of this year. You must now kit yourself out with Nomex race suits that meet FIA standards. The two allowed are FIA 8856-2000 and FIA 1986 standard and nothing else (see K 9.1.2).

The second, which is also a safety issue, is slightly less clear-cut and is explored on the next page.

Continued

BLUE BOOK ALERT TWO – DRIVER COMPARTMENT AND SUSPENSION COMPONENTS

The section (J 5.2.1) demanding that the driver and passenger compartment be isolated from a range of potential hazards has been tightened up. In particular there appears to be a more rigorous interpretation of suspension components sharing space with the driver – a fairly common feature in many single-seaters. The concern is that if a joint fails the wishbone could spear the driver.

In January the MSA issued some extra clarification. This stated:

Section J applies to all categories of vehicle. To clarify, the first paragraph of (J)5.2.1 requires that the vehicle occupant(s) be isolated from components with the potential to cause injury. This is pretty straightforward in closed cockpit cars such as touring cars, which generally feature a “box” containing the engine and another for the occupants. However, it is not quite so well defined in vehicles such as single-seater race cars.

The MSA has received a number of queries on this regulation, mainly regarding suspension system issues. There are many single-seater race cars that feature either a single or a pair of shock absorber/spring units mounted within the chassis above the driver’s legs, typically with bell cranks and rods connecting to the uprights. These items are outside of the volume occupied by the driver’s legs and it is considered that there is a very low risk of a hazard being created; this is time-proven.

Typically, forward of the pedal box are the hydraulic cylinders, and while the “bulkhead” of the pedal box is unlikely to be fluid-tight, the reality is that the risk of fluid getting into the volume occupied by the driver’s legs or onto the pedals is very low. Again, this is time-proven and acceptable.

It is common for the suspension members to be mounted inside the body skin, whether the skin is a removal panel or panelling riveted to the chassis. The sketch plan below (sorry, couldn't download this, ed.) shows a typical arrangement where the pivots are carried by vertical members in the chassis structure, with the bodywork holed to enable the wishbones/suspension arms to pass through. (This sketch shows an A-shaped wishbone where the bar of the A – the 'anti-intrusion bar' – links the inner ends of the wishbone – ed.).

As shown, should there be a lateral impact causing a pivot to fail, the end of the wishbone/suspension member is prevented from intruding and possibly spearing the driver’s legs because of the “anti-intrusion bar” coming up against the vertical chassis member. As such there is a very low hazard risk and it is therefore acceptable. If there was no “intrusion bar” it would be a very different situation, for the end of the wishbone could perhaps spear the driver’s leg.

The same applies if the ends of the wishbone are “inside” the vertical members, rather than as shown below. There are other ways of preventing intrusion; it is simply a case of considering what happens if something breaks, how likely it is to break and what the consequences are. The answers to those questions will enable you to decide whether there is a realistic hazard.

Continued

STUART TURNER: RALLY STAR AND MOTORSPORT SUPREMO - BUT NOT 'THE MSA'S'!

Our good-natured, humorous and excellent after-dinner speaker at the annual awards bash, Stuart Turner, gently pointed out that your editor is an idiot by managing to describe him as 'the MSA's Stuart Turner' in the last Bulletin. Humble apologies for this slip (what do you expect when you get an ex-tabloid hack to edit the Bulletin?!)

Just in case there is any doubt here are extracts from his biography on the website, Speakers Corner....

After being British Champion rally co-driver for three years, Stuart ran the BMC team when Mini Coopers were winning countless events, including several Monte Carlo Rallies. He later moved to Ford and again built a successful team, which won not only individual events like the longest rally ever held, the London to Mexico, but also European and World Championships in both racing and rallying.

His business experience included six years as Ford of Europe's Director of Motorsport which involved working with senior executives of many nationalities (and from several business disciplines) in every country in Europe. In addition to team building, Stuart has wide practical experience of quality and customer service issues and his knowledge is not confined to motorsport – as well as a spell as Director of Public Affairs for Ford of Britain, he ran a self-contained factory within Ford which built low-volume, high quality cars sold to knowledgeable and discerning customers.

He is a winner of a coveted Benedictine After-Dinner Speaker of the Year Award. Stuart has addressed audiences ranging from a dozen to over 2000 and is used to international groups, travelling to several countries to speak every year; his record to date being 27 different nationalities in an audience of 48! He is author of over 20 books on business and motorsport, published in several languages.

LONGTON'S ANNUAL MEETING

All members are welcome to attend Longton and District Motor Club's annual general meeting at 8.30pm on April 16 at the Lonsdale Club, Fulwood Hall Lane, Fulwood. Come and join us. Apart from anything else the beer's cheap and, of course, the company is excellent.

As announced in the last bulletin the deadline for nominations and discussion topics is April 2. But even if you've missed that deadline this is still a chance to contribute to the running of your club as well as having a pleasant evening out with fellow enthusiasts.

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A 'BONUS' FOR LDMC MEMBERS – YOU ARE INVITED TO COMPETE IN OTHER EVENTS

By Craig Powers, LDMC Competitions Secretary

LDMC members have been invited to the following speed events. These are club invitations and do not necessitate registration in Longton's own speed championship. Those entered in the Longton's Northern Speed Championship are also invited to events which form part of our championship.

Date	Day	Venue	Type		Organising Club	Invitation via...
15-Apr-12	Sun	3-Sisters	Sprint	*	Longton DMC	LDMC membership
28-Apr-12	Sat	Aintree	Sprint	*	Liverpool	via ANWCC
28-Apr-12	Sat	Olivers Mount	Hillclimb		Auto66	direct invite via SRs
29-Apr-12	Sun	Olivers Mount	Hillclimb	*	Auto66	direct invite via SRs
5-May-12	Sat	Angelsey	Sprint		L&CC / MGCC	direct invite via SRs
6-May-12	Sun	Angelsey	Sprint		L&CC / MGCC	direct invite via SRs
6-May-12	Sun	Shelsely Walsh	Hillclimb (2 days, practice on Sat)		MAC	direct invite via SRs
12-May-12	Sat	Harewood	Hillclimb	*	BARC(Y)	direct invite via SRs
20-May-12	Sun	Scammonden	Hillclimb		MGCC NW	via ANWCC
3-Jun-12	Sun	Harewood	Hillclimb	*	BARC(Y)	direct invite via SRs
17-Jun-12	Sun	Blyton Park	Sprint		MAC	direct invite via SRs
30-Jun-12	Sat	Aintree	Sprint	*	Liverpool	via ANWCC
1-Jul-12	Sun	3-Sisters	Sprint	*	Longton DMC	LDMC membership
15-Jul-12	Sun	Scammonden	Hillclimb		Mid Chesh MRC	via ANWCC
28-Jul-12	Sat	Shelsely Walsh	Hillclimb (Classics)		MAC	direct invite via SRs
29-Jul-12	Sun	Shelsely Walsh	Hillclimb (Classics)		MAC	direct invite via SRs

Events marked * are part of the Longton's Northern Speed Championship.

This list will be subject to updates in future Bulletins as further SRs are published. If you need assistance with obtaining SRs / Entry Forms then feel free to contact Craig Powers via cpowers@blueyonder.co.uk who may already have copies of the regs or can put you in contact with the organising club.

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