

**Jeffrey Haworth our Membership Secretary has been a committee member since 1967 and recalls those early days with his 'Wreckollections'.**

My earliest recollection of the BARC goes back to about 1961. From a child I had always been interested in cars; my father had awakened this interest by having an Alvis Crested Eagle and explaining the working points and having the occasional foray on Southport beach when I could reach the pedals! My main interest at this time was obtaining the latest Dinky toy, I was a wartime baby and Dinky toys were in short supply, you had to put your name down to secure the latest model!

Sometime around 1955/56 my uncle took me to Aintree in his Ford V8 Pilot (what a car!) to see a race meeting. The full details escape me but I do remember that it was won by Taffy von Tripps in a Ferrari, the atmosphere had awakened my interest in motor racing.

I will now fast forward to 1960 when I met someone who would become a close friend. He was called Dennis Volta who was a member of the BARC. He was involved in the marshalling side of events and he took me along to Aintree and gave me a marshalling post at Becher's Brook. It was then suggested that I would like to join the BARC (which could include RAC membership for a discounted fee!). Those were the days.

Dennis then suggested that I might make my MK2 Ford Zodiac go a little faster and he had the 'know how'. He raised the compression ratio and added a Raymond Mays exhaust manifold, it did seem to make a difference and then made a better noise with a Peco exhaust system (I am giving my age away!). The bug had bitten me.

My first event was the BARC Boxing Day Driving Tests at New Brighton. These were called the 'Festive Frolics' and were televised! There was no award but it would be the start of a long journey in competition. Most of my early days were spent competing in sprints, where the BARC was an invited club. These included Oulton Park, Aintree and even the Marine Drive in Southport. This sprint in Southport was a good test for my MK1 Austin Healey Sprite which went very well until I was beaten by some chap in a Morris Minor 1000 called Harry Ratcliffe!!!

The BARC promoted some autocross meetings, for one of which I was Secretary of the Meeting but was reprimanded for also being a competitor, but keep that to yourselves!

As far as I can remember I was invited to join the committee in about 1964 by Chairman Jock (Force Majeure) Sinclair. My first duty was to edit a monthly newsletter which involved using a Gestetner Copier which was quite a horrendous task and then to post about 140 copies to our NW members.

In those days it seemed like all the committee members smoked cigarettes, pipes and cigars, those were the days! Meetings took place at the Blundellsands Hotel in Crosby and later at the New Hotel in St John's Precinct Liverpool City Centre. One committee member who will remain nameless was a GP and I remember one meeting when he apologised for being late but had he not got his new Blue Light to fix to his car roof he probably would not have arrived before the end of the meeting! (Certain doctors had just been allowed to use these blue lights for attending emergencies).

During this period we would organise the Dodd Wood section in the RAC Rally; these were very exciting nights and generally we would assemble at about 10.00pm and the Forest Commander (Jock (Force Majeure) Sinclair would assign us to our various duties in the forest. We would then await the first cars, generally about midnight when the leaders would appear from nowhere. The noise, atmosphere and smell of Castrol R was mind blowing. One year my duty was having a quick chat with the drivers when they reached our checkpoint. One memorable occasion I remember was asking the driver what the tyres had been like for this rough section which was very demanding. His reply was 'There are four, they are round and black in colour'. This I realised was the Duke of Kent speaking to me! The only problem during these times was driving home at about 6.00am and then having to go to work! But well worth it.

Finally with regard to members on this committee we had a certain Dr Lehane who was always a very interesting person to talk to and once I said that I needed to know my blood group for my racing licence application, Dr Lehane said 'pop into Liverpool University Tropical Medicine Department' and he would do the necessary for me. There is now a Special Unit for Tropical Medicine and it is named 'The Dr Lehane Unit'!

This now completes a short review of my early days as a member of the BARC NW Centre.