

## **Chairman's Report to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of SACC**

*(Prepared by Vice Chairman, Pete Weall on behalf of Roger Reed)*

I will keep this report to the AGM brief in the same way that I hope the meeting itself will be brief but in saying that, the Chairman's Report to the AGM gives me an opportunity both to look back on last year and forward to the year ahead.

The reason for looking back is two-fold. We should never shy away from celebrating success. Reflecting on good times gives us all warm feelings and provides the encouragement to try to do it again, or to do even better. But looking back also lets us remember what went less well. The only value in doing this is to learn from what might have gone wrong and make sure we do everything possible to avoid it happening again.

Looking forward is even more important. We should know that as competitive drivers, we don't get where we want to be by looking behind us in the mirror but by looking ahead through the windscreen (or perhaps the side window for some drivers☺). Looking ahead is not just about seeing what is actually in front of you but about interpreting the way ahead in a way that helps anticipate what might be round the next corner or obstacle.

I want to begin by looking both back and forwards at the Association itself and in particular, how it is run. Last year saw a number of changes, some more gradual than others, in what we do and how we do it. We have continued to evolve the format of the General meetings by putting more emphasis on written reports so as to allow more time to discuss the points of real interest to member clubs. There is clear evidence of clubs working together, often across disciplines. Examples of this included the GoMotorsport event at Knockhill and the GoRally night held last month. There have been subtle changes to the Association website to try to give it a fresher look.

By far the most significant development has been the creation of the Association newsletter of which there have been six published to date. The first of these was in May 2015 and had 12 pages. It had distinct gaps in coverage of the various motor sport disciplines. This improved over subsequent issues as people began to generate more material to be included. The most recent edition is up to 24 pages. The SACC newsletter has come in for significant praise from the MSA and is held out as an exemplar to other Associations. I must take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to David Law for his work on this.

But our work is not yet done. There is still much opportunity to do things better. We can continue to look at what value is gained from the General meetings. Are there too many of them 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? How can we ensure succession plans are in place for the SACC executive and co-ordinator roles? No answers, just questions to be addressed.

Turning to the competitive scene, Scotland can look back on 2015 as a year of successful domestic motor sport and also good results at national level across a range of championships. There were Scottish based UK champions in events from Cadet Karts through Sprints to BTCC.

On the race scene 2015 year was one of the most successful ever in Scotland with an average entry of 130 cars at each of the 7 meetings run by SMRC including full 32 car grids for the BMW Compact Cup. The 2016 season has not started yet but hopes for the season ahead are very positive.

The Scottish Speed scene in 2015 saw five championships running with 28 events spread across 7 venues. Events around the North East had fewer competitors due to the down-turn in the oil and gas industry while some lowlands events saw almost record entry levels.

The 2015 rally season was mixed with over-subscribed entries on SV tarmac events but poor entries for most forest rallies. The low points included losing the iconic McRae Stages at the last minute but also the early cancellation of the Merrick Rally. There was frustration that the Jim Clark Rally is still not able to return to the closed road format due to the ongoing police investigation into the 2014 event.

Recognising that there is still an appetite for loose surface rallying, the Association is promoting the Rally Time Trial format as a lower cost alternative to full forest stage rallies. Road/navigational rallies are also suffering but somewhat offset by the increasing strength of classic/Targa events.

The Cross Country / Off Road disciplines are also very active. The final British Hill Rally Championship round ran in Scotland with a full entry and signs are positive for this format of motor sport.

Autotests, autocross, grass tests, production car trials and karting remain at the core of the competitive calendar for many clubs while the autosolo format is gaining favour.

Attracting, developing and retaining volunteers, especially marshals, remain key priorities across all disciplines and this was a hot topic at most of our 2015 meetings. For 2016, the Association have scheduled a comprehensive programme of more than 20 training events spread across the country. The level of attendance at the ones already held is very encouraging. While on the subject of volunteers, the rally community in Scotland were especially pleased to see David Barlow recognised as the overall MSA Volunteer of the Year for 2015.

At the strategic level, a small team led by Rory Bryant, put together an updated strategic plan for the period 2016 to 2020. This was presented to the SportsScotland investment board late in 2015 as part of a bid for increased funding. A key part of the strategy is to increase participation (both competitors and volunteers) and the member clubs of the Association are a vital part of implementing this plan.

Returning to the 2016 AGM, the only non-routine item on the agenda is that the SACC Executive proposes a number of changes to the Association Rules. The changes are mostly procedural designed to make running the Association easier for the small group of volunteers who keep it going. These changes have been circulated in advance for you to review and comment.

I want to draw particular attention to the proposed change to the way club's pay for membership of the organisation. This change is to help keep the list of paid up members more in line with the MSA Year Book. Under the current rules, we would agree the annual fee for 2016 membership at the 2016 AGM and the Treasurer can only issue invoices for payment after that. Most clubs pay promptly but for various reasons, some of these take several months to come through. The situation is complicated in that by September 2016, we need to give the MSA a list of Association members for the 2017 Blue Book.

If the rule change is agreed, the 2016 AGM will agree the membership fee for 2017. Payment will be due by the end of June (the same as the current rules) and any member club that has not paid by the end of August will not be listed in the 2017 MSA Year Book.

**Please note that if the change is agreed, there will be no payment required from existing member clubs for 2016 membership; the 2015 membership fee will cover this. In other words, in terms of cash flow, there will be no impact on either the Association or the member clubs.**

In conclusion, 2015 year saw change which brought with it uncertainty which, had it not been properly managed, could have led to catastrophic turmoil. The impact of the MESR was felt in particular across stage rallies with the forest events in Scotland being at the very forefront of the new rules and requirements brought in as a result of this MSA project. Everyone involved on Scottish motor sport can take credit from the way that the whole motor sport community north of the border approached the many challenges placed on them through this year of change.

Looking ahead, all of the event organisers in Scotland have a wary eye on the global economic situation and in particular, the oil price. It is hard to ignore the level of support across all motor sport that comes from the North East of Scotland and around Aberdeen in particular. The impact of this is felt not only by individual competitor but also in terms of commercial sponsorship.

Finally, I want to record my personal thanks to my fellow SACC Executives Roger, Gerry, Lock & Raymond; to president John Cleland and to MSA Council representative Bruce Lyle for their support and guidance through 2015

**Pete Weall**

Vice Chair Scottish Association of Car Clubs