

## **Jeffrey Hayworth, Sandocross Champion.**

What do you think of the idea of getting yourself a full race sports or saloon car and then racing it - on the beach?!! That is just what our recently retired after 53 years on the NW Centre committee Membership Secretary Jeffrey Hayworth used to do - with some considerable success.

Jeffrey joined the BARC in 1962 in the days of the Aintree 200 to which he went with a friend to help as a marshal. Of 1962 he commented 'I was just hairy and wild in those days, I didn't think about anything - much to my wife's disgust'. It was possible in those days to just turn up and help without any prior experience. Has a feeling Taffy von Tripps was driving at that meeting. His most vivid picture from that meeting at Aintree is of an E Type Jaguar that Graham Hill was driving. The car had only just come out and he remembers such things as them changing the disc pads on the car in a few minutes at a time when it was normal to spend some considerable time changing brake shoes and riveting on new linings. 'Although I had always been 'into' cars, never competitively, my friend never stopped talking about rallying, racing and sprints so it was inevitable that eventually I would become a member of the club.'

'I joined the NW Centre Committee in 1967, mainly to be involved with the autocross side of things but I also did some marshalling at Oulton Park. At this time I was working for the family business but fell out over the effect that my competing was having on my work. I saw that Sefton Garage the local Volkswagen and Ford dealer was looking for salesmen so I ended up working for Jock Sinclair (NW Centre chairman at the time) who owned the business. This put me more in touch with BARC members who came to buy and sell cars. One day a chap arrived wanting to swap a Mark 1 Sprite with a supercharger for a new Ford Zodiac so I was determined to have a go in this car with a blower. It really flew but I nearly had a disaster in it as the throttle stuck open when I was having a blast. They were quite happy days.'

'I had been a competitor in sand racing on Southport beach for donkey's years and had done a little circuit racing but my major successes were on sand and I had two FTD's at Southport. These meetings tended to be organised by Liverpool Motor Club but the BARC was always invited. This type of racing started off as 'sandocross', in other words there

were only two cars going round at a time on a circuit of about a mile. Then they got a licence to run full race meetings and I remember that the first sand race that I did was started by Norman Wisdom who was performing somewhere in the area. I was on the front row fortunately so I ended up in photographs in the paper with him holding the flag.'

'These meetings were extremely popular with about 130 entries so there were qualifying rounds and A and B finals. When you had about 16 cars going around Formby Bend the sand was getting very chewed up as you came into the corners at 85 or 90 mph with great spirals of sand everywhere; a limited slip diff was necessary of course.' I did these races from around 1963 until 1973 when for some reason they stopped running. I ran an E Type Jaguar which I had a half share in with Terry Cunliffe in 1971. (The car was ex-Rorer ) and my only sand race in it was "the hairiest drive of my life". But the fastest car I had was a 3.8 Jaguar saloon which used to belong to Red Rose Motors of Chester. It was red with wire wheels and had E Type mods with triple carbs, Gold cylinder head and a Coombes exhaust and that was really quick. It used to belong to Peter Wynne-Jones and he was quite a big name who used to go to the Isle of Man to sprint amongst other things.' 'The most essential equipment for sand racing was a pair of tights to stretch over the air inlets, but you still had to be careful as they could get sucked in and ruin the engine!'

In his younger days Jeff was considered to be the complete epitome of an enthusiast, and he is the first to admit that he was "always motor car mad". The mania began at the early age of 5 when he became an accomplished soap box constructor, and one of his more successful models lay sentimentally in a corner of the garage at his Formby home well into his adult life.

Living in Southport, Jeff was taken to a couple of Grands Prix as a boy, but it was always the saloons and sportscars that aroused his interests. For his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday a 1932 Austin 7 was forthcoming (no, it wasn't new) and the obliging occurrence of the Suez Crisis enabled him to get out without a passenger (it was a fuel saving ruling; look it up in your history books). This he duly did (as soon as the clock struck midnight to be precise) and the car got to the other side of Southport and then died on him. Not being very mechanical (especially in the dark) there was nothing for it but to walk back home, and the car was retrieved with the help of a friend the next morning. 'A friend and I used to make this ritual visit to the Motor Show every year, starting out at about two in the morning. We were well on our way on one occasion when we had to stop to repair a puncture. Whilst doing so we heard this

rapidly approaching car which we suspected of being an E Type Jaguar. Eventually it shot past us and we spotted the registration plate: 77RW. This was 1962 and at the time the car was being used in an advertisement on television for Brylcreem which ran 'this is the man which wears this sort of suit, this is the man who uses this sort of hair cream and this is the car he drives'. That sort of thing was so exciting in those days.'

Finding himself unoccupied one weekend, in response to a local advertisement he and a few friends went along to a Liverpool MC autocross on the Wirral. One of the drivers had a Ford Zodiac identical to his own car, so pausing only to utter a quick "I could do better than that myself", he joined the LMC in time for their next event. Having borrowed a crash helmet from a tame motorcyclist friend, he turned up at the autocross: "I was the exhibitionist sort of person - I had to give spectator value", which is certainly what he did, finishing the day without

having managed a time! 'My original intention was to do some rallying but the Mk 2 Ford Zodiac was not suitable and a Raymond Mays conversion was required. This consisted of triple SU carburettors and a six branch 'banana' exhaust which gave the impression that I had the fastest car there but of course I was absolutely trounced into the weeds by everyone else at my first event which was the North Wales Rally. I finished up in the middle of the night with no dynamo, which put an end to everything. We used to finish at the boat house in Park Gate over in Heswall which tended to be a bit of a focal point as most members of the NW Centre came from the Wirral at that time. It did not matter what time in the morning we finished up at the boat house, be it two or three o'clock, there was always a hot pot supper or similar and the prizes and trophies were given out.

Various Mid-Cheshire autocrosses at Warburton followed on, but success always eluded the Zodiac hero. The car was, however, more successful in sprints and driving tests, and his first award ever for a LMC Driving Test was soon followed by a win at a Lancs and Cheshire MC (as it was then) Sprint. One of his favourite sprints was held on the promenade. The Zodiac finally ended its competing haunts on its first sprint at Oulton Park when Jeff rolled it at Lodge "I didn't realise it was as tight as it was." (Seem to have heard that one somewhere before). Being at that time a car salesman, he was able to have the car brought up to a saleable condition and for 1963 he bought his first Sprite. No less than 14 Spridgets were to pass through Jeff's hands. Being all safety conscious after his Oulton escapade, he ran it in its first sprint with the hood up!

'I never did anything significant in rallying, I won the odd trophy as a member of a team but then I decided I had to get a Sprite or something as rallying was not really for me. At that time The Centre ran a lot of sprints and so I took it up. New Brighton was the most popular, the promenade was closed down for the event. I quite enjoyed this and became quite good at it and much more proficient at preparing and maintaining the car. I remember talking to a chap about driving tactics at a sprint we used to do in Southport; we had gone behind the bushes for a pee and he turned out to be a grocer from Burnley by the name of Brian Redman! He was quite quick then in a Harry Ratcliffe Morris Minor before he really hit the big time. I was annoyed because he was quicker than I was in my frog eye Sprite.' Jeffrey was still at this time more interested in sprints "because they were fast" and having joined the Aintree Circuit Club, he even took the Midget out for a couple of races there as well as a speed trial at Oulton. Unfortunately racing didn't really seem to be his forte and his successes could be counted on the fingers of one foot! Having given up selling cars, Jeff was now in a sales job as a pharmaceutical rep. and the company Vauxhall Victor also came in handy for a few driving tests! The accent was still on sprints, however, and by 1965 success was coming a little more frequently with his second Midget picking up 8 awards during the season. 'Then autocross became more popular and I was in fact Secretary of the Meeting for the first event which the BARC organised which I think was at Burscough in either 1963 or 64. I was reprimanded for this as I was also competing and this was not considered to be a good idea. I was involved with the Players No6 Autocross Championship. One of the memorable things about that was the number of cigarettes which were given as part of the prizes.' 'I was in fact Mid Cheshire Car Club Autocross Champion in 1969. I just won it by about three points in a Mk2 Midget. It was quite a quick car, bored out to 1293 cc and all the usual bits that you did to a Midget; Konis and aluminium and fibreglass panels. I used another Midget as a tow car and for sprinting.' After a few excursions in a Mini Cooper during 1966, it was back to Spridgets for another couple of seasons until 1968 when he bought a Lotus 6 and trailer off Pearnard Swift for autocrosses: "I really thought I'd arrived now - this was it".

Unfortunately this 'wasn't it' either, and the car took only one FTD on the one occasion when its mechanics lasted out longer than practice. After one of the Lotus' many practice breakdowns Ken Bottomer offered him a drive in his Sprite, which Jeff accepted and

promptly beat him. This convinced him that it was time to revert to the faithful Spridget, and so he later bought the car off Ken.

1969 began with an 1100 cc Sprite before being replaced by a 948 Midget. For 1970, the engine was brought up to 1147cc and his 5 Mid Cheshire MRC autocross awards contributed to a total of 18 firsts during the season, as well as the Club's Marsh Autocross Trophy. Having now gained a reputation as a consistently quick driver, Jeff put a 1293cc engine into the red Midget for 1971, which was to prove his most successful season with a total of 22 awards, 19 of them firsts, and an impressive record of 7 out of 7 Mid Cheshire autocross wins giving him the 1971 Championship.

'After about 12 years of competing I gave it up in 1973 to concentrate on work and business and various other things. One of the funniest things I remember was at a hot pot supper at the Park Hotel Netherton when awards were being given out at the end of the year and a chap called Roy James (the Weasel) had done exceptionally well in a Brabham. He had come from nowhere and was winning all over the place and someone asked him what he did for a living; his reply was that he was a professional burglar! We all fell about laughing but of course he was the getaway driver for the Great Train Robbery!'

Peter Gorrie

BARC NW Hon. Secretary