



THE CLEAR ROUND



Bryan Walker 2019 Gold Star Champion



The 2020 Sporting Trials season will be one that lives long in the memory. In years to come I'm sure it will be one of those, 'do you remember when' seasons. Despite all the challenges we have faced, thankfully we can say that we did manage to get a season done, although at this stage, the fate of the Gold and Silver Star still looks to be in the balance, with 'new strains' and 'tier 4's' spreading across the country. The events that have run have been very enjoyable with a variety of challenges faced over the course of year. COVID19 has clearly defined the shape of the year but if we cast our minds back to the start of the year the weather was also causing havoc. The Gold Star was marginal in the run up (although ended up as a super event) and we lost two of our events at the start of the year to the storms that continued to sweep across the country.

Moving through to the second half of the season, a very dry end of the summer threw up its own challenges for our clerks, as did of course adapting to the task of running an event with COVID protocols and competitor safety being of paramount importance. The efforts our clubs have gone to should not be under estimated. In a year where we have all been confined to our houses for long stretches, the opportunity to get out and participate in our sport I'm sure has brought a much-needed relief to many, and we should thank the various motor clubs' volunteers and officials who have put in such a great effort to facilitate this.

I'd like to spend some time looking at this year's championships. We have been treated to one of the closest MSUK season that perhaps we have ever had, so for all those that haven't followed things this year or have had to spend time away from the hills, hopefully you will enjoy this recount of the season. We have had five different winners over the course of the short season and a championship battle and finale that Formula 1 could only dream of. For much of the year the battle for the title was a three-way scrap between Richard Sharp, Josh Veale and Ian Veale with the advantage swaying back and forth as we moved across the events. The first half of the season consisted of just the 4 events with Josh taking two wins to Ian and Richards one a piece. As COVID put the brakes on championship rounds, Josh held the advantage on 56 points, Ian was chasing hard on 55 and Richard was a little further back on 48, which was skewed by an off-colour performance at the Stone Trough. However,

with podium finishes in the other three events this was almost certainly not going to be a 'counter' so Richard was still firmly in the hunt.

After the long summer break, the championship moved north for the Robin Jager which, with Ian Veale missing the event, provided an opportunity for Josh and Richard to gain significant points on their rival. Both had top 5 finishes with Mike Salton taking the overall prize and after the next event, the Pete Fear Trial, which Andy Wilks won to become the 5th different winner of the season, the balance of power had shifted again. Josh's consistency meant he was still at the top of the leader board, now having accrued 78 points, but Richard was now his nearest challenger after starting the 2nd half of the season with a 4th and 2nd, now with 74 points and Ian was somewhat adrift after his missed event on 65.

It was at this stage of the season that Ian began making his charge for the title. Back to back to wins at the Mercian and Tulleys trial for Ian hauled him to the top of the table with all drivers now dropping off their worst scores. As the season finale approached, the championship fight was now largely a two-way fight with Ian in the driving seat and Josh now in the position of the nearest challenger. The maths as ever was complicated but in simple terms Josh had to win the event to stand any chance of overhauling his dad and Ian had to finish in the top two to guarantee himself the title. Richard still had an outside shout but again needed to win the event with Ian and Josh not adding anything to their scores.

The Gloucester provided us with an event befitting of a finale with all driving skills needed on the day and in deteriorating conditions Josh produced a superb performance, doing everything he needed to do on the day and taking the event win. However, Ian also with the bit between his teeth managed to sneak himself into 2nd position and took the overall MSUK championship.

When the final totals were added up it became clear just how tight things were. Both Ian and Josh were tied on points with both ending up with three wins, two seconds and a third position to leave everything tied. The final countback then goes back to events that were initially dropped to find the best 6, which saw Ian sneak the win by virtue of having a further second to Josh's third.

Congratulations to all three on a terrific season and providing us with an exciting championship battle.

It's also been great this year to see that the live axle MSUK championship was just as hotly contested with Darren Underwood producing an excellent performance at the Gloucester Trial to take the Live Axle MSUK championship also on a tie break from Bob Packham. This championship has also swung back and forth over the course of the year and it's been great to see such an exciting scrap for this title too. With the likes of George and Stephen Barnes doing a number of events in their live axle Sherpas's, John Firth and Ian Blease-Dudley two promising newcomers in live axle cars, Sam Beare continuing to go from strength to strength, and with Bob no doubt keen to go one better next year, expect this category to become even more competitive and exciting in 2021.

Looking forward to 2021 here's hoping for our championships being just as competitive, having a fuller calendar, more entries and of course saying a happy goodbye to tiers 1, 2, 3 and 4.

To summarise the year that has been 2020 I'd like to look ahead to 2021!

We have had some highlights, Richard and Joe Sharp travelled the length of the UK, amazingly competing in all 10 events that ran, to win the Independent Red points championship.

Richard has worked tirelessly for the last 3 years, he's been instrumental in successfully stopping the finger pointing over our diffs, the unseen heart of a trials car. Richard not only developed and built the test rig that has been adopted by the sport, but he has also over the last two years travelled the country with it, testing cars with accuracy and humour. Richard, from everyone involved in Sporting Trials, thank you. I hope now that there will be a few glasses raised to you over the holidays.

The blue live class was a closer fight between Mike Readings and Pat Henson, they both competed in three events, just three points separated them, as Pat took the win.

The red live class would have shaped up to be an excellent battle, Mike Salton won the class in the first three trials of the year in his Concord, before switching to his new independent car. Bob Packham cleared up the points and won by a very convincing majority.

Darren Underwood has won the Blue Live class, I think it's now apt to say that Darren has embraced the sport, not only in competition but also in his pursuit of excellence in preparing sporting trials cars for others. I've heard countless times, that someone's car is with Darren!

The rookie class has been dominated by one man, John Firth. John has quickly been embraced by the trialling community, you'd think with his relaxed manner, wry humour, driving ability and car control he'd been competing for years, rather than just 18 months. For those in the Blue class, I'm sorry, John joins your ranks, and I tip him to win the class in 2021.

My own Sherpa Indy, has spent the last 18 months back and forwards to a workshop on a little farm Nr Maidstone, Ian Wright and I decided in the middle of 2019, to take my Sherpa Indy and create a car, that was competitive, fun to drive, comfortable and reliable! The

latter may not have always worked out, and I'm sure I'll discover some more gremlins, but the car is now showing lots of promise, the driver just needs to concentrate!

With the stop and start year, lockdowns, masks, Tiers and travel restrictions, the Gold Star of 2019 seems an age ago, as we go to print on this clear round, the Gold / Silver star is still in the diary for the 23rd Jan. A decision will be made by the end of the first week of January whether it can go ahead or not, if it is cancelled then the current plan is not to run it at a later date but look ahead to the 2021 season.

The committee has worked brilliantly this year, it's diverse and now has representation from all corners of Sporting Trials. The face to face meetings at Drayton Manor were switched in the spring to Zoom calls, which we've now become masters of. I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved, for their humour and for your time. I'd also like to say a huge thank you to Carole Readings for keeping the passengers Render Trophy Scores up to date. Without the normal awards dinner this year to present the trophy to winner, I'd like to extend a congratulations to Sue Underwood who takes home that title this year.

The season beyond Tier 4 Stay at Home rules, looks promising, we have an invigorated calendar with events more evenly spaced. We have gained a BTRDA round at the end of October in Northern Ireland, we have an event scheduled in Kent for the first time in many years, and the usual favourites are still firmly in the calendar. These include my favourite, The MAC or The Shelsey Walsh as it has become known, it's one of our best chances to promote the sport, spectators and photographers abound and the atmosphere from a cheering crowd definitely adds a dimension, the event moves to a slightly later date in April, it'll be great fun!

On promotion, we have enlisted the help of a production company, to capture video and photography that can be used by the committee to publicise the sport. We had a BBC news crew lined up to come to the cancelled Plum Pudding, but I'm promised that they will make an appearance later in the year. Our aim is to up the profile of the sport through social media, Instagram, Facebook, have short videos available to promote the events and highlight some of the characters involved in the sport.

The first part of the 2021 season certainly looks uncertain, there is though a drive by many to get back out on the hills, which I'm sure we'll all do if we can and when we're allowed.

Have a Happy New Year and be confident that there's normally someone worse off than ourselves, we're either in Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 4 or Wales!

Committee

Report

Committees never make the right decisions, ask anyone in the paddock, why have they done that, that's not fair, what happens if that occurs and that's alright for the top guys, but they haven't thought about us at club level. Stuart Beare, Chairman of the Trials Committee, would argue that his Committee has thought about as many angles as they can. Stuart has put together a group of people from all sections of the sport and they do not hold back when it comes to fighting their corner.

This year was going to be the first full year of competition with cars all conforming to a level playing field with regard to car specification (I thought I won't say the word diffs) we had a good programme of events and nearly fifty cars in the Championship. We all know what happened and things changed, some disciplines cancelled their Championships immediately, but we took a Committee decision to carry on. Why? Some wanted to cancel, others thought the opposite, in the end we realised the decision was not ours to make. Clubs had to ask for permits to hold their events if they decided to run them, MSUK only allowed drivers to enter events under strict guidelines and were allowing their Championship to continue. Competitors under the tier system were told whether they could travel or not and whether they should isolate. As a Committee we decided to let the Championship run without putting any more restrictions on anyone.

Why have the Gold Star and why are you holding it in the Midlands again? It should be cancelled.... I can't come.... Isolating.... What about the Irish?..... Can I stay in a hotel?.... What about a dinner and presentation? Easy cancel it, or perhaps not, what about the weather in January, will we be in lockdown again, can we get on and off the site. Stuart and the committee took the following decisions. We did not need to decide whether to run or not as the MSUK would only grant a permit to compete if legislation allowed them to do so and the organisers had taken account of all safety concerns. If we hold it in the Midlands the vast majority of drivers will be able to travel and return in one day without overnight accommodation. We took the decision not to put on a dinner as social distancing would be infringed, pick a site that is easy to get on and, off irrespective of weather conditions, give free entry into the Gold Star to all BTRDA members as payback for their membership during this awful year. Irish members are now entering the Gold Star in their own right as BTRDA members. They have decided to come to the Gold Star and have made accommodation

arrangements that they feel are safe. Presentation of the Gold and Silver Star will be held in the paddock immediately after the competition. Trophies for other sections of the Gold Star will be kept to the minimum and may be presented later in the year although a decision has not yet been made.

Calendar of events has been changed in 2021 (let's hope we can do them all), drivers said why have five events in one month and two in the next, it makes no sense it should be spread out more. Yes, we know but how do we get there? George Watson as Club Liaison has done a great job in trying to satisfy all parties involved, we found that the reason clubs used the same dates each year was due to outside pressures such as other club events, using club members on other club events and pressure from land owners with regard to livestock and cultivation. George made a good first effort as you will see from the calendar, but this is an ongoing project.

As a Committee we will never be able to satisfy everyone on all issues but Stuart and the members of the Committee who between them cover Post Historic, Competing Club Officials, Senior Citizens, Young Whippersnappers, PR and IT professionals, Drivers in all Classes and without question everyone holds the desire to make the sport better for all Clubs and Drivers in the BTRDA Championship. Many years ago, Zoom was a lolly given as a treat, now I have to construct my background on the computer to appear as though I read acceptable material. Others have put on the flowered shirt and palm tree background but most just collapse on the sofa and grunt occasionally, but it works and keeps us all in touch. See you all on the hills in 2021.

Peter Fensom

It has certainly been one of the oddest years when it comes to Sporting Trials, let's hope as we come to the end of 2020 we can look to a better year in 2021 as the vaccine's start to roll out, hopefully this means we can start to see a bit of a return to normality with events. I expect some of the earlier events in the year may be affected but hopefully, as we head into Spring, we will start to see an improvement.

From a Sporting Trials point of view the last Motorsport UK meeting was fairly quiet, the issue surrounding diffs is now taking less prominence, however it was interesting that a number of the other trial's disciplines were enquiring how the test rig could be modified to suit their cars. It has been agreed that for the foreseeable future the limit will remain at 15kg and we believe that there is no evidence to suggest that this needs to change. Hopefully this will bring some stability to the sport allowing people to get back to enjoying the sport and coming out to events. The ideal solution going forward is to try to make it easier and quicker to test cars; Richard has done a number of comparisons tests between the lever arms (arms on a car while on a set of rollers) and his dynamic tester and is pleased with the similarities. This will help in making testing more accessible and save people from having to travel to Richard or Richard traveling round the country; this would mean we can have several sets of the lever arm kits (arms and rollers) to be able to test cars locally or on site (by an appointed official), who can then red seal a car if they are a set margin away from the 15kg limit (for example under 12kg) but if they were over the set margin they would need to present the car to the dynamic tester. This is only an idea that's been discussed to try and break down the barriers for people wanting to get the test done at any point without having to travel miles, but ultimately the dynamic tester is the approved main test at this stage.

We also discussed about a Junior / turnkey / battery powered trials car formula. A topic which recently to a certain degree came up on one of the social media pages and there was a lot of interesting comments/thoughts on this topic. Juniors in theory is a great idea, who would not want to encourage new and young people into the sport, however, if you look round the paddock there are very few "younger" people trialing and the ones that are tend to be from second or third generations that have been bought up around it. The problem for the younger generations is the number of barriers into the sport; towing licence, storing a

car, young family, the sheer number of other things that now consume your disposable income makes it hard to target this age range. Realistically, we want to target the mid to older age range who potentially have a bit more disposable income, potentially do not have the same issues with towing licenses, further up the property ladder so more likely to have space to store a car, kids maybe slightly older so able to come along and maybe even passenger etc, we need to focus on not only bringing new people out and into the sport, but also keeping in contact and supporting the people who already have cars that maybe just need a bit of a nudge and encouragement to come back out.

The turn key car idea centres around having a car designed that has set parameters; maybe a fixed readily available engine, a certain back axle / gearbox / diff and a number of other set parameters to make the car to a similar competition standard without having to have such detailed knowledge on how to set up or modify the car. However, to make this option accessible to potential competitors and the cars not extortionate in price, you would need to make a sensible size batch of cars to keep the cost down.

The final point on cars as already mentioned above were electric cars. As it stands these are currently prohibited for competition in Sporting Trials by Motorsport UK but with the general push within society to move to electric vehicles on the road, it's something which Motorsport UK is looking at in more detail. For most petrol heads it's easy to go down the scrap yard and buy an old petrol engine to modify and fit in a trials car, then away we go. However, as battery cars are becoming more and more common how long will it be until we can go down the scrap yard to pick up some old batteries and electric motors to fit them in a trials car? This will be an interesting topic and certainly something that we will hear increasingly more about in the future, how and when it will come to sporting trials I am not sure. Certainly, will be interesting to see if any of our land owners are keen to install some fast chargers in the paddocks for the 30 min lunch break....

Our next meeting is in February, so if anyone has any ideas or a vision for what could be used in a turnkey car we welcome your suggestions, maybe ideas on what engine should be used, what tyre size, should it be gas/petrol/electric? Feel free to contact any of us on the committee to talk through your ideas.

It has been a bumpy year for everyone with the pandemic, hopefully everyone is keeping safe and managed to make the most of a very unusual Festive period. We very much hope to see you on the hills in 2021 when it is safe to do so. As a sport we need to pull together, support the clubs, encourage newcomers to the sport and most importantly have fun, do not forget we do this for enjoyment and to see our fellow competitors/friends!

If you have any thought on the above feel free to speak to Richard, Lindsay, Duncan and Josh.

Around the Clubs

Updates



Historic Sporting Trials 2020

What a rotten year 2020 has been for historic sporting trials. All we have managed was the Sywell Historic Sporting Trial organised by the Veale family in February. Even that was touch and go with Storm Cira threatening to destroy the event. In the end it was a great day out as we entertained the CAR SOS film crew and gained some useful publicity.

After that Covid-19 finished us. Every trial we planned either came in a lock down period, the landowners did not want us on their land during the pandemic or, as in the case of the Monty Peters Trial, the area was placed in the highest tier at the last moment.

It is better to write off 2020 from the trials point of view and concentrate on the positives that occurred during the year. We would have had our first truly northern trial organised by Mark Milne and his friends in the NPTCC at the Gale Hall site and our first Heritage Trial.

The Heritage Trial is for early post war trials cars NOT fitted with fiddle brakes such as the Dellow. These cars are not competitive in our Historic class against Cannons and as the modern classic trials are generally too rough for 60/70-year-old fairly fragile machinery it was felt they should have their own trial. The response was amazing. If the first Inaugural Heritage Trial could have taken place in June 2020, we would have had at least 42 cars (not double entered) at the event. Only 8 of the of drivers currently compete in historic sporting trials so we had a very encouraging 30+ new drivers. We are still looking for the early cars – please contact Martyn Halliday on 07739 464170 or martyn_halliday@msn.com

STCC Update

2020 has undoubtedly been a difficult and frustrating year and in the continuing global pandemic, motorsport has suffered like many other activities. Our Championship season is winter based and runs from October to April and usually involves about 14 rounds (where 3 can be dropped).



Our 2019/20 championship was interrupted by the National lockdown in March/April resulting in the last two trials being cancelled. It had no bearing on Class A as Trevor Aston and son Andrew had already tied up the Championship. Andrew Morrison and son Oliver were declared Class B Champions although Geoff McKay would have fancied challenging him if the remaining trials had gone ahead!

Our usual early September club meeting was a Zoom affair this year and 16 members participated.

The consensus was that the club should go ahead and organise a calendar and championship even though a few indicated that they were not prepared to participate. The Chairman outlined the rules that had to be adhered to in order to comply with National, Local and Motorsport UK regulations. Essentially, virtual sign-on, health declarations, temperature recordings, face coverings on site, social distancing where possible, competitors recording their own scores as verified by a marshal. The provisional calendar of 14 trials included our now traditional 2-day Prizegiving/English Visitor event at Halloween. It soon became obvious that this was not feasible and the Sunday trial at Tweeds was dropped from the calendar.

STCC only runs 2 Championship classes with no distinction between Independent Rear Suspension (IRS) and Live Axle (LA). Class A is considered as the 'experts' class and Class B a combined semi-expert and novice. Class B is permitted to run 1psi lower tyre pressure than Class A.

The season opener at Stewart's Farm on 26 September was attended by 8 competitors – 4 class A and 4 Class B. Worthy of note was the fact that Chairman David Webster with wife Suzie in the passenger seat completed a full house of zeros. (possibly only the 2nd time this has been done here) Runner-up was Class B Geoff McKay and daughter Katherine on 17 with reigning champion Trevor Aston and son Andrew back on 29. Quite a family affair this trialling!

Class A	Winner	D Webster / S Webster	0
	Runner-up	T Aston / A Aston	29
Class B	Winner	G McKay / K Gilchrist	17
	Runner-up	D Cross / B McCrea	65

Next up was Lennox's mountain on 10 October where 10 drivers took part. They say that on a good day you can see all six counties from the site and thankfully this was a good day. Once again David Webster demonstrated that he has really 'got to grips' with the ex-Simon Gracey Crossle but on this occasion it was a much tighter affair. On a low scoring day, only 1 point separated the Webster family from the Aston family with Harry Barr and passenger David Cross a further 2 points behind. In B, Peter Frost and passenger Michael Henderson had their first class win for some time from Alastair Morrison and son Oliver.

Class A	Winner	D Webster / S Webster	5
	Runner-up	T Aston / A Aston	6
Class B	Winner	P Frost / M Henderson	12
	Runner-up	D Cross / B McCrea	28

Sadly, the Covid 19 lockdown rules introduced in NI meant the cancellation of the next 4 scheduled events.

We resumed on 19 December at Rory's Wood – the home of The Crossle Car Company. This is the traditional post-Christmas event but fortuitously was changed to pre-Christmas this year as it turns out that NI is back in lockdown from Boxing Day!

Again 10 competitors took part in what is always a challenging day for man and machine. This is a mixture of 'point and squirt' around trees, 'pure trickling' on dead ferns, 'trickling/blasting' on wet slippery grass and 'pure blasting' up deep ruts.

Once again David Webster demonstrated that he seems to have mastered all aspects of the Crossle's potential and took a convincing win with Susie again in the hot seat. Geoff McKay and Katherine were runner-up with 8 points adrift but also showed how much he has stepped up since acquiring the ex George Burton Crossle. Surely Class A next year Geoff! Harry Barr, following a poor first round, found himself 21 points further back. Special mention of David Cross who has only been driving for a year and matched Harry's score on the day!

Sadly Michael McBratney's day ended prematurely when he ran out of gas - his first day out in the newly acquired Geoff Pickup Special which had been sitting idle for a few years. Martin Chapman also had an abrupt end when some part of the transmission cried 'enough'.

Class A	Winner	D Webster / S Webster	40
	Runner-up	H Barr / D Cross	69
Class B	Winner	G McKay / K Gilchrist	48
	Runner-up	D Cross / H Barr	69

So, we are back in a lockdown situation again, so it seems there will be no more events here until at least February

Best Wishes to all for a happy, healthy and successful 2021

Harry Barr (Press Officer)



(Ed. Nice piece from Graham Vince below who has returned to the sport as an official recently)

Whilst trawling the internet, I found that 750 Sporting Trials announced their dates for 2020- 2021 dates.

As I used to marshal these events back in 2011-2015. I contacted the organiser and asked if I could attend the training day. Kevin said it was for drivers and new teams, but more than welcome to attend as it would refresh the regulations and new rules for the events for myself.

750MC Training Day

Sunday 6th September 2020, travel to a farm (owned by a top national driver) near East Grinstead, West Sussex for a 9:30am start. Upon my arrival the drivers had parked in a field on the edge of wood on an incline, perfect for new drivers.

There are 3 classes within an event, 1- Experts, 2-Semi-Experts, 3-Novices.

The following points were covered under the training day.

1. The idea is to clear the hill, regardless about the time taken.
2. There are 3 brakes on the car, pedal for front brakes and independent fiddle brakes for the rear wheels.
3. Electrical cut off switch should be at the rear of the car on the offside.
4. The battery should be bolted down within the box behind the seats.
5. A fire extinguisher can be fitted within the spare wheel.
6. Helmets are not compulsory but its good practice to use a cycle helmet or a canoeing helmet.
7. Before the start of an event, the tyre pressure will be advised and may be altered later in the day.
8. When it is dry usually 10 PSI and for the wet it can be as low as 3-4 PSI.
9. There are correct methods for the co-driver to lean out, but they must keep part of the body within the confines of the seat.
10. Blue poles on the right with gate number and yellow poles on the left.
11. Drivers should drive to the hill and get ready at the start gate, after the marshal gives you the go ahead the drive the hill as the gates are laid out. 12 down to 1

Scoring Examples

(if you are going through gate 9).

1. If you get one of your front axle hubs pass the line between the poles that denote the 9 gate, then you score the 8 at least.
2. If the 9 gate is hit by the car or personnel, then you score a 9.
3. If you roll back going up a hill, then you have to stop at that point and score the point where you got to.
4. If you stop you have 3 seconds to continue forward motion. If you don't regain forward momentum you score the number that you have just gone through.
5. The aim is to get 0 on your score card.
6. At the end of the day, you help the marshal clear up the poles and bring the poles back to the paddock.

They set up a test run for all groups, the novices (4 cars), of which 2 were new to the sport. In normal circumstance an expert would jump in the car to show the driver the correct method to clear the section and sit in the passenger seat to offer instruction. However, due to Covid 19 regulations this ran a little differently with one of the experts driving his car on the hill to show them.

As a marshal, you are the judge of fact.

750 Trial, 20th September 2020 at Gabriels Wharf, Allington, Kent

The day was dry, and 10 PSI was set as the rear tyre pressures.

There were 14 cars running, split into 3 groups, each group had the 3 class within the group.

There were 6 hills being contested and run 3 times. After each round of hills, the hill can be altered physically, or tyre pressures can be changed to give a new challenge or change the grip levels, depending on the results from the previous run.

It was good to watch the novices grow in confidence.

750 and BTRDA UK championship. Tulley's Farm East Grinstead. 1st November 2020.

This was only going to be a 750 meeting, but the BTRDA group had their event venue cancelled due to COVID 19 reasons.

The day was overcast after some heavy rain in previous week, so tyre pressure was low at 3 PSI.

There were around 32 cars split into 8 groups mixing of the all the classes and championships. There were 8 hills run 3 times.

What a difference the top drivers made to the event, they made it look easy. Even after altering the hills to try and make them score a few more points, but this did not happen, they were too good for the hills.

Opinionated

Driving Tips

On the Fiddle

There are many reasons why a trials car ceases forward motion but, in my opinion, the most common cause is “the wrong wheel” spinning. It is endemic in the novice classes, common with the intermediate driver and not uncommon by those at the top of the tree; I’m regularly guilty myself.

Let me explain what I mean by “the wrong wheel” spinning. Unless a car is going “straight up” a hill, the centre of gravity (COG) will always be to one side or the other of the centre line of the car. The consequence of this is that the uppermost wheel will become light and, providing the diff is free, will spin; forward motion will cease. The way to prevent this in a trials car is to apply a brake to that “light” wheel and force the lower laden wheel to do the work. The trick is knowing how much brake to apply; too much and you are actually providing a resistance to forward motion. On a severe camber you may need to apply quite a bit of brake because the further the COG moves off the centre line the lighter the upper wheel becomes and the more readily the wheel will spin, but if you really hang on to it you can affect a version of a hand brake turn and the car is suddenly facing in the wrong direction.

This is where an agile passenger can be an advantage because by leaning up the slope they bring the COG back towards the centre line and reduce the amount of brake that needs to be applied. For this reason, it is also a good idea to have the car fairly well balanced, left to right, so if your passenger is much lighter than you, for example, it may be worth adding some weight to that side of the car to even it up.

A typical section will have multiple cambers, which often change very quickly from one side to another and it is vital that the lower, laden, wheel is always driving. Throw in the odd tight turn, when you need the inside brake to assist with that turn, and you can see why it is so important to concentrate the whole time on applying the correct brake.

Most trials drivers will probably admit that, on a trickling trial, they don’t actually like straight climbs because you have no idea which wheel is doing the driving, and therefore

can't intervene. In such circumstances it is paramount that you don't get wheel spin whether you are traveling very slowly or moving with some momentum.

Another tricky scenario is where a tight turn happens to be on a camber that rises away from you. While one naturally wants to pull

the inside brake for the corner, it is the outside wheel which is becoming light as the weight transfers inwards. In such circumstances one needs to use the slope to assist the turn and apply a gentle load on the outside (higher wheel) to assist forward motion; not easy and most unnatural.

And finally timing the transition from one brake to the other as the camber changes is key; the point the COG flips over the centre line, is particularly difficult to master.

I would estimate that I am applying one brake or another for probably 90% of the time throughout a typical section in an attempt to keep the correct wheel driving. I also make sure that when I walk a section I pay particular attention to the cambers and if possible watch as many competitors in front of me to see where they might get caught out.

Next time you see someone stop, take a look at which wheel on their car is spinning; I'll bet it's the upper wheel.

Ed: If anyone else would like to impart their wisdom to these pages please send through anything and everything. Also, if you are reading this and want advise on an element of trials, be that technical/mechanical car development or further driving advice please do let us know. I'm sure we can dip into the Clear Round tech and driving support team to provide the relevant information for these pages.