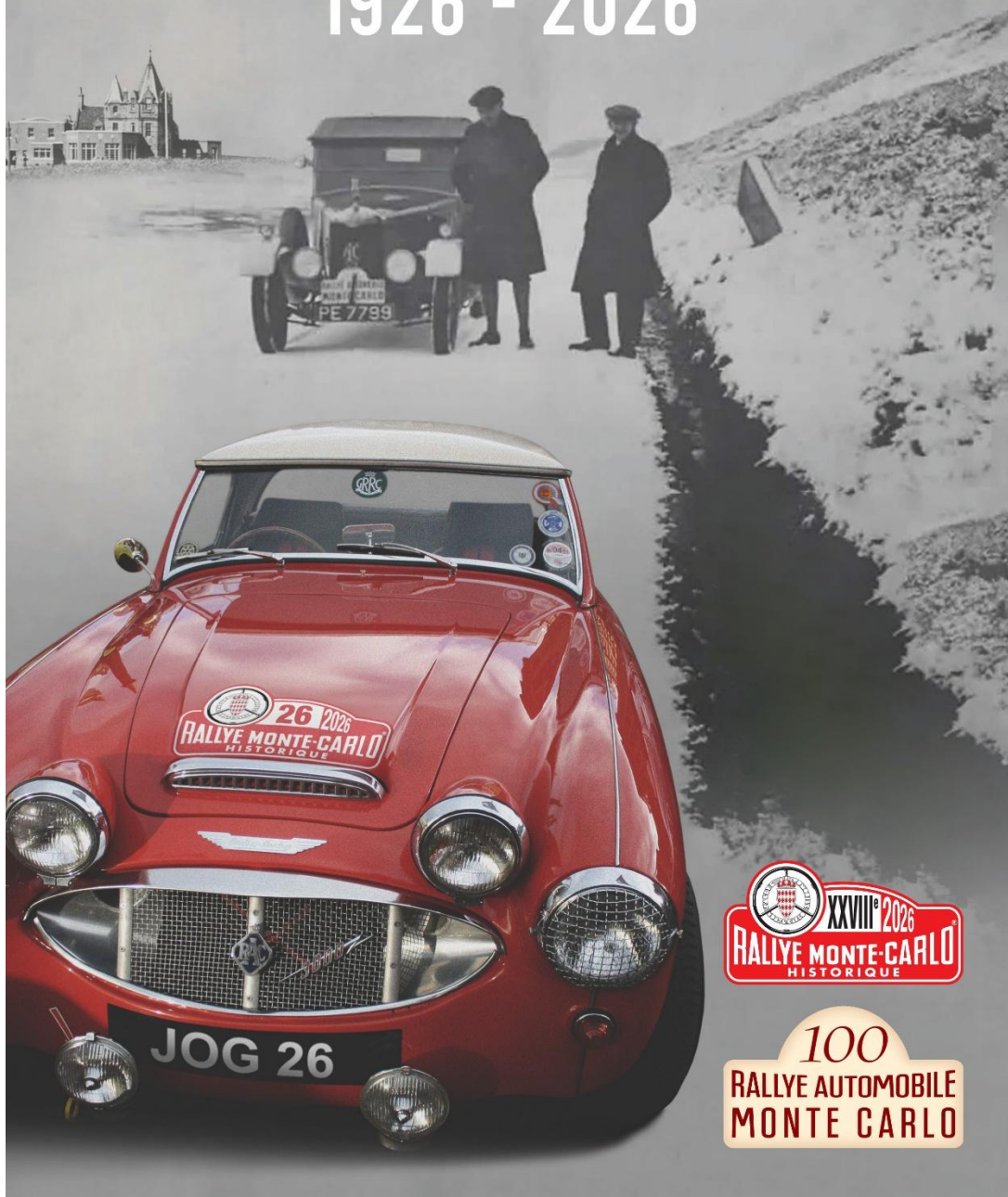


Classic

UPDATES & MONTE NEWS

JOHN O GROATS

1926 - 2026



WELCOME

The front cover of this month's Classic Updates and Monte News is a sneak peek of the Monte Poster for the 2026 John O'Groats Start. Text and logos have still to be added. Set in the snowy conditions of the time, the poster shows the hotel at John O'Groats as it was in 1926. The vintage car, an AC, is the one in which the Honourable Victor Bruce won the 1926 Rallye starting from John O'Groats. The man standing nearest to the car is Victor Bruce. The red car is a rallye prepared Austin Healey 3000 which belonged to Graeme Henderson and was Car 0 when the Rallye returned to Scotland in 2011. The contrast is striking both in terms of the conditions and the cars.

It has been a very busy month with meetings with Council officials and potential sponsors, the John O'Groats team and starting work on Tulip Roadbooks for the Scottish section of the Rallye by driving the entire route. It may seem like a long time until the Rallye, but for a successful event, the preparations need to start early.

In this newsletter is the final instalment of Martin Hull's impressive Austin Healey Sprite twincam project, the usual updates on the ADO project, a report on the ERDC stand at the SDCC show and an unusual 'motorsport' item. Next month there will be more photographs from the very successful Stirling and District Classic Car Club's Annual Show which each year raises a substantial sum of money for local charities.



Douglas Anderson

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UPDATE

Preparations are well underway for the production of ADO coupe bodies. The workshop has been reconfigured in order to streamline the production process and make the job of laying up the glassfibre in the body mould as efficient as possible. As we mentioned last month we have invested in a Rotisserie which will allow us to turn the body mould to the ideal position for the laminator to do his work. I collected it earlier in the week from Rollover Jigs which is housed on a farm in Hertfordshire. I think every farm in the country must have a collection of small industrial units churning out high quality equipment and spares for the classic car world. We are also fitting brackets, with rollers attached, to the walls so that the different types of glassfibre materials used in the body are easily accessible. Hope it all works according to plan but sometimes you have to readjust and reconfigure the workspace as the work progresses. Fingers crossed.



TWIN CAM AUSTIN HEALEY SPRITE Mk11

Martin Hull

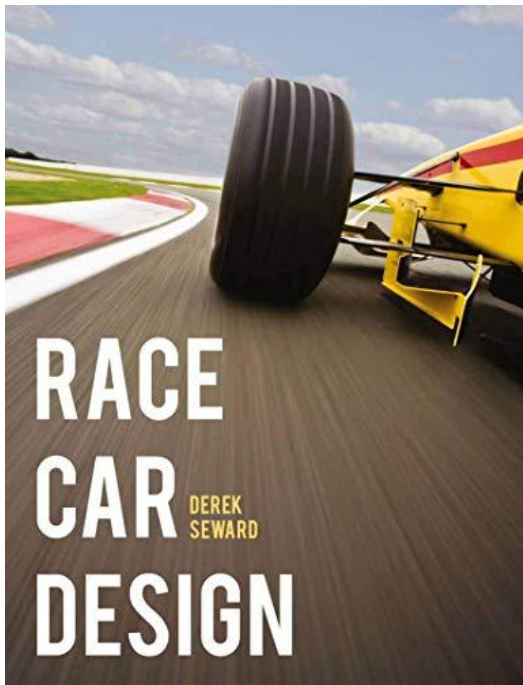
Part 5



On the Road with the Ford Type 9 gearbox and 3.7 diff (with LSD)
70mph is about 3000 revs and it just keeps pulling strongly.

Performance was definitely what I had expected, but I wasn't entirely happy with the steering. It felt slightly wooden at times and the inconsistency of the ride height has been puzzling. Driving up the lip into the garage for instance would leave the front risen without settling back to normal ride height. Not much, but troubling. Also after 3000 miles I noticed that the outer half of the front tyres were wearing more than the inner half.

After reading a newly acquired book, *Race Car Design* by Derek Seward, I came to the conclusion that my initial geometry was definitely wrong.



The fault in the geometry was the *front view swing arm length (LFVSA)*. Looking at the front of the car, draw lines through the top and bottom wishbone inner and outer joints. From the resulting triangle the horizontal distance from the tyre centre to the converging lines of the triangle is the front view swing arm length. It was not far

past the centre line of the car, when it needs to be well past the track length and the roll centre height was approaching 9", exactly the conditions to promote my symptoms. Apart from the ride height problem, the tyres would have been dragged across the road to some extent when cornering, hence the uneven wear.

So after taking some measurements I was able to draw the geometry of the front suspension to specifically determine the dimensional problem and to plan a solution. I needed to raise the top wishbone inner mountings by 20 – 30 mm. I could do this by replacing the shims which were there for camber adjustment with a plate and studs to take the wishbone mounting brackets, the plate being fixed with countersunk screws that picked up my original threaded mounting holes.

I started on the near side, removed the spring unit and made up one of the new studded plates to test my theory. My stationary ride height is set at 13 ½" from the hub centre to wheel arch, and I now found that I had increased the LFVSA to about 900mm, the track being 1170mm. This was a definite improvement but not really enough to be confident that I had solved the problem, especially when the roll centre was still some 8" from the ground. I also discovered on raising and lowering the hub that I now had bump steer to eliminate and simply raising or lowering the rack was not an option since the radiator cowl sits right over the rack now. However, on reflection, I decided that rather than moving the whole rack, I could alter the steering arm to adjust the height of the outer ball joint, ie the track rod end, thereby achieving the desired result.

On measuring and redrawing I determined that I could achieve a LFVSA of 1420mm, comfortably longer than the track, with a roll centre height of 6 ½". While it would be preferable to have a lower roll centre this was the best I could achieve without the lower wishbone mounts. So I made up the mounting plates from 5mm steel with the wishbone mounting bracket studs screwed and welded in, then screwed them on to the turret via the original mounting tappings, with Loctite.

The line drawn through the two steering rack ball joints has to meet the swing arm point, which now meant the steering arm had to be lowered by about 20mm. I was able to mock up the new position for the trackrod end by putting a large nut over the joint, just allowing me to nip up the nut to check for bump steer as I raise and lowered the hub. After experimenting I found 25mm square steel bar clamped to the steering arm gave me no bump steer, so suitable pieces were cut, drilled and pinned/riveted then welded to the arms. After painting the new parts I reassembled, with the height of hub centre to wheel arch at 13 ½". I set the camber with sims to 0 to ¼" deg

positive, hoping this would leave the steering consistently feeling light, with feel.

Camber change through bump and droop, starting with ride height 13 ½" (as above) and 0 deg:

Bump at	13"	1 deg neg	Going the right way for the outside wheel when cornering
	12 ½"	1 ½ deg neg	
	12"	3 ½ deg neg	
	11 ½"	4 ½ deg neg	
Droop at	14"	½ deg pos	Positive on the inside wheel when cornering not important
	14 ½"	1 ½ deg pos	
	15"	2 deg pos	
	15 ½"	2 ½ deg pos	



The camber change beyond 1" of travel is obviously more than I'd like, but I feel that in normal circumstances the travel is unlikely to be much more than an inch, so given the design compromises I had to make I feel this is acceptable. This is much less than the camber change previously, which was more like 2 ½" deg with an inch of compression. What is needed now to further reduce the camber change is to lengthen the top wishbones, but this could only be done by 10 – 15mm. It would be interesting to make a mock up to find out how much camber change would be prevented though.

On the road the steering feels much better, consistently smooth, no tight spots as before. The car feels very sure footed and confidence inspiring. I have settled on tyre pressures of 24psi front and 26psi rear and I have fitted a standard diameter anti-roll bar. I finalised the spring rates at 300lb on the front and 250lb on the rear. These are AVO units, 1.9" front and 2.25" rear. To me the handling feels fairly neutral, although someone more capable than me might have a different opinion.

I feel I have achieved what I set out to do, to build a lively, well handling and stopping, Mk11 Sprite. Lots of charm and fun.



On behalf of all the interested readers I would like to say a huge thank you to Martin for sharing in such detail his unique and well executed Project. We look forward to hearing about your next Project. (Douglas)



MONTE NEWS UPDATE



Last week June and I headed up to John O'Groats to meet with the Monte team. It was a glorious day with wall to wall sunshine, including at John O'Groats, with blue skies and blue sea. I don't think it will be like that come January. The team are all enthusiastic and the meeting was very productive. The local car club are taking on the challenge of building a gantry or ramp for the Start. Walter Mowatt, a local businessman who seems to know anyone who is anyone has offered to invite the Lord Lieutenant to do the honours and flagging off the cars. Les Bremner, a photographer, was talking about flying his drone to

get some different shots of the Start and he has contacts with the local press who are always keen to promote John O'Groats. We discussed overnight accommodation with local hoteliers and they are going to put together packages of different options from hotels, self-catering lodges, the Inn (formerly the original John O Groats hotel) and B&B's. Everyone is working hard to make this a success.

On the way we stopped at Graeme Henderson's garage at Keiss. This was the scrutineering venue for the 2016 Rallye and he has again offered to do the honours.

We stayed overnight at the Inn so we have now sampled most of the available facilities at John O'Groats and would be very happy to use any of them.

On the road back to Inverness we made up the tulip roadbook and after an overnight stay with June's brother in Beaulieu, we completed the next part of the roadbook to Stirling. Overall it was a very successful and enjoyable few days away incorporating work and leisure. All in glorious sunny May weather.



ECOSSE RALLYE DRIVERS CLUB



ERDC Stand at Stirling Show

Alan Thompson

Sunday 11th May, 8am at Bridge of Allan station where we had decided to meet. It turned out it was also where the Lancia, Alfa Romeos and Jags decided to meet - so already a great start! Whilst awaiting Mr Brisbane, I spotted a TR6 come around the corner with what looked like a massive wash board squeezed into the back of the car (it was actually our notice board), with Jodie, Alan's daughter, complaining about the extreme backdraft.



We headed off for the showground, to our spot between the Porsche 924 Club and the Phoenix Car Club, where we were met by Douglas, reclined in his weeeee yellow VW buggy and waving like royalty. It wasn't long before we had the cars

positioned and the gazebo and notice board up. Cars were moving all around us, taking their positions in what was turning out to be a magnificent morning - there was already a buzz about the place and a good vibe was set for the day. Doors opened to the public at 10am and it felt like a privilege to watch all these classics arrive and take their place for the show.

The place was soon alive and people were over looking at Fraser's very nice MK2 Spitfire and Alan B's smart TR6 "extra low exhaust" model.



Chat in the gazebo was good with Alan's daughter, Jodie, and Fraser's son, Nicholas, keeping the Club's average age respectable.



With so much to see and enjoy and the odd club member popping in, including Dave Summers from Stonehaven, the day went by very quickly. Thanks to all who came along and look forward to seeing you all soon.

OTHER EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2025

Look out for the ERDC Stand at the following Shows.

Moffat Rally and Show 28 & 29 June 2025 [Moffat Car Rally - Classic Car Shows UK](#)

Craufurdland Castle Show 23-24 August and **ERDC Touring event** Details to follow.

[Buy tickets – Lombard Rally Festival Craufurdland Castle 2025 - Static Display entry for Invited Clubs for a minimum of twenty cars. – Craufurdland Castle, Kilmarnock](#)

AUTOSOLOS

“Scottish Sporting Car Club would like to invite Ecosse Rally Drivers Club members to our AutoSolos. We run most of our events at Ardeer, near Stevenston but two are run at the Forrestburn Speed Hill Climb track. The dates are on our website under Events. You will find the current Regulations there as well. Sample route diagrams can also be found under the Events tab. [Scottish Sporting Car Club – Motorsport for Everyone](#)

If any of your members would like to enter the next event, we would be pleased to accept their entry. All entries are done via the RallyScore website. [RallyScore](#)”



A UNIQUE EVENT

A Bigger Variation on a Theme

Richard Ward

Starting in the year 1955, the first British Coach Rally was held in Clacton on Sea. It relocated to various places over the years. The firm favourite for many years was Brighton, then Battersea in London, Southampton, Cambridge even Peterborough. However, a few years back it moved to Blackpool seafront. It also changed its name to the UK Coach Rally.



This year (2025) it attracted 50 entries with 6 no shows. The entry has dropped. When I first did it there were 77 entries and the second time over 50 - although that year it rained and many were put off. It has run annually except for an odd couple of occasions, once for the Suez crisis and Covid.

The event is a season opener for the UK Coach Industry. There are distributors and suppliers there showcasing their products.

It is a weekend event, Saturday & Sunday, although most arrive on the Friday afternoon giving them time to clean off the road film from the journey. Competitors travel from all over the UK.

The event is in 3 parts

- A Navigational Road Run
- Driving Tests
- Concours d'Elegance

Points are awarded in each section then a tally up on the Sunday afternoon gives you the winner.

There are various categories and prizes. Both times I entered I did OK on the Road Run and the driving tests but struggled on the Concours side of things. Even although I thought my coach was fab, the judges chose new vehicles each time as they did this year. However I did win the Irizar award one year



This year there were many brand new vehicles. One was collected en route to the event and one had been delivered earlier in the week. It's first job was to Blackpool for the event.

The weekend starts on the Saturday Morning after breakfast with the road run, normally of about 50 miles taking in a variety of roads. The first coach is away at 09.30 from the 'Comedy Carpet', directly over the tram tracks & Promenade from the Tower. Checkpoints, with marshals, are on the route and they return for a lunch halt. The only timing they use is setting off at one minute intervals, as we do on the Classic Tours.

On Saturday Afternoon and Sunday Morning it's the driving tests with a variety of different tests, with a party night at the hotel on Saturday evening.

The coaches return to the 'Comedy Carpet' where the Concours de Elegance takes place. Once all the results are in the awards take place

The driving test this year was entry onto the flat area, all concreted, down a slope. Right Turn to a 'Garage' where the vehicle has to drive as close as possible to the end wall. (Gap measured)

Then, Reverse into another 'Garage' (Gap measured)

Then Forward and turn the vehicle round 180°.

On to another 'Garage' where they had to do a parallel parking manoeuvre (rear and Side gaps measured).

Then to a dummy bridge where the driver had to drive through the bollards without hitting them.



Driving Test 'Garage'



The Van-Hool, pictured above, was only 5 days old and on its first journey. An absolutely a fabulous vehicle. And it's price tag£335,000.

That is the busy 2025 weekend over until next year as the coaches set off back to their respective bases in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.



POSTER FROM THE PAST

