

# 2013 MDA Mini-Holiday / Race Report



11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013



## The journey to Valkenswaard

Unusually, it had not been possible to get everyone on the same ferry this year, so people's experiences on the outward trip were rather different. For some it was uneventful, but rather stressful for Ian and Gordon in the old camper, who broke down on the M25 on the way to Dover, and then again at the top of the ferry ramp, causing rather a queue! Ian took advantage of the break on board and took a nap, then woke rather confused at having arrived in Dunkirk when he thought he was on a Calais crossing.

The Wakelings, O'Flanagans and Edwardes teams witnessed the queue caused by Ian but were on the next ferry. Their plan was for Richard or Jonathan to lead the way once off the ferry, but Alison (driving the Edwardes camper) was first off. Not knowing which route to take, drastic action was required, as the others were some way behind and her shouts for advice were to no avail, so Alison pulled up on the motorway and waited for the others to catch up.

The Crooks crew were on an earlier ferry and encountered little difficulty, arriving at Valkenswaard in time for tea at a restaurant and deciding to take advantage of an early arrival and have an extra night at the Dommel Valley campsite.

No such luxury for Ian, who broke down again close to Gent. Richard stopped to give assistance, but they were unable to fix it and (with the help of the Belgian police) the camper was towed to a compound, where Ian and Gordon spent the night in the salubrious surroundings of guard dogs, wrecked vehicles and a rather large Polish lorry driver.

Camp was set up on Friday morning at the Eurocircuit. Ian arrived just after midday and the rest of Friday and Saturday were spent getting the cars ready and supplies gathered for raceday on Sunday. Shelley took an early flight into Eindhoven, then a bus to Valkenswaard and was met by Richard with her bike for the final leg of her journey - amazing what lengths club members will go to to get to a race!



## Sunday (Race Day)

Practice went well. Mark O'Flanagan on his first meeting at the Eurocircuit, enjoyed a quick spin in practice near the chicane, but managed to avoid the sand trap.

Ian had an interesting excursion into the sand in heat 1 and had to be recovered - no major damage fortunately, but he brought plenty of sand back to the pits.



Sadly for George, his racing in Holland was cut short when his crankshaft broke in heat 2

Racing was very close in all 3 heats and the final, with a Wakeling 1-2

**Final result - 1<sup>st</sup> Richard Wakeling, 2<sup>nd</sup> Shelley Wakeling, 3<sup>rd</sup> Todd Crooks, 4<sup>th</sup> Ian Clark, 5<sup>th</sup> Mark O'Flanagan**

Rachel collected Shelley's trophy as she had a plane to catch!



## Monday to Wednesday

Dommel Valley campsite was home for the next 4 nights. Monday and Tuesday were spent mainly fixing cars and trying to locate sufficient parts to get George's mini back in race order.

Wednesday was a little more relaxing, with a bike ride to the monastery to sample the local brew, then off to the bar in the evening where we just had to wait until after midnight to wish Richard a Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday.



## Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July

**Richard's Birthday** and boy, were we determined to make the most of it! Mark O'Flanagan was up before 8am, organising a 'Happy Birthday' tune (woke up most campers on the site). Everyone was wearing monks' hairstyle wigs in recognition of Richard's allegedly similar hair-do.

Shelley, Mark Day and Wayne arrived having flown back in, carrying mini parts in their hand luggage and wearing the mandatory monks wigs.

Ian went the whole hog and had a complete monk's outfit with brown hooded robe and wig which he wore all day. A visit to Valkenswaard market in the morning, then karting in the afternoon kept everyone busy - fortunately Ian was wearing shorts under his robe, as he had to tuck it in for karting.

A celebratory BBQ in the evening, with lots of bunting and balloons and a superb selection of birthday cake with champagne, then cards and presents. Richard clearly enjoyed himself! A great day and (as someone said) 0 - 60 in 24 hours!



**Celebrations started early**



**Partying after a busy day - Richard had constant reminders that he had reached that 'magical age'**

## Friday

Onwards to Maasmechelen - an early start and another first for Minicross. Helen Crooks, Shelley and Sonia Wakeling cycled from the Valkenswaard campsite to Duivelsberg circuit (around 27 miles). An incongruous looking group, with Helen in her cycle gear, Shelley in a playsuit and Sonia looking very cool on her dutch bike. The hottest day so far and they managed it in about 3 hours.

The large campers were taken by the usual motorway route and rest of the Crooks clan took the more direct N69 as it had not been tried before, to see if it was suitable for the larger vehicles for future visits (it is).

Parking up became rather a nightmare, but when the trailers had been moved 4 times we declared enough was enough, they weren't moving again! The cyclists arrived once the turmoil was over and had a well-deserved rest.



**Cyclists - before and after**

Saturday was little cooler and cloudy first thing - a welcome respite after Friday. It was Clubmans racing for the Belgians and it was nice to have the opportunity to watch some racing. Free practice for Minicross and the British classes at the end of the days racing, ready for Sunday morning.

## Sunday - Race Day

What a hot one! Even for heat 1 the temperature was in the high 30's. Heat 1 was close, but everyone got round without incident, with Richard coming in first, closely followed by Ian, Todd, Shelley, George and Mark O.

Heat 2 Richard got an excellent start, moving straight to the front between Shelley and Todd. Shelley took the joker lap on lap 3 which put her and Todd side by side as they went up the hill on the loose section. The loose section was so deep on the outside it was inevitable that something would have to give. It was Shelley who lost out, spinning on the loose, resulting in a damaged wheel. Todd carried on, catching Ian and the two of them having quite a tussle on the last lap with Ian spinning off and Todd getting through to take third place. Heat 2 results were George first, Richard second, Todd third, Ian fourth and Mark O fifth.

Heat 3 Mid-afternoon and temperatures were at their highest (39.5 degrees) George got a good start from pole and led all the way. Shelley had a twitchy moment on lap 2 but managed to hold it. Todd had a coming together with the barrier on entry to the joker lap (same place as his incident last year!) and pulled up. By lap 3 George was well ahead of the field and stayed there. Final standings first George, second Ian, third Richard, fourth Shelley, fifth Mark O



## Final Race

Fortunately it didn't get any hotter between heat 3 and the final. Todd's car was fixed in time - Duncan had his work cut out looking after 2 cars in that heat and with only a little time between races.

The grid line-up was George on pole, followed by Richard, Ian, Todd, Shelley and Mark O Nice clean racing through laps 1 and 2, then Ian suddenly slowed coming down to the finish line (It seems he managed to turn off his engine!) . He did get going again, but not before Shelley and Mark managed to get past him. Shelley and Mark both completed their joker lap on lap 3, but still kept in front of Ian.

**Final result 1<sup>st</sup> George Edwardes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Richard Wakeling, 3<sup>rd</sup> Todd Crooks, 4<sup>th</sup> Shelley Wakeling, 5<sup>th</sup> Mark O'Flanagan, 6<sup>th</sup> Ian Clark**



**My goodness, it was hot! Cooling methods varied from cold towels to fans and finding shade**



## **British Rallycross Classes**

This year, the MDA visit to Duivelsburg circuit coincided with Round 5 of the British Championship and our very own Todd Crooks was racing his BMW Mini in the Super National class alongside Stuart Emery in his Peugeot 206, Gary Dixon in his Vauxhall Astra and Gary Simpson in the BMW E30.

The group was mixed in with the Belgian classes, so, rather than racing against each other on track, it was all down to times posted.

Todd put in an excellent performance and gained another 3<sup>rd</sup> place trophy to add to his third from Mallory Park.

The class was won by Stuart Emery, with 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Gary Dixon and a 4<sup>th</sup> for Gary Simpson.



## The Final Leg

As is customary, after the Belgian race, club members went into the village for an evening meal at our favourite restaurant, where we were made very welcome. A lovely meal, speeches by everyone and free-flowing beer and Jaegermeister, specially requested by George, although he was disappointed that there was no Red Bull to go with it!

Ian played host and amused us all with his anecdotal accounts of the week's proceedings.

Entertainment later in the evening was provided by George and the Jaeger's in the form of cuddling the lighting and singing Boney M songs!

Our departure from the restaurant was quite spectacular - Ian fell off his bike at the first hurdle (the path), but all managed to make it back to camp in one piece in the end.

**All in all, an excellent Minicross Holiday.**

**Our 23<sup>rd</sup> year and we are invited back again for 2014**



## George's Celebrations

### Some memorable quotes from the holiday

Alison "But I don't know where I'm going!"

"George slept while Mark, Wayne and Richard fixed his engine"

Shelley (when heat 1 was called) "who-hoo, let's get hot & sweaty!"

Richard "I had a bit of a 'bollocks' moment when I made a mistake and let George past"

Todd "there's a gap - I think it's about the size of a mini"

Mark Day "Is this the new Revivals Company Policy - drinking beer while building engines?"

