



MOTORSPORT WALES

A Passion for Cars

For lovers of classic British cars and the Jaguar marque in



particular, Norman Dewis is quite simply a legend. As Chief Test Engineer with the Coventry company he oversaw the development of

some of the most iconic models in motoring history, while also finding the time to race at Le Mans.

Now in his 95th year, Norman remains passionate about motoring and motor racing and the New Year's honours list saw him finally get the recognition he deserves, in the shape of an OBE. At Motorsport Wales, we were lucky enough to meet up with Norman recently when he gave us a potted history of his life with cars. Much of the remainder of this article is in Norman's own words because we can think of no better way to tell his remarkable story.

He began by telling us where his interest in cars stemmed from. "I was born in my grandparents' house which was in Humber Road, right opposite the Humber works. I lived there till I was 7. When I was six and a half, seven, I used to look out of the front window and see all these workers going into the main gate of Humber. No cars driving then, they were all coming down on pushbikes and I said to my granddad one day that's where I want to work, I want to be, in with the cars.

When I was 14, I didn't have much of an education, my father died and I said to my mum right I've got to go to work. So I went back to see my granddad and he said go over there and ask them, see if you can get a job. I went over there and they gave me a job in the body building section. I'd been there nine months and I asked

Welcome, once again, to "Motorsport Wales". In this edition, we meet one of our idols and an unsung hero of motorsport.

We catch up with how one you Welsh driver has been faring with the support of the WAMC and we have details of the 2015 Association championships.

Upcoming Events:

<i>Mid Wales Stages</i>	<i>Mar 1st</i>
<i>Tour of Epynt</i>	<i>Mar 8th</i>
<i>Ross on Wye Autosolo</i>	<i>Mar 15th</i>
<i>Rali Llyn</i>	<i>Mar 21st/22nd</i>
<i>Tour of Caerwent</i>	<i>Mar 22nd</i>
<i>Rockingham Sprint</i>	<i>Mar 22nd</i>
<i>Rally North Wales</i>	<i>Mar 28th</i>
<i>Night Owl Rally</i>	<i>Apr 4th/5th</i>
<i>Loton Park Hillclimb</i>	<i>Apr 18th</i>
<i>Loton Park Hillclimb</i>	<i>Apr 19th</i>

*Pirelli MSA Welsh Forest Rally
Championship*

The opening round of the Championship, the Weir Engineering Wyedean Forest Rally saw Hugh Hunter and Andy Marchbank take maximum points while defending champion Alex Allingham, co-driven by Alun Cook, was side-lined with electrical problems.

Bob Ceen and Andy Bull took second in the Impreza World Rally Car with Paul Davy and Roger Allen third and top Group N runners.

Jason Morgan headed the junior driver category while Jon Ballinger and Mike Wilding topped the two wheel drive standings.

In the newly launched RAVENOL Welsh Challenge, Jason Morgan shares the lead with Thomas Lloyd and Dave Brick.

Special Stage Extra's coverage of the event is scheduled to appear on Motors TV on March 4th

*www.jelfmotorsport.com
Welsh Clubman's Forest Rally
Championship*

We are pleased to announce that Jelf Motorsport Insurance is sponsoring the championship and we look forward to a long relationship with the company.

could I have my apprenticeship. They said no. So I looked around and some of my friends were doing an apprenticeship at Armstrong Siddeley. They said why don't you try there so I went to Armstrong and they gave me a five year apprenticeship. I started in the machine shop, machining cranks, and cylinder blocks and then I went into the chassis shop. That's where I felt most at home.

In those days you had the chassis all complete, roadworthy without a body so we used to go out on test, they taught me to drive, we just had a wooden scuttle with an aero screen, a wooden seat just to sit on and over the back axle was a big box section filled with sand to give you the weight of the body. Well you can imagine in the winter we had helmets, goggles and big coats and that's where I started to get really interested in the car side.

There were about twelve testers and one day the boss said to me I'm going out with you, Dewis. So we went out, we used to go around Stoneleigh Park in those days, we stopped the chassis and he said right go over this and see what the faults are. We started and when I gave him the list he said that's more than I could have found so you've got a good talent for this type of thing, work at it and this is where you want to go and that's what I did.

I was always aiming to be the best tester. I did three years of my apprenticeship and World War 2 started and I was on the RAF reserve, to get some money, money was always the thing in those days, so I was flying. I got discharged in 1943, and then the Air Ministry gave me a job going around all the car factories inspecting the aircraft that they were building and that's how I got a link in with Lea Francis. They were making throttle boxes for the Stirling bomber and I used to go three times a week to inspect them and pass them off.

Then the war ended and Lea Francis said would you like to join us we're going to start making motor cars again. I said yes and I immediately took over the job of test engineer there. I'd done about nine years there when I had a phone call from Jaguar, Bill Heynes; he was the director of engineering. He said 'Mr Dewis would you be interested in coming and having an interview with us'. I said what for? He said we need a Chief Test Engineer. He said I've heard lots of good reports about you. I'd also while I was at Lea Francis built my own 500cc race car. He said I understand you race a bit. I said yes, just a bit. I went along and had the interview that was at the old factory at Holbrook Lane, Swallow Sidecars, and it all looked good but I said I'm quite happy at Lea Francis, I was very happy. He said what would persuade you to come? I thought quickly and I thought

This year the www.jelfmotorsport.com Welsh Clubman's Forest Championship is a 7 round championship with the best 5 scores to count. All the championship rounds are based in Wales.

The first round was the Red Kite Stages based in Llandoverly and using Crychan and Caio Forests. There were 41 Championship Contenders registered and entered on the event many contesting the championship for the first time and scoring good championship points to get their season underway.

There is a good variety of cars entered the championship which include a Triumph TR8, Fiat Stilo Abarth Troffo, Ford Escorts Mk 1 & Mk 2, Peugeot 205, BMW which gives an interesting selection of cars to follow during the season.

Terry Brown & Den Golding were the first championship contenders on the Red Kite Stages and 3rd Overall on the event just 7 seconds behind the Overall winners.

Class 1 will be interesting to follow with the Father & Son of Dave and Freddy Brick both using Vauxhall Novas. Is it going to be the experience of Dave showing Freddy how it's done or will the youngster lead the way? Dave scored maximum class points on the Red Kite Stages.

I'll go for the money. I said £2 a month. I thought he'd just say no and I could go back to Lea Francis. Anyway, he thought it over and he said we'll pay it. But he said if you accept it, when you join us



Norman Dewis and Win Percy

don't tell anyone else what we are paying you. Keep it quiet.

I had the interview in November 1951 and I joined them in January 1952. Bill Heynes asked me would I try the C Type and see what I thought. So I did and I didn't think much of it. The oversteer was prodigious. Of course there was 40 gallons of fuel in the tank over the back axle so I told him and he said well we did win Le Mans and I said yes but you only just made it. Two cars went out. Anyway to prove my point I worked out it

wanted 67lbs more at the front end. They could have done it by moving the engine three inches forward. Well you couldn't do that now, it was all resolved. So I'd got a few spare moments a couple of months later. I had a steel slab made up, 67lbs and I bolted that right at the front end of the sub frame, went out and it transformed the car. I showed it to Heynes and I said there you are I've done it. He said yes, but we can't go out racing with a slab of steel so we took it off but I proved my point.

From there, of course, Norman went on to develop, amongst other models, the D Type, the E Type and the Mark II, cars which most of us can only dream of owning today. We asked Norman which was his favourite and there was no hesitation. "The long nosed D Type was one of my favourites, 1955. It had a full wrap round screen into the head fairing. We'd extended the nose 7 inches to get lower drag and I got 192 down Mulsanne in 1955 in that. I had to, to pass (Karl) Kling in the Mercedes (300SLR)."

We could have talked to Norman for hours and time passed all too quickly so, finally, we asked him about some of the inevitable mishaps that must occur when you clock up the thousands of testing



The XJ13 - Norman walked away.

In Class 4 there are 2 BMW's fighting it out. David Jones & Glyn Price with Andy Fox and Jamie-lee Fox, Hugh Evans and Kevin Ellis in the TR8. David Jones is the 2014 Overall Championship Driver winner; can Andy and Jamie-lee take the crown from David? Andy and Jamie-lee took maximum class points on the Red Kite Stages.

Current Championship Leaders are:-

Terry Brown / Den Golding
30 points

Ben Llewellyn / Ross Whittock
27 points

Rupert Lomax / Rich Jones
25 points

Brian Dennis Motorsport Welsh Historic Rally Championship

Following the Wyedean the Championship has 21 registered contenders

Leading the championship in cat 2 are Steve Ward/Alan Jones in the Ex Works Mk1 twin cam Escort

Leading the championship in cat 3 is David Dobson in Mk2 Escort who is new to the championship this year leading co-driver in cat 3 is Graham Cox who was with Dave Jenkins for a one off ride on the Wyedean as he is usually paired with Jason Gardner

miles that he did. His matter of fact response was typical of this unassuming Midlander. "The C Type, I rolled that, the D Type I rolled that and the XJ13 that was the big one but every time, I never had seat belts, I wasn't strapped in. You just switch off, get down in the passenger side because always in the cars the scuttle area is the strongest part so if you get as close in there as you can you've got a chance of surviving and each time I got out, a few bruises, back at work next morning." And thankfully, he's still here to tell the tales

Matt's Back on Track

Matt Parry will be the first to admit that the 2014 season was a



mixed one for him but nothing could detract from the opportunity to drive a McLaren Formula One car. Having won the McLaren Autosport BRDC award at the

end of 2013 and also enjoying the support of the Elite Cymru scheme, administered by the WAMC, 2014 saw Matt make his debut in the Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup.

It was an experience that Matt himself describes as "very difficult", adding, "Probably on my side if we look back on it we probably weren't prepared enough for it as a team and as a driver. I don't think we got the best package out at the start and once you start badly it's very hard to catch that up."

Conceding that he made errors through the course of the season he says that the hardest part to take was the mechanical problems that he had to endure, especially when he was running at or close to the head of the field. "People seem to forget very quickly as well that you had a mechanical problem. It's very hard. At the end of the day, people only look at the results of championships they don't look at each individual result and think, 'Oh, yeah he had very bad luck here', they just look across the board and think he didn't score here and he didn't score here - there's no looking at it in depth and that's what doesn't look good so it's very hard to get over."

*J D Tyres Welsh Tarmacadam
Rally Championship*

The first round of the championship was Rali Cwm Gwendraeth which was held on a glorious sunny day at Pembrey. To date 32 Drivers and 25 Co-Drivers have registered for the championship.

This year's championship is also open to fully elected members of Clubs in the Association of West Midland Motor Clubs.

Leading Driver is Bob Fowden with Ashley Trimble leading Co-Driver. The Under 25 Driver is Chris Hand, and last year's winner Sherryn Roberts is leading the Ladies Award.

The next rounds of the championship will be The Melvyn Evans Motorsport Tour of Epynt on the 8th of March, and The Marshall & Hicks Print Media Tour of Caerwent on the 22nd of March.

King of Epynt

There will be 4 rounds in the championship with the best 3 scores to count. AWMMC members are also welcome in this series.

All championship contenders must start at least 2 events to be eligible for an award.

Last year 10 points was awarded for competing in all the 4 rounds, and 1 point being award from starting from the first Main Control, but this has been removed this year.

The first round will be The Melvyn Evans Motorsport Tour of Epynt on the 8th of March.

Once a challenging season was out of the way, however, Matt was able to look forward to his F1 run. "Mentally and physically I was prepared for it", he says, "Physically I was OK and mentally I was just excited to be able to drive a Formula One car which was your



dream when you started karting."

"Of course you get initial nerves but once you are out there and you've done your first two or three laps it just feels like any

other car, you just want to utilise the speed as much as possible. You're there trying to analyse you own performance and making sure you utilise the time as much as possible."

Talking to him, there's no doubting how much he enjoyed the opportunity, "It was a fantastic experience to be able to drive that car at speed through Silverstone which is such a fantastic circuit as well with. With such high speed corners and such heavy braking I think it's probably one of the best circuits to drive a Formula One car. It's hard to put into words what the car felt like. Nothing else can prepare you in terms of raw speed."

While many people comment of the incredibly short braking distances of a modern Grand Prix, for Matt that wasn't the single most impressive aspect, "For me, I thought the level of grip at such high speed was the biggest thing. That acceleration from second gear and going all the way up through the gears is the most exciting thing. The braking was amazing but I thought high speed acceleration was where the Formula One car excels in terms of feeling. I'll never forget that feeling and hopefully I'll be able to do that in terms of a career at some stage in the next few years. That's the goal and coming out of that car has given me more motivation. I think the more time I spend in Formula One the more I want to be there."

It would seem that his performance in the ultimate racing machine did his prospects no harm, either, "I think they were quite pleased with how quickly we were able to adapt to it. They were very vocal in terms of saying don't crash the car so they were putting quite a lot of pressure on the drivers. I think they were pleased. I made sure I followed all the instructions I was given and I was quite close to Jenson's times as well so that was

Road Rally Championship supported by the Basic Roamer Company

Maximum championship points on the opening round, the Rali Mike Darowen, went to Robert Pugh ahead of Arwel Hughes Jones with 2014 champion Ian 'Dude' Roberts third.

Dylan Williams leads the navigator standings from Gwawr Hughes and Max Freeman.

The next round of the championship is Rali Llyn on March 21/22.

As ever, we want your motorsport news to include in future editions. Just e-mail it to peter@peterhughesmedia.com.

Don't forget you can see the latest Championship standings and lots more at www.wamc.org.uk



quite impressive in terms of I only had around 20 laps. I got a great review in Autosport for it as well; they gave us some nice words. The whole McLaren team leading up to the event was fantastic. They really made me feel welcome in such a short period of time and hopefully one day I will be racing for them.”

Now it's time for Matt to look ahead to the 2015 season with a decision still currently to be made on whether that will be back in the Eurocup or in GP3 but whichever it is, he is clear on what he needs to achieve.

“I need to reinforce my status as a top driver. I had an incredible 2013 – the best year for me, winning everything that I entered. Obviously I had a bad 2014. I need to move on from that, learn from it and put everything that I learned into 2015 and start winning championships again. That's my end goal. That's what I'm fully focussed on – winning. I'm more focussed than ever on getting the job done this year.”

More Welsh Success

Congratulations to HOVAC member James Morgan. Having won



the 2014 Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy alongside young Estonian driver Sander Parn, the duo took outright victory in their debut in the 4wd Fiesta R5. Following their victory the pair were invited to take lunch with the Estonian Prime Minister. Watch out for an

interview with James in a future edition of Motorsport Wales.

Promote Your Club

Has your club got an event coming up for which you want entries of marshals? Maybe it's a social occasion to which you would like to invite members of other clubs or perhaps you would like to tell us about competition successes enjoyed by club members.

Whatever it is we will do our best to find space for your news.

Motorsport Wales is produced every two months and circulated to all registered championship contenders and to secretaries of all member clubs who are invited to share it with their members.

The deadline for news is the 15th of the month of publication with the next issue out at the end of April. E-mail anything you would like included to peter@peterhughesmedia.com.