

## **Chairman's Report to the 2018 Annual General Meeting of SACC**

In line with what I did last year, I am writing this report for both the formal AGM and the following General Meeting. Like last year, I have looked back at what I wrote in 2017 and, surprise surprise, find myself wanting to go over much the same ground.

I wrote at some length in my report to the March meeting last year about the ongoing work of the SMS project and my enthusiasm for it is not diminished in any way. I know that the sport in Scotland is very privileged to benefit from public funding through SportScotland and the benefits of this should be something that all clubs try to gain a share of. MSA clubs in other parts of the UK are rightly envious of the opportunities we have and I want to put on record my thanks, both personally and on behalf of you all, for the work done by Rory & Gillian.

By way of reminder, the focus of their work is on: increasing participation; promoting performance at all levels; protecting and increasing venues and events; and strengthening the club structure. A particular highlight of 2017 was the launch of the SMS Academy. Run in conjunction with the MSA performance team, this is a unique opportunity for young people (aged 14-20) to hone their raw talent through a structured programme of development. A recent highlight was a visit to one of their sessions at Knockhill by Scottish Sports Minister, Aileen Campbell.

Throughout 2017, Gillian in particular worked with several SACC member clubs and this will continue this coming year. Towards the end of 2017, SMS ran the first 'Club Development Workshop'. Feedback from this was very positive but I was disappointed at the relatively limited support from SACC clubs. There are plans to run another day later in 2018 and I hope that more of your clubs will be able to avail yourselves of this valuable opportunity.

New for 2018 will be an initiative developed by Rory in conjunction with SACC clubs to encourage participation by people new to our sport in AutoSOLO events using normal road cars.

Against this very positive background therefore, it was a considerable frustration, even dare I say an annoyance, when in early 2017, the MSA decided not to renew the contract for Alison Clark, the RDO in Scotland. It would be remiss of me not to record my appreciation, again personally and on your behalf, formally in this report to the SACC AGM.

Clubs remain key to the success of the SMS strategy and to the future of motorsport more generally. I know that clubs already offer a range of events including Targa, navigational and 12-car rallies, plus autotests and autoSOLOs. The SMS team are working especially hard to promote these types of 'entry level' competition to new people. Congratulations to East Ayrshire Car Club who secured third place in the 2017 MSA Club of the Year awards.

An important consideration for any organisation is how best to communicate with its stakeholders. In 2015 & 2016, SACC had set out a strong stall through the work of David Law. I fear David might have set the bar too high because nobody has felt willing or able to step into his shoes when he stepped down. I would ask all member clubs to help us find a new communications champion.

I said this last year but it remains a priority and is thus worth repeating that all of the SACC clubs should think positively about how they communicate with their members and perhaps more importantly, with potential members. We know that we have a great story to tell but sometimes we are shy about telling it.

Clearly this chairman's report, which is in part a review of the past year, can't ignore the Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI) looking into the incidents at 2013 Snowman Rally and the 2014 Jim Clark Rally. I know that this was a significant distraction for many people who were called as witnesses. The findings were published towards the end of the year and are freely available for anyone who wants to look into the detail. Suffice to say that the sport came out fairly well, albeit not perfect and the MSA are working now on any modifications required to event safety.

Turning to the competitive scene, Scotland can look back on 2017 as a year of successful domestic motor sport and also good results at national level across a range of championships. Scotland can herald yet another world champion in 13-year-old Dexter Patterson who won the CIK-FIA OK-Junior World Championship while Heather Calder was crowned MSA British Sprint Champion.

Knockhill continues to be a focal point for several sporting disciplines. I want to again record my thanks to Stuart Gray and all the team at Knockhill for the support they give to SACC and SMS which includes allowing space for promotional stands at events and also making discounted tickets available to SACC member clubs.

The topic of marshals continues to feature at the very front of delegates thoughts at every SACC general meeting. I wish I had a magic wand to solve all of the issues around motor sport volunteers but I have not found it yet. I am certain that these discussions will continue into 2018 and beyond and would urge anyone who has any ideas to bring them forward. Once again, I want to put on record my personal appreciation to our Training Manager, Rupert Hine, and to all the team behind him who I will not name in case I cause offence by missing someone. I do appreciate that it is a big team effort.

I fear I must apologise again for a lack of action on my part in that I have still not made any more progress in streamlining the SACC proceedings. Again, I acknowledge that suggestions for change have been made but none of these have yet been taken forward. The current structure of four face to face meetings each year does seem to suit some people but I am aware that travelling distance makes this difficult for others while the meeting content does seem repetitive. I continue to welcome any thoughts on this and repeat the questions I asked last year. Are there too many meetings or not enough? What is best for them in terms of location? Can we look to use technology to allow people to join without the need to travel? Put more simply, what do you want from your Association?

Finally, I want to record my personal thanks to my fellow SACC Executives. In particular to Gerry who announced his intention to stand down as Treasurer last year and whose wise head I hope I can still turn to if needed, but also to Lock, Raymond and the 'new kid' Grahame. Thanks also to president John Cleland and to MSA Council representative Bruce Lyle for their support and guidance through 2017. Bruce too is standing down and I trust that he will also be on hand if I need him.

Finally, finally. I am writing this report in time to have it distributed to you three weeks ahead of the meeting so I will ask you to bear with me as usual when I have to rabbit on about everything that I forgot to say using the excuse that it came up at the last minute 😊.

**Pete Weall**

Chair Scottish Association of Car Clubs