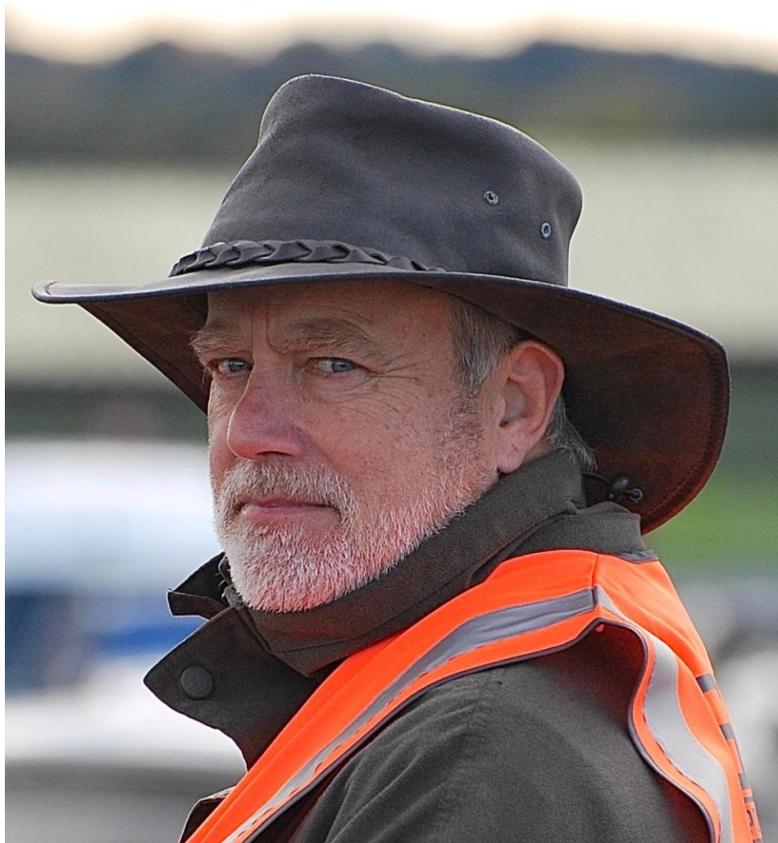


SPORTING CAR CLUB OF NORFOLK

Spotlight

The Newsletter of the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk (SCCON)

DECEMBER 2023



David Leckie

1959 - 2023

David lost his bravely-fought battle against cancer on 23rd October and his funeral, held on 15th November at St. Faith's Crematorium was attended by over thirty members of SCCON and other AMSC motor clubs. David was one of SCCON's longest-serving and most dependable committee members, and this edition of Spotlight is mainly a tribute dedicated to his memory. The Lyng Trial (which will now be held next year) has been re-named the David Leckie Lyng Trial because he had been the Secretary of the Meeting and the leading organiser of that event for many years.

SCCON is planning to organise a multi-club social gathering in David's memory in 2024

Important SCCON Information



SCCON's Christmas get-together 2023

SCCON's Christmas get-together will be held once again at:

The White Horse, Trowse, NR14 8ST

Thursday 21st December 2023

Please come - we'll be meeting up from 7-00 pm to 9-30 pm (ish)

Snack food, and cakes will be available

THIS IS A CRITICAL TIME FOR SCCON

Over recent years, SCCON has seen a reduction in the number of members active in the organisation of competitive and social events. Also, with the loss of David Leckie as both our Limited Company Secretary and our Club Treasurer and the resignation of some committee members, we have vacancies for some Club Officials. Without a core of nominated key officials SCCON will be unable to register with Motorsport UK as a club recognised for the organisation of motor sport events. The six nominated Motorsport UK officials we must have are: Chairman, Club Secretary, Club Treasurer, Competitions Secretary, Chief Marshal and Club Safeguarding Officer. We also need a new Company Director and Limited Company Secretary.

DO YOU WANT SCCON TO RUN COMPETITIVE EVENTS?

If these positions cannot be filled, SCCON will still exist in the immediate future as a Limited Company, but will only be able to organise the Midsummer Classic Car Run (as a non-MSUK- registered club) and social events. Is that what you want for SCCON?

NEW VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

Unless sufficient volunteers come forward before the end of this year, there will have to be an EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the club early in 2024 to which all members will be invited. If you have some interest in helping SCCON to keep going, please contact me at: cjnewson32@yahoo.co.uk or phone me on 01502-716 280. Alternatively e-mail your thoughts and/or your areas of interest to info@sccon.co.uk

Thank you, Martin Newson, Chairman, The Sporting Car Club of Norfolk

THE RIXY STAGES RALLY
Stanta Military Training Area
30th December 2023



Welcome to the Rixy Stages 2023 held at Stanford Training Area (STANTA). Originally known as Stanford Battle Area, it is a British Army training area situated near Thetford in Norfolk.

The venue offers the opportunity to provide multiple stage layouts completely within a single venue. The stages will be 100% tarmac with fast flowing sections combined with more technical roads through the on-site villages providing maximum entertainment for competitors.

Our supportive sponsors are assisting greatly and our thanks go to [Mass Racing Engines](#), [Allglass Anglia](#) and [Rally And Competition Equipment](#). and also to all the club members who help make the event successful. The event is promoted by [Anglia Motorsport Club](#) and supported by many motorsport clubs from the region.

The rally is named after Ian Rix, a regular competitor and supporter of rallying in East Anglia who sadly passed away earlier this year. He was often out driving his immaculately prepared blue Mk1 Escort and there is a prize in his name for the most entertaining car.

Without the dedicated support of many marshals involved, this event cannot take place. Please encourage non-competing friends and family to enrol as marshals on the event web-site at rixystages.co.uk. Please contact the chief marshal of this event if you would like any advice or guidance. We do our best to make marshals welcome in the lead up to, as well as during the event. There will be food, drink and goodies for the marshals, as well as the generous marshals' cash draw to which all the entrants have contributed.



Home - <https://rixystages.co.uk>
Competitors - <https://rixystages.co.uk/competitors> - the entry list is already full!
Marshals - <https://rixystages.co.uk/marshals>

David Leckie's Unwavering Support to Motor Sport via SCCON

David joined SCCON in the 1990s and soon joined the committee. As the years progressed he took on more responsibilities, becoming a director of the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk Limited and Company Secretary in 1998. In this role he ran SCCON's Annual General Meetings for twenty five years and has kept us squeaky-clean-legal with Companies House.

Over the years David progressively got more involved in the running of SCCON events and, despite being a keen competitor himself, he would always give higher priority to the need for officials to run events, rather than his desire to compete.

In the early 'noughties', SCCON hadn't promoted a special stage rally for five years and several committee members wanted the club to start running them again. The result was a series of rallies held annually, starting with the 2002 SCCON Spring Stages Rally held at Oakington Airfield near Cambridge up to the 2010 Malcolm Watson Spring Stages Rally at the former USAF-base at Sculthorpe near Fakenham. David planned the budgets for all these events and was variously: Secretary of the Meeting, Deputy Clerk of the Course and Safety Officer.

In 2011 SCCON held a huge spectator event at Kimberley Hall to celebrate the club's 60th Anniversary. Its many attractions included a display of sixty cars, one made in each year of SCCON's existence, and air displays by two Chinese Nanchang fighter aircraft and a Russian Yakovlev fighter-trainer, all deploying smoke trails. David drew up the comprehensive safety plan for the whole event, including no less than five separate risk assessments, and it had to pass muster with the Civil Aviation Authority and the Police. David then took on the (unsung hero) role of being SCCON's Health and Safety and Risk Management Officer, a role he held until this year.

David was always keen to promote SCCON and encourage new members. In May 2011 he and Peter Riddle took part in a Radio Norfolk broadcast with presenters David Clayton and Kirsteen Thorne. David and Peter emphasised that you don't need a sports car to be a member of SCCON and David described how our members have fun competing in everyday cars at very modest cost. He explained how he and his daughter Katy competed on SCCON's 12-car navigational events in his £250 Vauxhall Nova, praising her navigating skills and mentioning several other youngsters and lady members of SCCON. One young lady member was then at Southampton University where she was both competing and organising motor sport events in the Hampshire area.

The Radio Norfolk studio that Peter and David had broadcast from was inside Norwich Forum, and David had the idea for a display on the plaza outside the Forum to bring SCCON to a wider audience and, hopefully, attract some new members.



The SCCON display outside the Forum in Norwich on Saturday 18th June 2011

Spotlight reported.....

"What an excellent turn out of club members and cars we had for our show outside the Forum. We displayed cars from:-

Paul Brunton	Ford KA	Night event road rally car
Roger Bennington	Triumph TR7 V8	Ex-works rally car
Lotus Cars	Lotus Evora	Norfolk-built premium sports coupe
Roger Bennington	Caparo T1	Road-legal F1-style racing car
Roger Bennington	Aston Martin GT4	GT racing car
Dave Mann	Subaru Impreza STi	Group N National level stage rally car
Peter Riddle	Vauxhall Nova	Entry-level car for Clubman events
Martin Newson	MG ZR	Tarmac spec. special stage rally car
Jim Deacon	MGB	Historic rallying MGB sports car
Julian Riley	Saab 96	Historic rally car
Rob Henchoz	Volvo 144	London-to-Cape Town historic rally car
Mark Annison	Ford Escort Mark 2	Special stage rally car

That display in central Norwich, organised almost entirely by David was a great success and he put on a similar event four years later.

The cars on display on Saturday 30th May 2015 were:-

Peter & Allison Cotes	Volvo 144	Peking-to-Paris endurance rally car
Andrew Lawson	Ford Escort Mexico	Special stage rally car
Dale Lawson	MG ZR	Enduro 1400cc rally car
Richard Ward	Ford Escort RS2000	Superb unmodified low-mileage car
Andrew Ward	Mazda MX5	Sports car used on Clubman events
Mike Smith	Lancia Delta HF	Special stage rally car
Peter Riddle	Vauxhall Nova	Entry-level car for Clubman events
Gordon Shipley	Peugeot 306	Clubman's rally car
Martin Newson	MG ZR	Tarmac spec. special stage rally car
Roger Bennington	Lotus Elise	Norfolk-built sports car
Stuart Delf	Ford Fiesta	Tarmac spec. special stage rally car
Mark Annison	Ford Sierra XR	Track Day Car
Tony Hewitt	Go Karts	Karts raced by Chloe and Freddie

Spotlight reported:-

"On the day we chatted to around 200 people out of more than a thousand who looked at the cars on display. Several people supported us by buying a raffle draw ticket. The weather was mainly sunny, though short outbursts of rain interrupted proceedings a little. SCCON was able to create a very good impression in the city."

From 2004, David was involved in running SCCON events, initially evening Autotests and Go-Karting and by 2006 Autosolos had arrived with longer-format tests and no reversing. Several Autotests were held at Brandiston Airfield where David had to negotiate with three different landowners. But Brandiston offered limited opportunity to vary the tests and cars disappeared from view in some places. So when Snetterton became available from 2010 onwards, offering both tarmac and grass surfaces, it became SCCON's preferred venue for forwards-only Autotests. The core team of Dave Bell, David Leckie and Howard Joynt ran many events at Snetterton, up to last year. But SCCON was also looking for other venues and it was David who persevered in gaining permission for three Autotests to be held in 2015 and 2016 at the former RAF Coltishall site (now inexplicably re-named 'Scottow').

The last one in 2016 gained no less than 45 entries. After receiving reports from the site's security staff, Norfolk Property Services said they were "very happy" with how professionally SCCON's activities on the site had been run.

Coltishall was then explored as a potential venue for a Targa Rally but after the installation of solar panels on the site this was no longer feasible. We could still design Autotests that went nowhere near the solar panels, but then a 10mph speed limit was imposed for the whole site and SCCON was no longer welcome. So it was back to Snetterton with the addition, from 2017 onwards, of a new annual Autosolo at the Stanta Military Training Area. David was a familiar face at those Stanta events, competing, marshalling or acting as one of the event officials.

SCCON's hill-climb trial at Cadders Hill, Lyng had been held spasmodically over the years, run by a succession of different people. Then from 2009 David took over the running of that event, ensuring it happened annually and when the AMSC (Anglia Motor Sport Club) was established in 2012, the Lyng Garage Trial became the final event in its popular Trials Challenge. Some years, the Lyng Trial was voted by AMSC competitors as their favourite event of the season.

Pat and Henry Fairhead have sponsored the P & H 12-car navigational rally since 1989. It has traditionally been the opening event of SCCON's 12-car season aimed primarily at novices and newcomers. When long-standing organiser Dave Bell wanted to pass the baton to someone else, David Leckie stepped forward and he ran the event, sometimes with help from his daughter Katy, from 2010 to 2022. After Henry died in 2021, Pat continued her support for this event, due in no small part to David's efforts.

In 2017, David took on the position of Club Treasurer for SCCON, another role he carried out with his usual capability and calmness. If you wanted SCCON to pay your expenses after an event, you had better provide some documentary evidence first!

When motorsport resumed part way through the Coronavirus pandemic, Motorsport UK stipulated that every club must appoint a Covid-19 Officer who had to provide a report after each event to confirm that all the current legal requirements and all MSUK's recommendations had been followed. And who volunteered for a job that was necessary but rather unglamorous? It was David Leckie, who else?

As the country eased out of the Covid crisis, David had just retired from his job with Zurich Insurance and he wanted to fulfill an ambition to run SCCON's Midsummer Classic Car Run. In January 2023, he got as far as volunteering to run this year's event but barely a month later his health had started to deteriorate and he reluctantly gave the job back to Martin Newson. What a shame we never had the chance to see what David's fresh ideas would have brought to that event in its twenty-fifth year.

Over nearly thirty years, David did so much for SCCON, not seeking personal acclaim but for the satisfaction of carrying out his motor club responsibilities to a high standard and seeing the enjoyment of so many participants in SCCON events. Motor sport in the UK totally relies on the selfless dedication of people like David Leckie.

Photo credits - Most of the action photos were taken by Andy Manston of M & H Photography

The other photos are from various sources including Ted Cleghorn's family and Facebook

David Leckie in the world of Autotests, Autosolos and Gymkhanas

David loved to compete in a wide variety of clubman-level events and many SCCON members will remember David organising or competing on Autotests and Autosolos.

In the mid-2000s Chelmsford Motor Club ran a series of gymkhanas with fully competitive speed tests at West Raynham and Woodbridge airfields. They were a forerunner of the Targa Rallies of today and each event attracted around sixty entries. David competed on many of these events in his Vauxhall Nova SR 1.4 with Dave Bell co-driving for him. Peter Riddle competed on most of the same events with Ian Doble in his Nova 1.4 Luxe. Because they were all from SCCON and in cars with very similar performance Chelmsford MC always gave them consecutive starting numbers. With only 1400cc, results were always going to be mid-field, and David and Peter took turns to beat one another. With the help of Peter Skillen in his Peugeot 205XS, David and Peter won the team prize for SCCON at the 2007 Motex Gymkhana at Woodbridge Airfield.



2007 Motex Gymkhana - David (L) and Peter (R) with similar jumping styles on their way to the team prize

David competed in Autotests and Production Car Autotests in a variety of cars including SCCON's K11-type Nissan Micras, Howard Joynt's K12-type Micra, his Ford Focus diesel with his son Tom co-driving, his yellow MG ZR and his Mazda MX5.

Tom sometimes drove too, even beating his Dad on one grass Autotest at Snetterton.



David competing in the 2009 RAF Honington Britvic Gymkhana with son Tom navigating

David had done all the negotiations with Norfolk Property Services for SCCON to use Scottow Enterprise Park (Coltishall Airfield) for Autotests in 2015 and 2016, but he wanted to compete on these events so others took on the various official roles. David managed to compete on all three of them and won his class every time in his red Vauxhall Nova!

Most of the motor sport community in East Anglia will remember David's valiant efforts in Autotests driving his red Nova SR 1.3 registered C85 XAH. This car has been in SCCON ownership since it was new and David progressively developed it, tuning the engine, lowering it and significantly lightening the body.



David sliding his Nova round the cones - 2018 Stanta Autosolo/Autotest



John Peterson's Mini Clubman - at the 2018 Stanta Autosolo/Autotest

David was always competitive in his red Nova, regularly finishing in the top three in his class, but his nemesis was John Peterson in his extensively-lightened ultra-rapid Mini Clubman GT. David finished runner-up to John in the AMSC's (Anglia Motor Sport Club) 2014 Autosolo Challenge. In September of that year at Cambridge Car Club's Autosolo at RAF Wethersfield, David finished as the top AMSC contender and he was very pleased to have beaten John. He did it again at the 2017 Stanta Autosolo where he won his class, beating John Peterson again, this time by 12 seconds. It was a very friendly rivalry.

David Leckie and his 'At-traction' to the Hills

Ted Cleghorn, one of the earliest and most popular members of SCCON, was an expert trials driver despite having lost his right arm in a lorry accident when he was only 22 years old. He always drove manual gearbox cars: an MG Magna before the war and a blue Dellow post-war (when he was usually navigated by his wife Mibs). Ted gained many outright wins, class wins and Premier Awards on the most prestigious trials of the day.



Ted Cleghorn trialling his Dellow. LH photo shows him winning a Premier Award on the 1952 Exeter Trial
RH shot shows Ted on the 1953 Duncows Grave Derbyshire Trial. SCCON badge visible in both photos

David Leckie had a long standing interest in what Ted had achieved and that developed into his own keenness to learn more about Classic Trials. So he bought 'Shorty', a shortened VW Beetle that was well known in the trials world and he tucked it away in his garage, considering himself to be more the custodian of a piece of trials history rather than its owner. He was hoping to restore Shorty and compete with it during his retirement, but that wasn't to be.



David's cut-and-shut short-wheelbase VW competing while in previous ownership

David wrote a series of articles about the major classic trials for 'Spotlight' and the following sections have been extracted from the articles he wrote in 2009.

CLASSIC TRIALS BY DAVID LECKIE

Classic trials are not just for classic cars although many do take part. Classic trials are for all sorts of cars and bikes. What is 'classic' about classic trials is the format of the events.

In addition to the many 'one-day' trial events there are three historic classic trials run by the Motor Cycling Club (MCC) – they are the Lands End Trial, the Exeter Trial and the Edinburgh Trial. The basic format is similar to a Production Car Trial but the penalties are not graded from 12 to 1; instead each section is either "cleaned" or "failed". The road mileage may be anything up to 350 miles with several sections to be tackled at night; the events being run over Friday nights and Saturdays with a typical starting time being midnight and an expected finish of 5.00pm the following day. Huge numbers of entries (cars, motorcycles plus a few three-wheelers), up to 420 in total, take part in these classic trials nowadays.

Whereas most 'one-day' trials have a history of less than fifty years, the MCC classics date back to before the 1st World War and some are still run over substantially the same routes. Awards are based on a simple system of 'Gold' for climbing all the hills, 'Silver' for failing one hill, and 'Bronze' for failing two. Those gaining 'Gold' in all three MCC events in one season receive a 'Triple' - the triallist's ultimate award.

The Edinburgh Trial

The Motor Cycling Club was founded in 1901 and is one of the oldest clubs for the sporting motorist. Today the club has over 1000 members who enjoy their particular style of motor sport on two, three, or four wheels.

In Edwardian England, roads were still the province of the horse and travelling any significant distance was usually by train. Motor vehicles were few and far between; still a novelty believed by many to be no more than rich men's toys. In 1904 the MCC inaugurated a competition which involved motor cycles travelling from London to Edinburgh in a limited time. 46 hardy souls set out from London on the evening of May 20th while officials boarded the midnight express to the Scottish capital to meet them on arrival. Most checked in at all of the 92 route controls and 21 motor cycles completed the trip within the allotted time schedule qualifying for a gold medal. The event has continued to the present day making it one of the longest established motoring events in the world.

It must be said though that today's Edinburgh Trial is a far cry from that original outing and the event has certainly had many different formats over the years to keep pace with changing tastes. By the mid-thirties the route, despite taking in observed sections in the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales, was in danger of becoming too easy and entries were dropping. So it became a rally. After the war the government, through the RAC, wanted to limit the number of long distance road events so the Edinburgh was amalgamated with the MCC's annual Derbyshire trial. This solution meant that most of the action took place in the Peak District taking in hills with emotive names like Bamford Clough and Litton Slack. This is still the style used today for the Edinburgh Trial held on the first weekend of October, and going nowhere near Edinburgh.

Class 'O'

In 1991, to celebrate the Exeter Trial's 90th anniversary, the MCC organised a separate 'Run' which took place alongside the actual trial but used only hills of a non-damaging character. These had figured in past trials but by their nature were no longer difficult enough to be of interest to the most serious competitors. This event-within-an-event was an immediate success with competitors asking for more of the same and from this was born Class 'O'.

It is an entirely separate class in the three MCC classics trials, using most of the same route but deviating to avoid the most challenging hills and taking in some easier ones, usually with a historic background. Unlike the regular classes with their Gold, Silver and Bronze medals, a less formal prize is awarded to those Class 'O' competitors who finish the event without penalty. This is the MCC's Tin Award which appropriately takes the form of a medal cast from genuine Cornish tin sourced from the Blue Hills Mine in Cornwall where test hills are still held on the Lands End Trial.

Any type of car or motorcycle can take part in Class 'O' and consequently it appeals to many for whom the main event might be too competitive or too difficult. These competitors may be newcomers wishing to dip their toes into the water, owners of old, interesting but fragile, machinery which couldn't cope with the hurly burly of the most severe of today's sections but which would be perfectly at home on the less damaging hills of fifty years ago, or front-wheel-drive vehicles that cannot climb the steepest hills. Competitors on two, three or four wheels all run together in true MCC manner, the club being one of the very few where drivers and riders rub shoulders.

It would be a mistake, though, to think that Class O is merely a nostalgic social run in interesting countryside. All the hills have a sting in them. Some hills are surfaced but have enough gradient and tight corners to make drivers think, particularly when faced with a restart on a particularly difficult bit. Those that have gravel or muddy surfaces, although not rough and damaging, are 'stoppers' in their own right ensuring that vehicles have to be carefully prepared and competently driven. To claim a Class 'O' award for a faultless performance is no mean achievement.

Entering the Edinburgh Trial

I have tried to compete on as many different types of event as I can in my Vauxhall Nova. So far I have managed Enduro Rallies, Road Rallies – including the Preston and Drystone, many 12-Cars, Production Car Trials (PCTs), Grass and Tarmac Autotests and Gymkhanas – not bad for a car that only cost me £250.

For a while I've been looking at what other events I can compete in and I'd always had an interest in car trials – particularly 'Classic Trials'. So, after persuading Peter Riddle to be my navigator and 'bouncer', I thought I'd have a go at one. The Edinburgh Trial is actually the closest event to us being based in Derbyshire and so I decided to enter it this year. I had a perception that it would be like a combination of a Classic Car Run, a slow 'Preston Rally' and a PCT.

Being front wheel drive my Nova will never be competitive against the rear-engined and rear wheel drive cars and the hill-climb 'specials' and as it would be my first attempt I decided to compete in Class 'O'. A quick scan of the entry list saw we would be competing against a BMW R26 motorcycle, Triumph Trophy, Lambretta (yes!) and other motorbikes while the cars included along with many others a Wolseley Hornet Special, a Singer Le Mans, Austin Healey Sprites, Dellow's, Lièges, Hillman Imps, Citroen 2CVs, Ford Escorts, Duttons, VW Beetles, Toyota MR2s, Marlin kit cars and some 'Specials'.

Having already competed on several rough road rallies like the Preston and the Drystone, the Nova is already well protected with sump and tank guards, the exhaust and brake lines are all well protected and skidded. But when reading and re-reading the rules I still had a few things to think about. Do I add ballast or not? Do I raise the ride height and what tyres will I need? Ballast was an issue and on a front wheel drive car we needed to have the weight as far forward as possible - preferably ahead of the front wheels and we wanted as little weight as possible at the rear of the car. In the end I filled a length of plastic drainpipe with concrete which I was able to secure in front of the radiator and just behind the bumper. It wasn't that heavy - lead would have been better – but it was within an inch or two of the front of the car, safe and secure and within the rules. We considered putting the spare wheel on top of the bonnet like some Land Rovers but it hampered vision too much.

I decided to keep tools to a minimum and those that were essential were carried in the front passenger foot-well. The ever helpful Mark Annison at Canada Garage sorted out a patch of rust around one of the rear spring pans and that work would be needed for the MOT anyway – assuming the car survives the trial!

After experimenting in the garage I had found that the stud spacing on some old brake discs was the same as the studs on the top of the Nova's front struts and I hatched a cunning plan to cut out the centres to act as spacers to sit on top of the strut and raise the front ride height. After one of those eureka moments I realised I could achieve the same with no effort if I used alloy wheel spacers. So I ordered a couple of pairs of different thicknesses and they fitted perfectly. Mark welded in a couple of longer bolts to the strut tops and I used a 20mm spacer - we could have used more but I felt this was the best compromise. I would have liked to have raised the rear by a similar amount but I didn't have another eureka moment so decided to leave it unmodified.

Mud and snow tyres and rally tyres aren't allowed on classic trials. This wasn't really an issue as such but it became an issue for my wallet because I hadn't got any that were suitable and more importantly that were legal for this event. I'd have to buy some. Tyres have to be from an approved list, so I took the list to my local tyre fitters and when I explained what I was doing, it caused some amusement. I wanted a set of tyres but I wasn't interested in the brand; they just had to be cheap! I ended up with some 80-series Nexens working on the basis that the extra sidewall height would be useful.

A few nights before we left for the start at Tamworth I read horror stories in the MCC club magazine of competitors failing the first four hills – not agonisingly close to reaching the top but not even being able to leave the start line! A call to Peter steadied my nerves; we weren't in it to win but for the fun, the camaraderie, and for an adventure into the unknown.....

David Leckie's exploits in the world of Trialling

David asked me if I would navigate for him in his 1400cc Nova on the 2009 Edinburgh Trial. Neither of us had even spectated on a classic trial so we would be entering as total novices in Class 'O' for "less competitive" vehicles.

"Less competitive" means normal cars rather than fully developed trials cars, which are built solely for climbing ridiculously steep hills with bumpy, muddy and often very slippery surfaces. The ultimate trials car is rear-wheel-drive with the engine over the driven wheels, has an exceptionally tight turning circle and is ballasted so there is little weight on the front wheels. This completely bastardises any semblance of normal steering and handling so driving one on a tarmac road can be 'interesting'.

Class 'O' gets an easier route, missing out the steepest hills and the hills that class 'O' does tackle are made easier by one of two methods. On some hills there is a stop-and-restart box for the main classes, but class 'O' crews drive straight through the box without stopping. The other way to make a hill easier is by having two 'stopping boxes' - one for the main event and a different box for class 'O' where a re-start will not be as difficult.

The 2009 Edinburgh Trial had 261 entries, comprising 84 solo motorcycles, 13 motorcycle combinations, a single Reliant three-wheeler and 163 cars. Because of the sheer number of entries, it took a long time to process everyone through the start formalities at the M42 Services at Tamworth. The first motor bike started at 1-30am on Saturday morning, but with our late number we didn't leave until 5-30am.

We had a look around some of the other cars. There were saloon cars of all ages, pre-war MG's and several Liège kit cars which are tiny and very light with Reliant engines. They looked as if they'd blow away in a stiff breeze - more on that later!

Eventually we set off for the long-ish run out to the first hill near Ashbourne. The route had been issued during the week before the event and was fairly easy to follow.

Just before the first special test at "Deep Rake", we stopped to let the front tyres down to 14 psi. This was a compromise because even less pressure would have got us better traction, but with increased risk of getting a puncture. "Go when you're ready" said the marshal - and we scrambled our way up the steep, gravelly farm track without stopping. Unlike rallies where you can see your penalties on your time card, classic trial penalties are only recorded on the marshals' check-sheets. Because of the size of the entry and the huge number of marshals, you don't even get the results at the finish - they are published some time later!

After we had cleared the top of the hill, we joined other competitors all pumping their tyres up for the following link section on public roads. David used an electric pump for the front wheel on his side while I pumped my side with a foot pump. We quickly got into the routine of doing these tyre pressure adjustments for every hill.

The character of the hills varied a lot and some had evocative names like Wigber Low, Middleton Steep and Bamford Clough. From the start we'd been favoured with dry weather and we had climbed every hill successfully on our way to the first timed speed test at Longstone Moor. The test was a straight-ish section of loose surface into a grassy figure eight and then a very bumpy straight to the stop-astride finish. It was like the bumpiest Autotest you've ever done and David drove it very well. The next hill was called Black Harry and, although it was straight, this was our toughest test so far. There was a very steep section with rocky outcrops in the track surface. Too slow and the sump-guard scraping on the ground might stop us, while too fast could damage the car. I sat as far forwards on the seat as I could and up we went, with just enough speed to

keep going. Then it was a gentle run to the breakfast halt at the "Bull in the Thorn" pub on the A515 where we had a compulsory stop of at least an hour.

After another fairly easy ascent up a gravelly track to the south of Blackwell we got to Hollinsclough village for another mandatory rest halt; it was much more relaxed than competing on a rally. While we were having our tea and cakes in the village hall, the heavens opened and we thought this would make the subsequent hills more difficult, But the rain stopped and an almighty gale blew up. We'd struck lucky because while we were on our way to the Hartington white (well known to road rally folk) the strong wind was drying the surface of the hill. It was extremely bumpy but David drove skilfully to get us to the top without stopping.

On one of the link sections, we were following a 1950's Dellow on a wide yellow road and I suggested we could overtake. "I'm not sure if I dare to," was David's reply "'cos he's going all over the place." Under the influence of the 50 mph wind gusts, the lightweight Dellow with its old fashioned steering box was being blown all over the road. But we did manage to pass him when he had a big veer to the left!

After a couple more fairly straightforward hills we came to the finale at Dudwood Farm. The main event had tackled 14 hills but for Class 'O' this was our tenth and last hill consisting of a short but very tight and twisty ascent through a wood.

The final part, still at Dudwood Farm was another Special Test against the clock, mainly on grass with a couple of very tight hairpin-turns, a small bank to cross at a 45 degree angle and then up a narrow track to stop-astride the finish line.

Then it was back to the Bull in the Thorn where a vicious wind was howling across the car park. Some competitors were doing work on their cars, but just opening the bonnet was risky because the wind threatened to whip it out of your hands. You certainly couldn't leave it propped up without holding onto it as well. We felt sorry for the marshals who'd been standing outside for many hours in the wind and rain, and we'd had a very comfortable run compared to the motorcyclists.

Once inside the pub I handed in our time card which only had our times at the main controls recorded. The award for a clean run in Class 'O' is a tin award and as we'd climbed every hill, I duly recorded our claim for one, hoping that a couple of very minor roll backs when starting off would be ignored. By now it was late on Saturday afternoon so we had a meal while chatting to other competitors and then headed for home.

It wasn't until two weeks after the event that the results were published on the MCC website, but it was worth the wait. Of the 47 entries in our class, every one of the motor cycles had failed at least one hill and only 16 cars got a tin award for ascending every hill correctly. We were given clean runs on all the hills and we were fastest in our class on both the speed tests beating our nearest rival by 2.6 seconds. We were effectively the outright winners of Class 'O' though no trophy is awarded for this class.

I had thoroughly enjoyed spending so much time with David on this event, and it was certainly very different from the other forms of motorsport I'd done.

Peter Riddle 2009

After his success in 2009, David arranged for a three-car SCON team to tackle the following year's Edinburgh Trial, entering in Class 'O' again. David took Howard Joynt to navigate for him in his Vauxhall Nova, Julian Riley entered his 1972 Saab 96 accompanied by his son Josh, and the third team car was Peter Riddle's Nova SR 1300 with his son Mike in the left hand seat.



David Leckie and Howard Joynt, climbing a hill on the 2010 Edinburgh Trial in their Nova SR

Things went very differently from the previous year. There was no rain at all on the Saturday of the trial, but there was no wind either and the surfaces on all the hills stayed damp from previous rainfall and dew. So, whereas David and Peter had successfully climbed all ten hills in 2009, traction was much harder to find in 2010. David and Julian managed to climb only four of the ten hills, while Peter was successful on just two of them and, having been fastest on the first speed test, he over-shot the stop-astride line on the second one. Because all the entries were made together as a SCON team, the organisers had provided consecutive numbers. And that enabled the one thing that was better than the previous year - it was the companionship and the banter between the six friends while pumping up their tyres after every hill.

David also entered the 2012 Edinburgh Trial with Dave Bell navigating for him. They successfully climbed six of the ten hills and were 4th fastest out of 53 competitors in class 'O' on the single speed test that was held that year, but six hills wasn't enough to gain an award.



David co-driving in Howard's Marlin on ECMC's 2020 Norman Perren Trial at Seckford Hall

David made one more entry on the Edinburgh trial in 2018, navigating for Howard Joynt in his red Marlin sports kit car. But they suffered huge delays on the A14 during their journey to Tamworth, and had to start right at the back of the field and then..... the heavens opened, the windscreen wipers stopped working and the Marlin had no roof! David couldn't read the soggy maps and the equally soggy road-book, Howard couldn't see where he was going, and they were getting cold. They decided to be masochists no more and called it a day, returning to the start at the M42 services where they got warm and dry. After loading the Marlin onto Howard's transporter truck they headed for home.

David was organising SCCON's Lyng Trial at Caddes Hill, so he didn't compete on that event but he did compete as Howard's co-driver in the Marlin on other clubs' events such as the 2018 March Hare Classic Trial run by Falcon Motor Club (where they gained a respectable finish among some of the trials specials) and Eastern Counties Motor Club's single venue Norman Perren Trial at Seckford Hall. Howard lent the Marlin to David for him to drive it on the 2018 Wattisfield Trial with Martin Newson navigating, but David didn't really fit the car and, even with the seat removed and David sitting on a piece of foam, he wasn't comfortable, so that was just a one-off. David did compete in one or two more trials sharing one of Howard's SCCON Nissan Micras; each of them taking turns to drive it. Wouldn't it have been great if David could have competed in 'Shorty' as he had hoped to?

Winning an all-night road rally



David making a splash in his Nova GTE complete with metal SCCON badge

David occasionally competed on all-night road rallies, including tough ones like the Drystone and the Preston Rallies. And he was the outright winner of one road rally in 2004 when he and Dave Bell won SCCON's 164 mile long Poxihen Rally on maps 132 and 133. The rally was organised by Simon Tebbutt who created the name Poxihen as an anagram of the Phoenix Rally, which at one time had been SCCON's premier 200-mile road rally. The competitors had very tricky conditions to contend with after a blizzard hit Norfolk an hour before the start. Of those who completed the whole route, David was 3rd fastest, but he beat the experienced second-placed crew of Chelmsford Motor Club's Tony Michaels and Paul Barrett by being the only crew with no fails. Mark Banham and Paul Haylock finished third. Matt Fowle and Bob Blows (who would become joint Clerk of the Course for The Preston Rally three years later) and SCCON's Brian and Ben Marquis both drowned their engines in the same ford. Other SCCON crews on the event included Rob Kitchen and James Savage (Peugeot 205) who finished fourth on the driver's first ever full night event, and Julian and Josh Riley in their Saab 96. Josh, aged sixteen, was making his rallying debut and they won the novice award.

David Leckie's exploits on SCCON 12-Cars

David started competing in SCCON 12-cars soon after he joined SCCON and it wasn't long before he posted an unlikely win on the 1996 P&H 12-car. Navigated by Stuart Gowing, he won in his bright yellow Lada Riva 1200. It may have been sturdy and reliable, but brisk it was not, so all credit to David and Stuart.

I navigated for David on SCCON's 1999 Breckland 12-car in another car that was a bit lacking in the performance stakes. It was David's thirty-year-old Triumph Herald 1200. And we so nearly won that event. But I went the wrong way round a triangle of yellow roads and the resulting fail dropped us from first to third place. Even today I feel sorry that I failed to get David a win in that very unlikely rally car. But our third place did help David to be the runner-up driver in SCCON's 1999/2000 12-car rally championship by a single point.

David was competing on most SCCON 12-cars in a variety of cars, either driving or navigating, and his next win came when he was in the left hand seat. Mark Annison and David won the 12-12 12-car (12-12 because it was on map 144) in Mark's 2.0 Escort MkII. Now that was a brisk car!

After David bought his Nova SR 1.4 he reverted to driving with Dave Bell navigating for him. They were a successful pairing, winning no less than five SCCON 12-cars between 2004 and 2007. Then when his daughter Katy reached fourteen, the minimum age for competing on 12-cars, he teamed up with her, often in his Ford Focus TDCi - but wasn't that his company car? At that time, I was competing with Daniel Key in my Nova 1.3, taking turns as to which one of us would drive. Over the next few years, it was remarkable how often David and I gained consecutive finishing positions with either one of us in front. David won a couple more 12-cars with Katy: first the 2008 BPE 12-car in his Toyota Auris and then back in the Nova to win the 2008 Ward Construction 12-car. In 2008/09 David and Katy came 2nd in SCCON's 12-car championship, only beaten by the far more experienced crew of Chris More and Ian Doble. David competed on his last SCCON 12-car, with Katy, in 2014.

Peter Riddle

The 2009 Drystone Rally

The Drystone, run by Mid-Derbyshire Motor Club, had a reputation as one of the toughest all night road rallies, using many of Derbyshire's very fast white roads. And David wanted to have a go at it. So I agreed to navigate for him in his Vauxhall Nova SR.



David Leckie and Peter Riddle on Mid Derbyshire Motor Club's 2009 Drystone Rally

David hadn't got many results to get us a good starting position so we were seeded at 56 out of 60 entries. We drove to the start at Carsington Water and we were in it just for fun - that lasted until the starter flagged us off! We had a cracking start to the event, passing several other crews on our way to first petrol where we were in 23rd place. This was a super drive by David in a 1400cc car against some very quick opposition, and he continued to catch and pass a few more cars. But then that old rallying gremlin of 'Force Majeure' came along to disrupt our progress.

One section had a very long white road across a field, then down a long gentle slope and through a deep ford. But when we got to the ford, there were two cars stuck in it and they were obviously going to be there for quite a while. We had no alternative but to turn round and re-trace our way back along the long white. This had two effects on our final result - first we got a fail (30 mins penalty) because we couldn't approach the time control after the ford from the correct direction. This applied to all the cars running behind us too. But we'd been only the second car to arrive at the ford after the two cars got stuck. So when the cars behind us saw everyone coming away from the blocked ford, they turned round straight away, losing much less time than us and the further back a car had been running behind us, the less time they lost. We finished 29th overall; still pretty good when we'd been seeded at 56 but without 'that ford', we'd probably have been in the top twenty.

Peter Riddle - November 2023

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER STUFF

Apart from Special Stage Rallying that he would have liked to tackle had it not been so costly, David managed to take part in all the motor sport disciplines he'd wanted to. He had no desire to go motor racing (another expensive form of motor sport) but he did drive his Mazda MX5 with his son Tom on some track days at Snetterton.



David and his MX5 in the pit-lane at Snetterton during a track day

David also had a great interest in speedboats and at one time he owned a tiny Ford 100E-powered Albatross racing boat. He later bought another small historic motor boat that he intended to be an additional 'retirement project'. And David was in the process of arranging for SCCON members to visit Oulton Broad Motor Boat Club to watch powerboat racing when the Coronavirus hit. Sadly that was another ambition that David was unable to complete.

Weddings

On a happier note, David was able to fulfill his ambition to see both his daughter Katy and his son Tom get married, and he also attended another wedding with a SCCON connection. When SCCON's Membership Secretary Alan Kirkham was unavailable on the date of a wedding in September 2018, he trusted David to drive his 1946 Armstrong Siddeley Typhoon as the wedding car.



The Armstrong Siddeley wedding car that David drove, outside Stower Grange Hotel in Drayton, co-incidentally the venue for several of SCCON's recent Dinner Dances.

SOME COMMENTS ABOUT DAVID POSTED ON SCCON'S FACEBOOK PAGE

Always calm, capable and dependable.

David was the reason I joined SCCON - what a sad loss.

Always a friendly face at events and did so much to make the Lyng Trial one of our 'must do' events.

A kind, considerate and helpful chap.

What a lovely man he was.

A true competitor and volunteer in this region.

Such a lovely guy, what a huge loss.

A true gentleman, so loved.

Always such a good, kind, helpful person.

Hugely likeable and dependably level-headed, a great competitor too.

Ever smiling, one of the SCCON stalwarts.

I had the great pleasure of his company.

David was a stalwart, dependable guy who never let anyone down.

Always a sane voice, he will be sadly missed in SCCON and in the wider world.

A true gentleman. David was a great guy.

I remember him talking me through my first 12-car; a lovely bloke.

A real gentleman who will be greatly missed.

David was such a lovely gentleman.

Such a great guy. A really nice bloke.

We always had such good bantering sessions at events.

Thank you David.

Always calm and helpful, always polite.

David was so very helpful and approachable.

We have lost one of the best.

David Leckie and the Preston Rally

'The One and Only' Preston Rally organised by Chelmsford Motor Club has a reputation for being the roughest, most car-breaking and most challenging road rally in Great Britain. David's relationship with the Preston goes back nearly thirty years. He competed on the Preston fourteen times, sometimes driving, sometimes navigating, and for most of the years when he didn't compete he marshalled instead.

David's first entry in 1995 was driving his own 'strong but slow' bright yellow Lada Riva 1300 with SCCON member Gavin Fielding navigating. They retired before they reached the first petrol halt. The following year they finished, albeit as last-placed finishers, but for a novice crew, just to complete the Preston Rally is an achievement in itself.

For 1997 David swapped seats to navigate for SCCON's Mike Lambert in Mike's blue Hillman Avenger 1500. And he got his best result, coming home 13th overall and 2nd in class on an event that had attracted a disappointing 34 entries. And who came 16th overall? It was Owen Turner and Andrew Dadswell in their Austin Metro, a crew who would go on to become multiple winners of 'The Preston'.



Mike Lambert and David Leckie on the 1997 Preston Rally

The following year Mike and David brought the Avenger to another finish, but it was a repeat of David's 1996 'last classified finisher award'.

From 2000 to 2002 David navigated for Mark Annison, twice in a Ford Sierra XR 4x4 (before four-wheel-drive was disallowed for the Preston) and once in a Ford Escort Mk 2. Mark now prepares rally cars for a living so he might be embarrassed that they retired every time with suspension or exhaust problems.



David Leckie on the 2004 Preston Rally - was this where the rocker arm broke?

From 2003 to 2009, David drove his own Vauxhall Novas on five Preston Rallies with Dave Bell navigating for him, except for 2004 when Peter Riddle handled the maps. He gained finishes between 25th and 34th overall, but the Preston, by now attracting sixty entries, was tougher than ever and attracted more cars that could out-gun a 1400cc Nova. David didn't fare so well with Peter when a rocker arm broke going over a jump on the very first competitive section causing the engine to go onto three cylinders and retirement beckoned.



Peter Riddle & David Leckie near the start and near the finish of the 2015 Preston - car wash required!

He had two more goes in 2015 and 2017, by now back in the navigator's seat for Peter Riddle in his blue 1400cc Nova. They finished 15th overall and 17th overall respectively. Respectable results with only 70 bhp and sometimes running on only 3 cylinders on the wettest sections. In 2017 only forty of the seventy starters finished the rally and a third of those who made it to the end were nursing their cars with various problems.



David taking their time at the end of the last test on the 2017 Preston Rally

Sadly David clocked in to his own final time control far too early.