

# YB CARRIES OFF CUMBRIA

MGs came out on top in Cumbria in June when a whole variety of Abingdon products took part in the Cumbria Classic Weekend. Miles Whitelock from County Antrim took the Car of the Show award with his superbly restored YB which he had rebuilt from a basket case shell found in a barn. He drove the car to the show – including the ferry crossing from Northern Ireland – took part in the Saturday run through the Lake District and then won both his class and the outright award. Other MG winners included Alan Harrison with his TC who was second in the Pre-1950 class, while the Fifties Sports Cars went to the lovely MGA Coupé of Stuart Jackson ahead of the TF of Miles Casson. John Harwood was third in the Sixties Saloon class with his beautifully restored 1100.

In the Classic Caper there was no luck for the 1989 winner Ian Lambley who had differential problems with his MG Midget and had to be content with second in class. However Chris Veevers took the Pre-1950 class in his TC and the Fifties Sports Cars saw Matthew Baker and Stuart Hamilton in their MGAs take first and second. Andy Bailey did well in his MG 1100 to take third in the Post Sixties Saloons against a hoard of Mini Coopers. The equivalent sports car class saw David Marsden win in his MGB from Neil Walmsely's Midget while Nigel Payne won the Grand Touring class with his 'B GT.

The Cumbria Classic Weekend is now established as one of the biggest and best classic car events in the north of England. It has a unique blend of semi-competitive action, superb scenery and an excellent classic show. Run over the mid-summer weekend the event consists

**The third running of the Cumbria Classic Caper was fully booked weeks ahead. GRAEME FORRESTER reports on the success of MGs on this popular event.**

of the Cumbria Classic Caper on the Saturday and the Car Show on the Sunday. Many enthusiasts do both events and stay in the historic city of Carlisle over the weekend. Perhaps the secret of the success of the Classic Caper is that it is run by the very experienced Wigton Motor Club who have been organising competitive events for years. This expertise shows in the overall and detailed organisation of the run compared with many of the similar events which are run up and down the country.

The event this year attracted a full 120 entries with many crews unable to get a run as the organisers limited the numbers in the cause of good public relations. By far the most popular make was MG but there was a wide spread of entries from cars of the Twenties to the most modern, a 1984 Ferrari. Entrants came from all over the British Isles, including two from Northern Ireland, while a TR5 came from France.

Half the cars took part in the six special tests at the halts along the route while the others were just along for the run. However, at each halt there were time controls which kept the event running on schedule and all competitors had to take their full time at each halt, between the 'in' and 'out' controls. This kept the cars running at one minute

intervals and avoided any problems for other road users.

The Caper started from the medieval courtyard of Carlisle Castle where the pre-event documentation was done and competitors received their 'tulip' style road books, time cards, rally plates, lapel badges, sweatshirts and a welcome cup of coffee. The top seeds included both the previous winners of the event with Roger Atkinson in his very quick 1450cc Frogeye Sprite and Ian Lambley with his MG Midget. The mayor of Carlisle set each of the cars away on the short run to the first halt at the Pirelli tyre factory on the outskirts of Carlisle where the first autotest took place.

The route then took the cars into the northeastern fells of the Lake District and included many of the classic roads that were used on road rallies of the Sixties and Seventies. The fell road over Calebrack featured the infamous ford where each car was photographed. These were then processed and presented to the crews as they booked into the finish – a very unexpected but welcome addition to the event this year. The next halt was for coffee at Hutton-in-the-Forest, the historic home of Lord Inglewood MEP where the autotesters were faced with a new problem, called the hedgehog squash, which involved squashing eight sponges with the nearside wheels while completing the course. This was slightly more of a problem for the two three-wheeler Morgans which were tackling the event with some gusto.

A shorter section took the cars to Dalemain House near Ullswater in the eastern Lakes for the lunch halt. Here competitors were welcomed by the Chairman of Eden District Council who presented each crew with a souvenir coaster. The cars were lined up in front of the Georgian house which made for some super photos. A high quality lunch was available here while the crews were able to enjoy sharing their experiences and discuss their motor cars.

However, all was not well with the leading autotesters as Roger Atkinson broke his gearbox while Ian Lambley was suffering a severe oil loss from the differential on his very quick Midget and recorded a slow time on this test. This meant that of the front runners it looked as though Steve Murphy in his works replica Mini Cooper S was in the lead while David Rushton's race spec Morgan V8 was using its power to good effect.



Andrew Baker cornering hard at Braithwaite. Photo by Jim Turner.

# CLASSIC

Ian Anderson was going well with his Series-4 Lotus Seven. Geoff Stephenson was finding that the Ferrari Mondiale was not the best car for autotests but plugged on gamely. Stuart Turnbull who won the Solway Rally last year in his Midget had opted to use his MGB V8 this year but found its handling was not in the same league as the little Midget. Regular competitor John Nichol was putting in some good times with the E-type Coupé and Ken Bell was going great guns with the 1938 Morgan 4/4.

A run alongside Ullswater took crews to some of the twistier and hillier roads on the run as they turned west towards Keswick, the heart of the Lake District. The route provided superb views of the mountains which surround the town. The cars parked for a mid-afternoon break besides the shores of Derwentwater and again the Chairwoman of Allerdale DC presented everyone with a locally hewn coaster. Large crowds of holiday makers gathered to admire the cars and watch the great skill of the drivers as they tackled the autotest.

The toughest part of the event was now before the competitors as they tackled the infamous Honister and Newlands Passes which are now tarmaced and not a problem for modern cars but were still a challenge for the older of the competing vehicles. The weather was warm and sunny as the cars completed the part of the run and arrived at Braithwaite on the shores of Bassenthwaite Lake for an ice cream halt and a driving skill test.

Along the side of Bassenthwaite lake – the only real 'lake' in the Lake District – and past Wythop Forest, a well known stage on the Lombard RAC Rally, the



**Overall Cumbria Classic winner Miles Harris in his 1953 MG YB leads Peter Remington's 1952 Jaguar MkV. Photo by Jim Turner.**

event then headed east over the northern fells taking the cars into the area best known for being haunted by the legendary John Peel who is buried in the village of Caldbeck on the north east fringe of the national park. The clear air and the good weather gave superb views over the Solway Firth to Scotland and east to the Pennines. This left the final run in along the river Caldew to Carlisle Race Course for the final test, a buffet meal and awards ceremony.

Sunday dawned with a slight drizzle but by midday this turned into warm sunshine which made for a great day at the Cumbria Classic Car Show at Carlisle Race Course. Over 200 cars and ten clubs were on display while there

were arena displays by the Wigton Autotest Team, model helicopters and a pipe band.

Judging was done by self-judging in classes with the emphasis firmly on pride of ownership and regular use – there is no place for the Benson & Hedges freaks in Cumbria! The award winners were then on display in the arena where they then self-judged the Car of the Show which was the MG YB Saloon of Miles Harris who had driven the car from Co. Antrim in Northern Ireland, taken part in the Capar and then won his class and the outright award at the show. This is exactly in the tradition of how MGs are meant to be used.



**Len Brush negotiates the ford at Calebrack in his 1958 ZB Magnette. A nice touch of the Cumbria Classic was that all entrants were photographed here and the pictures processed in time to hand out as keep sakes at the Carlisle finish.**

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