

Valkenswaard Euro Circuit - 20th July 2003

The ferry crossing to Holland went without trouble with all 9 cars on board. We arrived at Euro Circuit, the purpose built Rally Cross circuit, on the 18th July late afternoon where we established camp and started warming up for the Party of the year. The temperatures were getting hotter but nothing that a couple of beers and a BBQ could not take care of to celebrate Richard's Wakelings 50th Birthday. I would dread to think what Richard would have been like if he was racing on the Saturday, it was a good job he never had a couple more beers.

Saturday was spent for most of us recovering, Matt led a few of the guys to the heart of Holland in Amsterdam, while the rest of us had more of a relaxing afternoon in the scorching heat. I don't think Richard came round to later afternoon despite being up at the crack of dawn. Saturday evening was a bit more civilised with a couple of beers and once again another BBQ.

Race day the temperature dropped slightly with a cool breeze. All cars made it through scrutineering prior to having a drivers briefing in Dutch, which was later translated. The practicing/training followed a fleet of 15 Citroen 2CV's. The grid position were all sorted all drivers were back awaiting the first practice.

The first time heat ended with Ralph B coming in first closely behind Richard W. Nigel B was seem determined to go in the sand but only managed to get two wheels in on the final lap, this was prior to him driving into the back of Mark Collard who later suffered from a broken sticking accelerator cable. Danny never finished due to his wipers packing in and too much dirt on his screen.

The second heat did not go as well for Ralph who came in 5th position, with more luck for his son Danny who had fuel pump problems. Nigel eventually left the circuit and landed in the sand leaving 4th position behind. Richard was on the ball and look in a much better state than he did 24hrs later and 1 year older.

The final heat saw a bit more action with some touching bumpers and wing mirrors coming down the first straight. Ralph then spun off and hit the grass bank on his first lap putting him out for the rest of the day. Richard then decided to follow suit and forgot to turn for the hairpin (old age!!) and broke drive shaft and bending his steering rack loosing 3rd position to Craig Cox. Matt was the winner of the final heat to give him a final grid position of Pole. Sean Smith seemed to wake up or was not as concerned about Matts second car being damaged and came in second place with a well deserved third for Craig Cox in the college built car.

The final grid was put together but was nearly not complete when Craig Cox fuel line broke at the paddock gate, but with a quick change of pipe from the BBQ it saw him line up with all the other drivers. Matt was in Pole next to Craig and Richard. The red light at the Euro Circuit certain does not come on for long and it seemed to catch Matt having 40 winks on the start line as Mark Collard dodged round him. Matt later pulled off. Richard took the lead the start and took the chequered flag to finish off his special 50th Birthday weekend. Craig and Sean were pushing hard but never managed to get the better of the Birthday boy. Craig took a good second closely behind Sean seemed much more confident in Matt Roaches second car. Trevor S 4th, Mark Collard 5th, Nigel Blanks 6th, Danny Budd 7th, Matt Roach 8th and Ralph 9th.

There was one more night left in Valkenswaard where went into town for a Chinese banquet and ate as much as we could. This was then followed by the fun fair. The racing seemed a distance memory as we rammed into each other on the dodgems.

Mark Griffin



The Tailor-Made Specialists

We are offering FREE travel insurance to all MDA members should you book with us.

If you would like a brochure or more info see Jo Lawson, car 428 or mail her at jolawson74@hotmail.com.

**Minicross Torque is kindly printed by Redfern Printing.
Contact Adam Lashbrook on 0208 467 9090**

WAKELINGS WAFFLES !!!

Well its time to drag out the ol' pen again, season is well and truly under way and Yorky and T-Rev Stretch are doing the business, in the Rally cross and Allrounders championship, and Master Grant Rees is giving the juniors something to well and truly aim at, well they might as well shoot at him cos they can't catch himyet!!!! there is no doubt he is a cracking driver, but he has stole a march on several of the oppo's cos he has been in the Mini's longer. Pity some of the other Dads don't accept this and let their lads get on with the job of catching him...cos they will. I will put money on the fact that Grant wants this to happen.

Yorky has had a good run and basically he will have to mess up his start before he's going to give anyone else a chance, his form is so good that he puts himself on the front row and is gone, once he has a clear track he's running a second a lap faster, and as smooth as a Steve's bum!!!! Talking of which..... did you see the size of that, cor blimey it fair put the women in trauma for a week..

Plenty of action in the races, loads to talk about I've been bringing Shelley's car up to spec, but for the life of me I cannot get it away, it is amazing that the cars can be so different, in its favour though is that it handles beautifully, and is totally forgiving..The one significant difference is the front sub frame, the car has the early type, but whether that has any effect I don't know. The poor starts though definitely helped create the big crash at the tart in Anglesy cos I was dropping back into the pack going into the first corner and it just put too many cars in the same place at one time.

Driving standards have caused plenty of complaint , but the fact is we all have faults , and in our racing contact is going to happen and you then have to make the best of it . OR DO YOU? fact is with this accident was that some serious damage was done and the quick analysis was that it was a racing accident...so we all walk away and wait for it to happen again...cos nothing has been worked out... we have seen several incidents this year with several competitors complaining about others and then counter complaints... and from my where I sit or stand this just degenerates into a level of dissatisfaction for all parties .In our level (club) of racing we have all ages, all experiences, all temperaments (this is good cos we see real life...rather than the clones of the BTCC and F1) but if we are to make the best of our racing then we have got to analyse what happens in any incident, not to apportion blame but to improve all our abilities.

I have given significant thought to the Anglesey crash and this is what happened...I knew a good start was unlikely, so my strategy was to get to the inside and try and defend what ever position I was left with.. looking back this was wrong. I was starting from the front on the outside..I got across 1 lane but not the 2 I needed ,this left the gap on the inside and on the outside, what happened after that was obvious...Matt R filled the gap on the inside and Dan B committed to a run round the outside (where I should have tried)..we met at the second apex by the Marshall point and at that point the track naturally narrows. and 3 into 2 won't go, not one of us could back off and when the touch occurred mayhem followed. So although it was a racing incident , the cause was set before the off. So having worked that out I will say that it was unfortunate, but having been racing a long while I am not unduly worried now I am reasonably clear what happened, there are other factors, that can be thought about, and they are that both Mat and Dan could have had different start strategies, but do you seriously consider that either of these young guns are going to hit that first turn anything other than totally committed. I don't think so..first corner action is about commitment and when circumstances conspire big accidents are going to happen.

The final and an important point here is, that it has taken time to work this all out, these thoughts were not apparent after the incident, and had we , or the CoC tried to sort this out then we would all have been too highly pumped to get a rational thought, and in that circumstance a wrong conclusion may have been reached. So what to do....

TRY THIS FOR SIZE. - RACE INCIDENT REVIEW.

On date _____ you _____ were involved in a significant race incident with driver _____ . You are required to attend a review of the above at _____ (next meeting), where we will discuss what happened. This is not a disciplinary hearing simply a means of discussing the above with cool heads and an aim of improving our racing experience.

The review will take place at the race office, hopefully with the CoC in attendance and will be Chaired by _____.

Thank you for your consideration.

Richard Wakeling