



THE LISBURN **OILY RAG**

The Newsletter of Lisburn City Old Vehicle Club

March 2015



In this issue: The Mayor's Reception Frogeye Tales Henry's Hillman
The Ulster 100 Norah Humphreys and much more . . .

Committee

Chairman:

Samuel Spence

Tel 07785510376

E-mail lcovc.chairman@gmail.com

Vice-chairman:

David Bready

Tel 07591087464

E-mail lcovc.vicechairman@gmail.com

Secretary:

Syd McCoy

Tel 07746572446

E-mail lcovc.secretary@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Ivan Adair

Tel 07703192008

E-mail lcovc.treasurer@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Tommy Moore

Tel 07527059799

E-mail tommy.lcovc@gmail.com

Paul Hunter

Tel 02892663888

E-mail phunter955@hotmail.co.uk

Sunday Summer Drives

From April, the Sunday walks will be replaced with a Sunday drive. Meeting points and times will be circulated, but runs will remain afternoon events with perhaps a visit to a place of interest; a walk maybe and a coffee.

It is hoped that these runs will provide more members with more opportunities to enjoy our Club activities.

Front Cover:

*Walter Simpson's 1972 Mini 1275
in original 'special order' black*

The Editor's Letter

Welcome members to the first issue of 2015. The committee have been busy again putting together a programme of events for this year and it is looking good. We have some new venues for you to visit this year and we hope you will all enjoy them.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed articles for the magazine last year. We love to hear from you and would like to see some more input to the magazine from you all. Stories about your car, stories about your past adventures in the motoring world or anything of interest you would like to share with us.

Look forward to seeing you all again this year for our calendar of events and trips, regards to everyone,

Tommy.



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The Chairman's Letter

Hi Everyone,

Hopefully by the time you read this, Spring will have sprung and we can look forward to the Summer months and more outings and events in our 'classics'. Since the last issue of *The Oily Rag*, in December, we have had time to reflect on the festive period and our venturing into organising a Club Christmas Dinner and a Christmas Party. I am pleased to report that, on the whole, positive feedback was received regarding both events and I hope that we can develop and hone our organisation to make these nights a continued success this year.



January saw a very good turnout at the Lagan Valley Island for the Mayor's Reception and presentation of our cheque to Marie Curie Cancer Care. May I record my sincere thanks to The Right Worshipful, The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Ewing for inviting our Club to his reception and for the wonderful hospitality. Thanks also to the 'Dromara Destroyers', Ray McCullough, Brian Reid and Ian McGregor who kindly gave of their time to support and entertain us for the evening. Above all of course, a very big thank you to our Club members who gave generously to enable us to present Councillor Yvonne Craig with a cheque for £2,553.65p for Marie Curie Cancer Care. I think this was a magnificent sum for our small (exclusive!) Club.

For our February Club Night our guest speaker was local author Norah McMullan. I am pleased that a good number of our ladies came along to hear Norah who is currently writing her third book.

I am delighted by the support given to the *Oily Rag* by our 'in-house' writers and it is good to see our members getting involved with our mag.

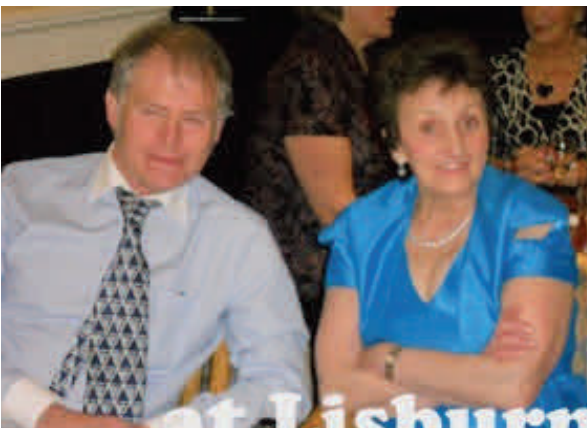
Meantime, I wish you all a Happy Motoring Spring and Summer.

Sammy



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at Lisburn Golf Club



December 6th 2014





Some say he lives at the North Pole and at a certain time of year he grows a long, white beard and wears a baggy red uniform and that he can encourage reindeer to fly. All we know is, he's called our Wilbert.

Christmas Dinner 2014

A big thank you to our chairman Sammy for securing the Golf Club for our Christmas Dinner. As always the food was delicious and served by friendly staff, who looked as if they too were enjoying the Christmas spirit. The room was beautifully decorated and everyone looked relaxed, happy to forget about all the things that were on the 'to do' list before the big day. Good food and great company may have been enough to ensure everyone had an enjoyable evening. However, we were lucky enough to have the fabulous group 'Perfect Partners' on the stage to encourage some dancing. Even those of us who didn't take to the dance floor enjoyed the music and watching others glide around the floor effortlessly. Our own Sammy and Gloria delighted us with their efforts as they recaptured the days of their youth with some fancy footwork. A certain table decided to do some Strictly scoring, perfect tens, written with Gladys' best lipstick! A must for this year to get us in the festive mood.

Carol Bready

The LCOVC Christmas Party



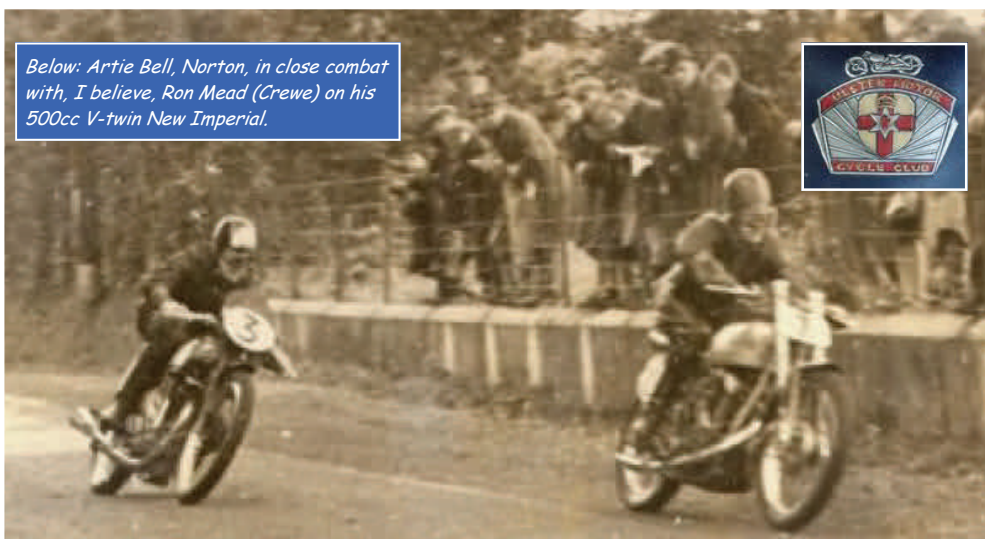
Political Harmony at Lower Maze. Councillor Pat Catney and Alderman Paul Porter kindly gave of their time to entertain an appreciative audience at the inaugural LCOVC Christmas Party.



Tues 16th December 2014



Below: Artie Bell, Norton, in close combat with, I believe, Ron Mead (Crewe) on his 500cc V-twin New Imperial.



The Ulster 100 . . .

Back in November last year, when Tom Best gave us a talk on the Ulster Grand Prix Supporters' Club, one of our members mentioned a road race which took place in Lisburn after the war. That race was the Ulster 100 which was held for one year only, on Saturday 22nd September 1945. This is believed to have been the very first road race held in the UK following the end of hostilities in WW2.

The event was organised by the Ulster Motor Cycle Club, which had, pre-war, promoted the Ulster Grand Prix and would do so again, but not until 1947. The Ulster 100 attracted 48 competitors comprising 25 X 500's, 15 X 350's, 6 X 250's and 2 over 500's. Not a bad field considering that the bikes must have been 'recommissioned' pre-war models and the fact that racing quality tyres were virtually unobtainable.

The start was on Ballymacash Road, along Glenavy Road, right at Belshaw's Corner and along Benson's Road to Whitemountain Road and right at Boomer's Corner onto Pond Park Road/Antrim Road and right onto Ballymacash Road to complete the lap.

The winner of the 500cc race was A J (Artie) Bell (Norton), 2nd was R A Mead (New Imperial) and 3rd was W F Little (Norton). W S Humphry from Mansfield (Velocette) won the 350cc race and W George from Newtownards (Excelsior) took the 250cc.



Arthur James (Artie) Bell

Artie Bell won the 500cc race at the Ulster 100 on his pre-war 'garden gate' Norton and in doing so he was probably the first person to score a first for Norton anywhere, post-war. In his thirtieth year, he was embarking on a racing career with Norton which would be cruelly cut short by serious injury, through no fault of his own.

His racing career started in 1937 and later he bought a second hand Norton on which he won the Enniskillen 100 road race and his performances had brought him to the attention of fellow Ulsterman, Joe Craig, the technical boss at Norton. By September 1939, however, racing in the UK and Europe would be put on 'hold' as Germany invaded Poland.

... A Unique Event

Syd McCoy

Artie made his TT debut in 1947 on a private Norton and finished second to the factory bike ridden by Harold Daniels. He had led for three of the seven laps and his efforts earned him a place on the 1948 Norton works team which included Harold Daniels and Geoff Duke.

His business interests included a motorcycle shop situated just off the Woodstock Road in Belfast and it was there that his friend Rex McCandless and brother Cromie carried out a lot of the development work on the 'Featherbed' frame which would be adopted by Norton and become the benchmark for frame design for decades. There are local stories of the various developments of the McCandless frames having been tested at speed on the Ormeau Embankment.

Artie Bell was, in 1950, a World Championship contender and had finished second to Geoff Duke in the Senior TT of that year. The next round was the Belgian GP at Spa Francorchamps and during the 500cc race Carlo Bandirola's Gilera was struck by Les Graham's AJS whilst braking for La Source hairpin. It was said at the time that Bandirola braked early. Artie was taken down by the crash and ended up striking the pillars of a commentary box. His injuries meant that he wouldn't race again and his full potential would never be realised.

Overleaf: Front cover of Ulster 100 Programme

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Bits and PIECES

Proposed Stranraer Face-lift Should prove a Classic Attraction

Some recent news on the vintage scene has unveiled plans to restore the old Stranraer port into a rail and maritime museum.

Since Sea-link / Stenaline pulled out of Stranraer in November 2011 for a new port at Cairnryan the old port fell into dereliction and became a local eyesore.

Plans are now underway to regenerate the area with Network rail and the Isle of Man Steam packet company showing an interest in the project.

The old railway station is to be restored and a facility for steam locomotives to call in, there will also be berths for old ships to dock such as the PS Waverley and a Summer service to the Isle of Man.

The project also hope to run a vintage bus service to local beauty spots and local attractions.

The response has been very encouraging and it should help put Stranraer on the tourist and heritage trail of the Dumfries and Galloway coast.

Hopefully everything will go to plan for them and it could be a future day out for the club members across the Irish Sea.

Tommy Moore.

Kilbroney Car Badge

To mark the 30th anniversary of the Kilbroney Show, the organisers will be presenting every entrant with this commemorative car badge. To qualify, entries must be received by 14th May and when you receive your number it will be accompanied by a voucher which can be exchanged for the badge, on the day.



END OF THE ROAD FOR MOT DISC

Environment Minister Mark H Durkan today announced that from 6 April 2015 Vehicle Test ('MOT') discs no longer have to be displayed on any vehicle.

Mr Durkan said: "I feel it is appropriate at this time to remove the need to display test discs on all vehicles in Northern Ireland, including goods vehicles and buses.

Motor vehicles, goods vehicles and buses will still need to go through their respective vehicle tests but the test certificate will no longer include a vehicle test disc.

If any vehicle owners have a test disc which has not expired on this date, it can be removed from the vehicle and destroyed

Have we got your up-to-date contact details? Please inform the Secretary of any changes and you can, of course, check the information we hold for you by contacting the Secretary; contact details at front of this issue.



L to R Syd McCoy, Sammy Spence (LCOVC Chairman), Brian Reid, Ian McGregor, Ray McCullough Councillor Yvonne Craig and The Right Worshipful, The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Ewing.

The Mayor's Reception and Presentation of Cheque to Marie Curie Cancer Care

On Tuesday 20th January, The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Ewing, welcomed LCOVC members to the Chestnut Suite at Lagan Valley Island for his reception and presentation of cheque to Marie Curie Cancer Care. The evening was very well attended and 'kicked off' with a short Club meeting after which everyone enjoyed The Mayor's hospitality in the form of a delightful supper. Just about managing to call a halt to the excellent refreshments, Sammmy then presented a cheque for £2,553.65p to The Mayor and Councillor Yvonne Craig, who was attending in her role as representative for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

After the formalities, three of the 'Dromara Destroyers', Ray McCullough, Ian McGregor and Brian Reid answered questions from The Mayor, Club members and guests, and gave a most enjoyable account of some of their racing experiences, mainly during the seventies and eighties. LCOVC are indeed indebted to all three 'destroyers' for giving of their time for this worthy cause and entertaining us so well with their recollections.



Sammy Spence presents The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Ewing with an autographed print depicting 'The Dromara Destroyers'

After the hand-over of the cheque for Marie Curie, Sammy presented a surprised Mayor with an autographed, limited edition print of the 'Dromara' riders. The Mayor, a keen biker, said he was delighted with the gift and added that the framed print may even take pride of place in the Mayor's Parlour!

At the end of the riders 'question time' Club members and guests donated a total of £143 to the fund for the placing of a tribute to The Destroyers in the village of Dromara. We look forward to news of the completion of the project.



Just part of an attentive audience at The Mayor's Reception



Vintage Day

For Cars, Tractors and Bikes at

**Elmwood Presbyterian Church
Ballymacash Road, Lisburn**

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10.00am-1.00pm approx.
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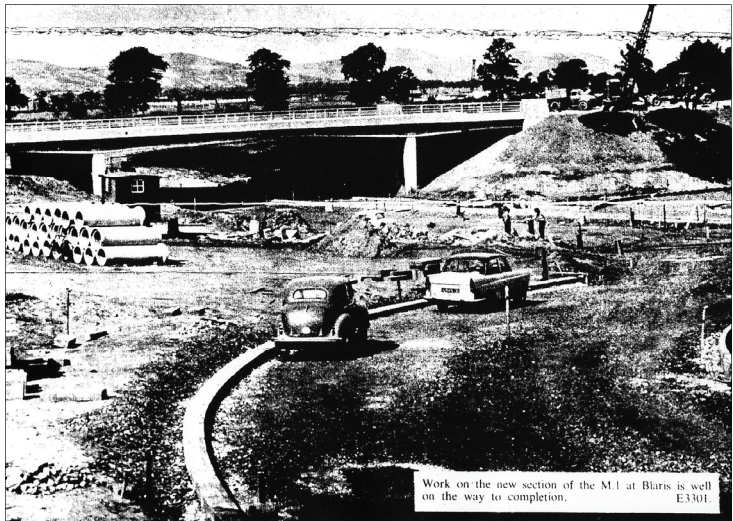
Rear View Mirror—A Look Back at Lisburn



*From the Ulster Star, July 1963,
the photo depicts on-going work
at the then new M1 at Blaris. The
caption reads 'work on the new
section of the M1 at Blaris is well
on the way to completion.'*

*The workers' vehicles pictured
could have used some extra power
for the new motorways.*

Photo courtesy Ulster Star

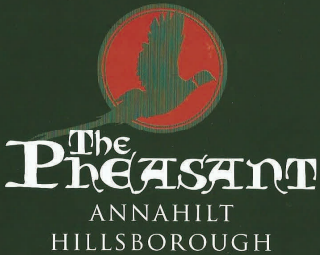


Work on the new section of the M1 at Blaris is well on the way to completion. E3301

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The Frogeye sprite has always appealed to enthusiasts with its fun to drive character and the distinctive front end. The problem is that they now fetch in excess of £10,000 for a good 'un. Solution? - buy an MG midget and convert it!

The MG bodyshell is identical to the Frogeye, so a late model MG Midget in good order with some MOT left was purchased and stripped out in preparation for a new body kit. The opportunity was taken to improve the body and a little welding was required. The removal of the steel wings and heavy rubber bumpers resulted in a much lighter car! The Midget was mechanically sound and running well so the engine was left alone apart from adding a four branch manifold, stainless steel exhaust and K&N filters. Telescopic shocks were added to both the front and rear for a more durable ride and better handling.

Tifosi Rana are major suppliers of Frogeye plastic bodies and provide a comprehensive manual to aid the conversion. The front end and rear tub

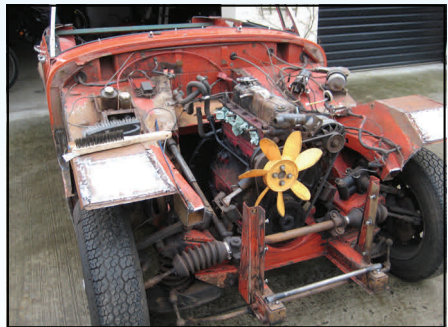
were purchased and arrived in a giant cardboard box a few weeks later by courier. The original doors were kept to enable the wind up windows to be used along with the original detachable hardtop when required. Fitting was straightforward and the only departure from the instructions was to use Triumph Spitfire bonnet catches instead of the unsightly rubber bands suggested. Extra metal support was added to the rear tub and has resulted in a strong and compact rear end. The underside was well rust-proofed and has had several coats of flexible paint applied to keep it that way.

The project was almost complete and started up again without any difficulty after fitting a new battery and adding fresh petrol.

The next stage will be to finish off the trim and electrics, do some road testing and fine tuning to complete the job.

So far this has been a successful exercise, and although costs have mounted, (as is the nature of all such ventures) they are still well below the cost of buying and restoring an original Frogeye.

To be continued



Above left: PO1 1028 as purchased for project.
Above right: The Midget has lost most of its bodywork and any exposed corrosion was cut out and new metal MIG welded in.
Left: The restored tub was cleaned and treated with specialist paint prior to fitting the new Frogeye bodyshell.

Henry's Hillman

Henry Snodden tells us about his forty-five year love affair with a Minx of a girl he met in 1969

Back in 1969 I was twenty nine, lived in Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire and drove a fast Fiat 125s Twin Cam. There was a noise in the engine which I didn't like, and having noticed a similar car in the village I called on the owners to listen to their car.

Mr Ritchie, retired owner of the famous Fiat and Jaguar dealership in

Glasgow bearing his name, brought me to the grand garage of their lovely home where I confirmed that their Fiat was silent, and therefore that I had a problem!

Also in their garage was the big family Mark X Jaguar in a special livery of black and silver, and in the corner - a wee Burgundy Hillman Minx - VD 9358. Mr Ritchie offered me the Minx for £30 - we did the deal.

That was forty five years ago and the Hillman has been in very frequent and reliable use since then. Our three children were all born during this time and now as grown ups they all have happy memories of great outings here in Ireland.

With never a hope of winning any prizes in concours, the Minx nevertheless performed mightily in strenuous rallying, mainly with the Ulster Vintage Car Club.



Classified as 'post vintage non thoroughbred' and not eligible for overall awards - she always performed impressively. On one occasion the Hillman won the UVCC's excellent night rally outright, beating many superb vintage cars - thanks to a very competent navigator, local man Phil Scott, whom I borrowed from the lively Mini rallying scene, me trying my very best at the numerous crossroads manoeuvring tests, and her own nimble performance.

The Minx had a psychological trick in that she sounded very sporty. I had replaced the rusted out silencer with a vestigial straight through pipe at DC on Kennedy Way. The six volt lights were supplemented by a large spotlight, fitted by Victor Kirk, who kept us going in the days when I worked at Aldergrove Airport. His ingenious split Jubilee clip adjuster is still very effective today.

To this day VD 9358 is still original, warts and all, never repainted, and still looks very well when rubbed with an oily rag.

I never needed much in the way of spares, though grateful to Speedy Spares for brake linings etc. Fortunately many years ago a friend Willie Wallace over in Raffery, gave me spare axles from a hulk Minx. Invaluable when I sheared a half shaft or two over the years. Another great mate - Sidney Gilmore - who still recalls changing Minx engines during the war - enabled the fitting of replacements and helps to keep us going to this day.

Just earlier this year I finally got around to joining the Hillman Owners Club. The day after I received my membership papers I was driving to the Cultra Hillclimb when there was a sinister rattle just around Drumbo. I turned around and drove gingerly home. I somewhat pointlessly removed the sump, which only served to make proper diagnosis difficult. There was no metal debris on the mesh.

My friend Jim Hutchinson at Portadown, a very competent motor engineer, checked the crankshaft and big end bearings - which were stamped 'standard' and found the crank not bad, but undoubtedly worn. Compression was very low and when he replaced the sump the engine sounded like a mouse chewing paper. However there was obvious blow past in the cylinders and I decided that the Minx at 76 years old deserved an engine overhaul. I'm 74 now !

So I took her for a final drive - forty five mph was no problem, but she laboured to climb out the Saintfield Road. Next day my expert neighbour and good friend Basil Jess removed the seats, floorboard, radiator and shell, gearbox and then the engine. Quite a job and Basil remained cheerful throughout. I think he was surprised at the amount of dismantling.



The engine was entrusted to Jack and Ciaran McAloran - a very experienced father and son engineering business near Portadown. Examination showed that the root cause of the noise had been a piston ring breaking up. We assume that she just spit the broken bits out through the exhaust valve and carried on.

However the shopping list was extensive - pistons, rings, bearings, valves, timing chain and gaskets. Ciaran decided that a full overhaul, rebore and regrind would complete the picture.

Its great to have friends! At this time I joined Lisburn City Old Vehicle Club and a great group of people. I have enjoyed both meetings so far. Gloria is a star - and I hope to get to know more of the members.

Hopefully you'll want to hear the latest on the parts search and the rescue of the Minx in a later report,

Henry Snodden



On Tuesday 17th February, local author Norah McMullan (who writes under her maiden name, Norah Humphreys) was our Club Night speaker. Norah told us about her nursing career, involving teaching and research and how, relatively recently, she embarked on her new career as a novelist. Her first book *No Greater Love* was published in 2010 and was very well received. Her follow-up novel, *The House on Waring Street* received equally positive critical acclaim and Norah is already working on her third book. The ongoing trilogy follows the fortunes and life experiences of an Irish family from the early 20th century onwards.

For Sale



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Car Ramps 22ft long and will raise the vehicle about 5ft would be suitable for MOT wash. £1200.00

2007 Polaris 200cc street legal and registered quad. Purchased from dealer in 2007 and has only recorded 27 miles on the clock £2000.00 Photo bottom right.

Mobile office, towable on 2 wheels was manufactured in 1958 as a mobile dental surgery good condition approx.20'x7' £600.00 ONO

Contact Clarey on 07543601714

A couple of boxes of old magazines for sale a few each of Land Rover World, Land Rover International, 4x4 and Off Road as well as a few of Sporting Gun. Any money gained from the sale of these will go to club funds. Phone Sammy 07785510376 or 02892688533



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Coming Events

Cars and Coffee is a new event being organised by Peter Dowds of Vanilla Black Catering. It's a sort of 'tyre kicking get together' and the first meet will be on Sunday 22nd March at The Maze Racecourse (entrance alongside Gowdy's) and takes place from 10am to 1pm.

Sunday Car Runs 5th April, 3rd May, 7th June (the first Sundays in the months). Assembly points and times will be circulated in advance. These runs replace the Sunday walks for the summer months.

The Easter Monday Run, 6th April. Assemble at Dobbies Car Park for 10.30am departure. Come earlier if you wish to avail of breakfast. A scenic drive in Co. Down with a Picnic Stop followed by a visit to the Downpatrick and County Down Railway.

TECH DAY, Saturday 11th April. Our first 'daytime' Tech event and again by kind permission of the directors of McCreath Taylor, Flush Park, Lisburn. Terraclean, Dent Magnet, Fix-a-Scuff, Rustbuster etc. The BBQ will be revved up. Come along and avail of the services or just come for the craic. Call in anytime between 11.00am and 4.00pm.

The Shakedown Run, Tuesday 21st April. Organised again by Paul Hunter, assembly will be at Lower Maze Community Hall at 6.30pm. Details will be circulated.

Club Night Run, 19th May, Visit to Stormont. Meet at the rear gates to Stormont in Massey Ave at 7.00pm for a not to be missed guided tour.

Club Night BBQ and Treasure Hunt, Tuesday 16th June. Organised by Paul Hunter and usually one of the most enjoyable evening meets.

YOU WILL ALSO FIND CLUB DATES IN SAMMY'S YEAR PLANNER CALENDAR WHICH HAS BEEN CIRCULATED TO MEMBERS

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