

## **BARC North Western Centre report for BARC Magazine 2019 Autumn Edition.**

Although the most visible activity of the NW Centre is probably the sports saloon championship, members actually provide most of the services needed to run a race meeting. One of these services is the Rescue Unit. It has always been very highly regarded for its efficiency and very high levels of equipment and crew training under the excellent leadership of the crew chief Colin Whitter. It is always busy throughout the season and earns its keep as well as providing a vital service at race meetings. Alan Stockton has spent many years under Colin's leadership and became very skilled and experienced as a result. Sadly the day has come when Alan has decided to move on. We will all miss his contributions and sociable company and he has written a few words to cover it:

### **Alan Stockton writes :**

When you think of speed what do you think of? - Fast cars, racing cars, time....!

As I reflect upon it I can tell you that the last 34 years have passed with the speed of a formula one racing car crossing the finish line at Silverstone!

I began my time as a Marshall at the tender age of 18, my Mum had two years previously, sadly passed away and my life was turned upside down and lacked focus. Marshalling at that time helped me re-focus. For the next 9 years I marshalled, I enjoyed the camaraderie that the training and the race weekends brought as I stood on the bank at Oulton Park.

1995 brought new challenges as I was delighted to be accepted onto the 'Rescue Unit' where for the last 24 years I have forged great friendships which will last far beyond the racing circuits. I have many memories that will remain with me for the rest of my life, some happy some not so.

I remember when at Pembrey, Mal Seel, one of the crew members, as we arrived in the pit lane he made a hasty retreat and proceeded to vomit into the tyre wall, which a short time later a photographer lent on, not realising what had previously occurred.

Once on our way home from a Pembrey Race Meet, the unit Chief Colin Whitter and I along with a couple of others from the Rescue Unit were travelling in his car and unfortunately we came across an RTC involving a Fiesta and Sierra. The collision was head-on, which resulted in serious injuries to the drivers. We were able to assist as our impeccable training took over as we managed the situation. The Rescue Unit arrived a couple of minutes after us, followed a short time later by the Emergency Services. We were able to remove the roof off the Fiesta as the emergency services dealt with the casualties. The Fire Chief commented on how our equipment was far superior to theirs and that we should carry on as they dealt with the casualties in the Sierra. Sadly the drivers in each car would have received life changing injuries!

In 1999 at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Michael Schumacher, due to brake failure at Stow Corner, crashed into the tyre wall which resulted in him sustaining a broken leg! And guess who was first on the scene to assist him as he exited the car? BARC Northwest Rescue Unit! All the tabloids were purchased by family and friends as we were pictured by the press assisting Michael. The one and only time I have been pictured in the Sunday Sport Newspaper!

There was an occasion when we arrived at an incident at the Avenue at Oulton Park and the Doctor's runner, who shall remain nameless, had forgotten to take the Medical Bag! It was reported that Colin was heard in race control, which is over a quarter of circuit away, saying 'Don't forget the ..... Medical Bag'! Colin certainly knows when to give praise when it's due but also a ticking off when it's needed. I can however remember one incident when I was the driver of the Rescue Unit with one Doctor and a trainee Doctor and after being scrambled to an incident at Druids, I drove to the scene and realised that I had left the trainee Doctor behind. We all make mistakes!

There are so many memories that I have accumulated over the 33 years, far too many to share in this short article. I would like to take this opportunity to thank BARC NW for giving me the opportunity to join the Rescue Unit and for the memorable days and weekends, I have made some great lifelong friends over the years. I will miss everyone and want to express my thanks to you all, it has been and will remain a memorable chapter of my life.

I would highly recommend a life on the rescue unit and would encourage anyone who is interested to do a taster day.

The CNC Heads sports saloon championship has now completed 9 of its 14 rounds. Only 2 meetings remain with 3 rounds to be run at Anglesey on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September before the final meeting at Oulton Park on 26<sup>th</sup> October (will there be any daylight?!).

After 9 rounds the class leaders are: Class A Jon Woolfitt, Hyabusa turbo MK Indy; Class B Paul Dobson, rotary engine Locost 7; Class C Dave Harvey, Kawasaki Locosaki; Class D Garry Wardle, Porsche 911 GT3; Class E Rob Burkinshaw, Honda Integra; Class F David Bird, Honda Civic. The overall leader is Rob Burkinshaw, Harvey, Dobson.

Rounds 8 & 9 were run at Donington Park on 10<sup>th</sup> August in very fickle weather. It was a very busy day with qualifying and 2 races in 1 day. 41 cars qualified on a dry track even though a number of regulars were absent but 3 new drivers were welcomed. Ric Wood our sponsor came along to race his latest acquisition, an Australian Nissan Skyline. The first race is recorded as rain/wet. It would have been easier if it had been just that but in fact it started on a drying track followed by a downpour a few laps in and then a slowly drying track. It was difficult to know if wets or slicks were the answer and there was a combination of both in the end with very few feeling they had made the best choice.

A full grid inevitably meant that there was plenty of close racing and Luke Armiger had his well-deserved first overall win in the second race in his beautifully engineered Vauxhall Tigra silhouette. Rob Burkinshaw has a pretty strong lead in the points at the

moment in his immaculate quick and reliable Integra so there is a lot to do to dislodge him by the end of the season.

To show how quickly time flies planning next year's season is well under way! It does not seem long before we will all be meeting up again at the Centres' Conferences.

Peter Gorrie. *NW Centre Secretary.*