

## **BARC North Western Centre report for BARC Magazine 2018 Summer Edition**

### 400 UP AND ONWARDS

Not many championships can say they have done over 400 rounds over a period of 34 years but that is what the BARC NW Sports and Saloon Car can. So what are the criteria for this? Over this time the BARC North West committee which has stewardship of the championship has been settled with three chairmen steering the ship over this period, Ken Mitchell, Dave Blundell and Ray Sumner.

BARC North Western Centre has existed since just after the Second World War. In the early days it was very much a group of enthusiasts not interested in competing, but interested in motor sport and a social life that revolved around their sport of choice. In the 1950's membership was 600-700 and in 1959 steps were taken to start organising races. The first kart meeting took place the following year. In the 1960's there was further growth in competition events with a number of autocross meetings, night rallies and sprints organised by BARC NW. The organisation of events continued to expand in the 1970's. Then in 1983 BARC NW began to organise its own sports and saloons series.

The Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May 2018 saw the celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> race in the championship. This was at Trac Mon, on the stunning Isle of Anglesey, a popular track for drivers, marshals and spectators alike. There is a number of drivers in the Championship who have competed in over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the rounds since records began in 1984. These include Tony Sugden (retired), Garry Wilson (retired), Bob Claxton, Iain Gorrie, Ralph Underwood, Chris Maries and Ric Wood. Ric himself has been a registered driver in the championship and competed in a total of 29 seasons. He's brought along some amazing cars over the years, including the Calibra V8 and ex Alain Menu DTM Astra Paul Dobson, Duncan Auckland, Paul Rose, Steven Hibbert, Joe Spencer and Simon Allaway have also raced for many years.

There has been one major constant though, John Leck, our Competition Secretary for all these rounds and for many he was Secretary of the Meeting as well. John lives and breathes the Championship and he is always thinking of ways to enhance the championship without doing anything too drastic to upset the 'applecart'. So for example keeping the regulations

stable thus allowing the same car to be used with minimum updates. The time John has spent over this period if added up must be enormous so his wife Sue should also be thanked.

While John looks after the administration side of the championship he admits to having limited technical skills. For that side of the championship our Eligibility Scrutineer Peter Gorrie has expertly guided the championship from a technical viewpoint. Peter is equally as passionate as John and has seen the championship grow over the last 20 years and is always willing to help and advise a competitor on how to build or modify a car for the championship. His main task is to ensure all cars are built and raced to the regulations which he uses in a firm but always fair manner. Since those early days the regulations haven't changed drastically, and this consistency in the regulations is one of the things that continues to make the championship popular for drivers. In fact the drivers have a good deal of input into any changes in the regulations.

The consistent regulations for the championship allow pretty much any car that has been a production car to compete, with three classes each for both specials and modified cars, all based on engine size. The points system also means that drivers consistently winning their class in smaller engine cars stand as much chance of winning the whole Championship as those in the fastest cars. One change in the regulations in 2018 is the introduction of championship points for drivers who spend a day on the banking helping out as marshals. This will give the drivers an opportunity to appreciate a different perspective on a race meeting and the hard work of the volunteer orange army, without whom racing wouldn't happen.

The championship tries to forge a good relationship with the highly professional marshals. Drivers have regularly attended the annual Oulton Park marshal training weekend, providing a drivers perspective and in car footage to help with training, even donating an old Subaru Impreza car shell for the marshals fire training. On the whole, the marshals enjoy the Championship as well, even though, as Simon McLachlan says "From a flagging marshal point of view, the diversity of cars keeps us on our toes". "Big grids, great racing and often a thank you wave after the chequered means this is a race I will marshal whenever I can." John Francis, Marshal

“I marshal at Oulton and Anglesey and I have to say that the CNC series is my favourite club event. One of the big positives is the number of entrants...there is nothing worse than seeing a just handful of cars going round the circuit. Obviously the number of classes and variety of the cars within the classes is also a big point as it means racing action for the whole race time, even if it makes blue flagging so hard! Also, the drivers are very approachable...we are all car & racing fans and having the drivers happy to talk to us and show us their cars is much appreciated by us.” – Mark Beresford, Marshal.

The paddock at each race meeting is always friendly and you'll see drivers/mechanics helping fellow competitors with work on cars to ensure they get out and race, even if they are competing against each other. In addition we have the driver buddy system where the driver representatives will assist newcomers to racing or those new to the Championship to settle in and become part of the family. So thanks to Simon Allaway, Duncan Aukland, Peter Davies, Graham Saul and latest recruit Mike Nash.

It's also a very sociable paddock, especially at the away rounds where many of the competitors stay at the circuits for the weekend and enjoy the banter in the evening over a BBQ and a brew. The reputation of a friendly sociable atmosphere in the paddock, combined with the open regulations, has resulted in some drivers travelling great distances to race with the Championship.

We've had drivers regularly travelling from far flung places like Aberdeen, the Scottish Borders, Brighton, Portsmouth and Kent to come and race with the Championship. Why? Well they love the close competitive racing, the friendly paddock and the full grids. “Best paddock in the country! The racing is clean and close.” – Steve Rowles, driver

New drivers are always helped out on race day by one of the driver representatives. This helps them get to the right briefings, understand what's happening at signing on and scrutineering and ensures they enjoy their day.

New to the Championship this year, Rob Wakelin, with a Honda Civic said “My first year and it's the friendly paddock, everyone talks to everyone, the variety of cars, always someone to race even in the lowest class, the close racing and respect of others when racing close”.

For the fans the full grids make for a great spectacle. With six different classes of car there is always a number of battles to watch during the race and the variety of race cars out on the track makes for plenty of overtaking to see. Proper door to door racing and great value for money for the spectators.

In the words of race fan Phil Stokes –“It's the variety of cars and driver commitment that makes it such a great spectacle for me. Still a fantastic race series which I love!”

This was echoed by another fan and follower of the series, Jim Birch. “Great range of cars & very friendly paddock & great racing & usually very respectful”.

“The CNC championship is good in many ways. Competitors although rivals are all friendly and in times of trouble they will help you out if they can. If anything happens on track they all show concern.” – Trina Hodgson.

The consistent success of the Championship has also brought in two new sponsors this year, CSP Detailing, who are awarding three drivers with a pack of products at each meeting and Advantage Motorsport, offering discounts to Championship competitors. Should your business wish to enquire about sponsor opportunities contact Graham Saul.

For more information on the championship visit [www.barcnorthwestern.co.uk](http://www.barcnorthwestern.co.uk)

For more information on marshalling visit [www.marshals.co.uk](http://www.marshals.co.uk)

Good sponsorship also leads to a settled Championship and after running with no sponsor for the first four years we have had 30 years of continuous sponsorship with 11 sponsors but two especially stand out having done over 50% of the period. Ace Vehicle Deliveries did 8 years but in 2008 along came Ric Wood with Performance ‘N’ Economy Chip Tuning which after three years became CNC Heads who are now in their 11<sup>th</sup> year in total, long may it continue, so Ric thank you very much.

Finally we have a Championship which has an eclectic mix of cars providing exciting racing which is always a favourite with spectators, marshals and drivers.

Long may it continue.

Ray Sumner - *Chairman*, Duncan Aukland - *Driver Representative*, Graham Saul – *Driver Representative*.

