

Dear Club Member

In the last magazine I made a plea for anyone willing to part with back numbers of Le Journal; 1, 2, 16 and 38 to complete my archive set of magazines. The first two were produced before I joined the Club but I obviously must have misplaced the others. Suffice to say there is always someone who will come up trumps. So a big thankyou to John Eglinton for sending me copies of No's 16 and 38. John also lent me (yet to be returned!) copies of Mille Miles magazines which contained a couple of items about the Club in its early years. They will be included in the Summer edition of the magazine.

As I am sure many of you will realise that next year is the 30th Anniversary of the formal establishment of the Club and it is my intention to try to produce a bumper edition of the magazine as I did for the 25th Anniversary. You guys managed to provide me with enough material for 76(!) pages, 2½ times our normal size, so to help us fulfil that objective, let me have your reminiscences, old and not so old, photos, stories of cars you have owned or events you attended, anything at all that is Club related.

At the Annual General Meeting, former Chairman Barry Jayes offered to be the co-ordinator for our anniversary events, having been actively involved in our 20th and 25th anniversary celebrations. This offer has been gratefully accepted and as a consequence Barry will be joining us at our January Committee meeting. To assist him in his task Barry has reminded me that previously our celebrations included an Anniversary evening linked with a car related event, the production of appropriate car stickers and other items. Barry was also able to persuade Renault to fund the production of custom made and logoed blue polo shirts which were issued to members FOC.

Your Committee would like to hear your views on what you would like to see take place to celebrate what is after all an impressive achievement for a small specialist club such as ours. Events of this type take some planning and the main focus of our January meeting will be to agree and start planning the Club's events for 2019 including the 30th Anniversary celebration. So we are asking all members to please put your thinking caps on and let Barry know how you would like to see your Club mark this important milestone. Please contact him directly, he is more than happy to talk over ideas and see what we can come up with, so even if you only have a germ of an idea then do let him know. His contact details are: E-mail: b_jayes@sky.com and mobile: 07811 979396.

As those who went to the NEC show in November will have seen, Renault finally came up trumps and provided a new A110 in black for display on our joint CAR/RAOC stand. Many thanks to them for doing so. The Sporting Bears also had one in their group of cars for their charity rides which proved to be very popular.

Which only leaves me to wish a very safe and Happy Christmas to you, your families and friends. I hope to see some of you out and about next year.

Peter Whitehouse.



Cover Image: Pat Moss and Liz Crellin in Roger Clark's 1973 A110 on the 1973 RAC rally. From Chris Rabbets collection, photographer unknown.

Le Journal

December 2018 Issue 64

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My A610 - A Tale of Woe

By Barry Jayes

It was about a week before the Mâcon event in France (5th/6th May). In addition to everything I had described in my "Tale of Success" in the last edition of the magazine, my A610 had been given a full service, two new rear tyres, tracking, everything was checked and double checked given that the journey from home to Eurotunnel then Calais to Mâcon and return would be around 1,100 miles plus the two day rallye touristique as well, nonetheless a great event and not to be missed.

I had been out for a long run in the A610, put it back in the garage, went to lock the doors later and saw a small pool of green fluid underneath the car, which I realised was coolant. Mild panic ensued while I tried to find out where the leak was from and I eventually traced this to the joint on the bottom outlet of the expansion bottle...well it was the original bottle and 25 years old!

About a year earlier I had bought a spare expansion bottle from a motorsport company on eBay for a competitive £29.99. This was listed for the Renault 5 GT Turbo but it appeared to be identical to the ones fitted to the GTA and A610. I fitted this which entails removing other coolant hoses to get the expansion bottle out of its cradle, topped up the coolant, went for a 20 mile drive and all seemed well. I duly set off to the Tunnel terminal and boarded the train with fellow travellers. Whilst onboard, I again checked the coolant situation and found that the bottle had started to deform.



Deformed filler mouth on expansion bottle

To the left of the expansion bottle is the air blower duct which diverts cool air into the engine cover and onto the injectors and coolant was also leaking from within this duct. The return water feed pipe from the turbo runs through this duct in which there is a metal pipe with a finned section on it, forming a cooler.



Coolant cooler.

This has air blowing over it when the car is on the move and when the cooling fan is running but whether 50mm of finning makes a lot of difference is, I guess, a moot point. These are known to corrode with time and a crack was present at the end of the finned section. It appeared that the pipe had corroded over the years and the stresses of removing and refitting the coolant hose to change the expansion bottle had caused the corroded metal to fracture.



Fan housing for the coolant cooler

What to do? I decided to go into Calais to see if I could find a section of 13mm pipe to bypass the cooler. After visiting numerous DIY stores and garages without success I was getting desperate. I had taken 10 litres of water with me, just as well as I was constantly topping up the expansion bottle which was now deforming more around the filler mouth and appeared to be sweating from some minute cracks that had appeared in it. There was now no way I was going to get to Mâcon. I advised friends who were by this time well on the way there and returned to Eurotunnel, paid a premium to get the Shuttle back to Folkestone later that afternoon and went for something to eat and drink as I hadn't had anything since 4.30am. This was by far my shortest ever visit to France!

Even with a 10 litre water supply there was no way I was going to make the 125 mile journey back home without running out. So I disconnected the hoses either side of the cooler, and blanked them off with two short socket extensions from my tool kit.



Get me home solution, by bypassing the cooler

But what to do about the coolant bottle? The filler cap was no longer sealing as the filler mouth had deformed and the small cracks were weeping more preventing pressure development which meant the car would overheat and I still had a long traffic jam on the M25 to contend with. Luckily I had a BIG roll of self amalgamating tape with me, so when everything had cooled down I wrapped this around the coolant bottle mummy style and then wrapped some around the thread on the bottle mouth which seemed to create a good seal. Having topped it up yet again, I found that if I kept the engine revs below 2,500 this controlled the leaks which entailed driving home at about 50 mph and ideally not using the turbo. After a laborious journey back home thankfully without having to use the breakdown services, I put the car in the garage, kicked the tyres, cursed and got something to eat!

One of the guys on the Mâcon trip had also fitted the same type of expansion bottle as mine to his GTA which lasted him until Mâcon before developing a split. Somehow, with the help of others he managed to seal it with a soldering iron and use a French version of Radweld to help seal everything else. He also had a very steady journey back home to the UK. So the message here is DO NOT BUY a cheap coolant bottle from this company!

The expansion bottle, originally fitted to the early Megane is no longer available from Renault but there is a good quality one available made by Crown. This is for the Jeep Cherokee XJ (1987 - 1994) for the 2.1 and 4.0 litre engine models. The Crown reference is J0758977 and this is identical to the Renault original. They are available from a number of companies via eBay at similar prices (£35/£40) and reasonable delivery times.



Correct spec expansion bottle

So, expansion bottle sorted, now onto the coolant cooler. I could see that the finned aluminium outer was pressed onto a metal pipe so I bought a 13 mm stainless steel pipe with a 90° bend and cut this to length, then cut the inlet and outlet pipe off the leaking cooler and used a 13 mm drill to drill out the old pipe so the finned section would slide neatly onto the new pipe. Interestingly within the corroded pipe section was a metal reducer which reduced the diameter of the pipe work down to about half...why this is there, I have no idea. Does anyone else have any ideas? Maybe the flow within these pipes is quite powerful and this slows the flow down so flow isn't lost elsewhere within the cooling system, anyway I made sure I fitted it in the new pipe in the same location and crimped the pipe in a vice to hold it in place.



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Screwing in the finned cooler section

The cooler is available from Simon Auto in Germany for about €120 but I'll wait and see if my £8 pipe works first! Incidentally the caps for the expansion bottle are still available from Renault:

Blue Centre for the GTA Turbo & A610
Part No: 7700805032
Brown Centre for the GTA Atmo
Part No: 7700805031

So, it just goes to show you can however much you prepare for a long trip, you can always be bowled a googly!

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Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams

1938 - 2018 R.I.P. By Tim Jeffrey

It would be wrong of me to say that I knew Barrie well but he always had time for a chat whenever I bumped into him at an event or exhibition. As I was developing the GTA, I was always keen to hear his recollections of driving these cars.

his driving ability and his friendly character. He will be sorely missed.

Barrie and Yours Truly with our respective "Fastest Alpine" trophies

In 1985 Barrie had a great victory in front of a home crowd at Brands Hatch when the Renault Alpine GTA Europa Cup cars appeared in support of the European Grand Prix. Jan Lammers couldn't drive the Rothmans car and Barrie was asked if he would deputise for him which he did and in fact Barrie even wore Lammers' race suit. He was only asked on the Wednesday before the Grand Prix but by race day he had got to grips with the rear engined howler. Clearly it suited his driving style as in the race he thrashed the regular drivers to take first place. To cap off a great drive by Nigel Mansell won him the Grand Prix race the following day.

For over 50 years Barrie drove many different cars at various events and at La Vie en Bleu at Prescott in 2007, he drove Bob Gibson's A110 and was awarded the trophy for the fastest Alpine on the hill as I was in 2008. The many recent tributes show how much he was admired for both



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For Sale



Originally manufactured in Dieppe as a V85 version in 1972, this A110 has subsequently undergone numerous modifications. The original 1300cc engine was initially replaced with a 1600cc engine and eventually upgraded to 1800cc. and a five-speed large gearbox was then installed. It has a 'big brake' conversion and a 'quick' steering rack. The 'bubble arches' were fitted around 1974 together with wider Gotti wheels and the front end has been modified to accommodate the front radiator layout. This Alpine has competed in numerous events across the Continent. The car has also been the subject of an extensive sympathetic body restoration by Classic Restore.

Regrettably due to advancing years, after 15 years of enjoyment the car is up for sale at an asking price of £85,000 or near offer.

Telephone 07778 287387 for further comprehensive history or to arrange to view.

GTA Subframe Repairs

By John Sweet

For some years now John Law has been entrusted with the annual servicing and MOT on my GTA Le Mans, plus whatever jobs he feels are necessary to keep it in good order. At the last service in January this year he replaced the brake discs and pads. The braking wasn't great despite having drilled and grooved discs with plenty of life in them. Afterwards, when he gave the car back the brakes were loads better but he reported it sometimes pulling to one side when braking. I can only say I noticed it once and it was nothing like the unruly hot hatches I used to have which loved to dive left or right whenever the loud pedal was pressed with youthful enthusiasm. Anyway, Mr Dell had new steering racks in stock and John ordered the other parts.

A couple of months later I noticed the front bumper was loose on one side and, on inspection, this turned out that a support bracket had rusted through. Given that I was moving house in the summer, this seemed like a good way of moving the car - give it to John for fixing before I packed then fetch it once I was in the new place. So - front suspension bushes, steering rack and bumper brackets. John offered to check the cross member whilst everything was in bits which I agreed to. So one sunny Sunday afternoon in August Mandy and I went up to John's new workshops near Bishop Stortford to drop off the GTA. Not only has he got a fantastic space compared to Wapping, it is set in some beautiful countryside.



John Law outside his new spacious premises

There then followed regular updates - the cross member needed repair so John did that.



The badly corroded cross member



Other corroded metal work

He made up new brackets and gave the chassis parts some paint. It made sense to powder coat the wishbones.



Refurbished body parts



Powder coated wishbones

Exposed, John finally found the source of a minor coolant leak - the radiator was past its best so that has been replaced by a Chinese one. As you can see from the pictures, John has done an amazingly thorough job of repairing my car and it drove beautifully when I picked it up at the end of October.



Repaired cross member



Repaired sub frame parts



Final re-assembly

A run up to the AGM a few days later (over 200 miles round trip for me now) showed it to be in rude health.

A.S.A.N. Track Day Croix-en-Ternois Circuit

15th September 2018. By John Sweet

It has been a number of years now since I went to one of the track days at the Croix circuit organised by French club Association Sportive des Alpine Du Nord (ASAN). This event was a "must go to" for Club members in the early days when it was a two day event. As I had to abort my only other trip to France in 2018, I decided to download the entry forms and apply to attend. My plan was to go over on the Friday afternoon shuttle in my A610 to Calais then have a leisurely drive down to the B&B Hotel in Bruay La Buissonnière near Béthune where I was staying the night and catch up with friends who were also staying there, Mark Garner and Ian Greenaway in a Renault Spider and Tony Law in his GTA Le Mans.

We all met up at about 7.00pm and went for a meal at the local Buffalo Grill and spookily our table number was 110...! After a very sociable evening we returned to the hotel for an early night, ready for the track day on the Saturday. In the morning we left the hotel for a 30 minute drive to the Croix Circuit arriving at 9.15am ready for the briefing and the track opening at 10.00am.



A wide representation of Alpine cars in the paddock



Track time was split into three classes:

Class A: Promenade

All Alpine, Spider, and Renault vehicles with a Gordini engine, basically the amateur class.

Class B: Performance

As above but vehicles prepared for competition/trailer to the site for the more professional drivers.

Class C: All RenaultSport vehicles.

I was in Class A along with a large majority of participants and the programme was structured so that all Class A participants could go out on the track on the hour and every hour should they wish to do so until 5.00pm and the only track requirement was a crash helmet! My first few laps were steady ones, gradually finding out about the track and the best lines to take whilst all the time there were mad French men screaming around me in their Alpines. Maybe it was the UK number plate but their sole aim seemed to be to get past me as quickly as possible...so much for amateurs. Each track session was for twenty minutes, more than enough to get the engine and tyres nice and hot. I left the first session with the distinctive smell of hot rubber in the car, ever mindful that I needed a roadworthy car to



drive home in! At lunch time there was a break followed by a session for a group of about thirty children and teenagers from a local care home. Volunteers were requested to take them on three slow-ish laps of the circuit, then back into the pits and out again with another child. I volunteered for this and had the pleasure of taking four very excited youngsters out onto the track which they so enjoyed...!

The track day finished at 5.00pm and I said goodbye to Jean Remi, and a number of the other organisers and also the other UK participants who were returning to the UK that evening. I made my way to a delightful English owned farmhouse B&B called La Rivière in Willeman near Hesdin only a few miles from Croix.



La Rivière B & B

I was welcomed by the owners Stuart and Janice and whilst we were waiting for other guests to arrive for the evening meal, we sat out in the garden, chatted, drank red wine and nibbled olives...life was good. We had a delightful four course meal cooked by Janice whilst Stuart was on wine glass topping up duties which he carried out admirably! La Rivière is a delightful character B&B and I had a huge double room with en suite all to myself, very good value for money.

Sunday morning came only too soon and I said my goodbyes but before leaving Stuart suggested I looked around the outside of the local Château de Willeman which was only in the next road.

Although closed I was still able to walk around the grounds of this magnificent 17th Century Château and spent some 30 minutes exploring them.

As I wasn't due until a late afternoon shuttle back to the UK, I decided to drive a scenic route back to Calais via Humières, Fruges, Lumbres and Clerques, then onto the A26, in complete contrast to my track day activities. Driving back I noticed a bit of steering wheel wobble as if my front wheels needed balancing and on checking, the reason was obvious. Before starting out I had about 5mm of tread on my front tyres and as a consequence of the track day the inside edge of the nearside and the outside edge of the offside tyres were completely worn away following at least 50 laps of the clockwise circuit, necessitating new front tyres when I got home.



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GO..GO..GO..... My 2018 season

By Tim Jeffrey



KIW on the Lavant Straight at Goodwood – photo by Bob White

I left off from my last article in the summer edition, having completed the GTA winter rebuild and competed at the La Vie en Bleu event at Prescott in May and the following weekend at the Coventry City Motofest. The challenge I had set myself three seasons ago of trying to beat my A610 times with a stock engined GTA Turbo still remained unfulfilled.

I had high hopes for the Prescott event as it's a favourite of mine with a 50.58 sec personal best time to beat. Alas, the Saturday runs were delayed due to fog and when that cleared the track was slippery but I salvaged the day by coming within a hairs breadth of my best A610 time in the wet. Sunday was for the most part dry, in as much as it rained and then dried very quickly when the banker runs were needed. Pushing hard the car fluffed and backfired a couple of times and still didn't seem to want to give its all, so I ended the weekend a disappointing 4th in Class following in the wake of Bob Gibson and a few quick Peugeots, two seconds off my target time.

Coventry City Motofest saw the return of competitive motorsport around the streets of

the city for the first time in almost 30 years and this proved to be a huge crowd puller. The sprint course was set out on the ring road and underpass and was defined by an awful lot of hard barrier chicanes. I had decided to support the event as the number of competitors wasn't huge and I entered on the Sunday in a smaller field of cars than had competed on Saturday and mine was the only Alpine. It was unbelievably hot and the car played up on hard acceleration again fluffing and hesitating. So hot in fact, I could not believe the temperature of the fuel tank. I felt little had been achieved other than posting the time of 94.42sec recorded in my Competition log.

By now I was getting very disheartened, analysing what we had done over the winter that may or may not be causing the problem. Everything else was good; great turn in, plenty of grip and excellent reliability, the car was performing superbly except when it came to that last twenty percent. I have to say probably half of the deficit was down to me and the doubting little monkey that sat on my shoulder every time the light went green.

By the time I took part at Shelsley Walsh, Bob Gibson and I had started getting suspicious about two things; fuel temperature, from which the A610 had suffered during its development

and our decision in the light of that to return fuel straight back to the tank rather than to the swirl pot. We had ruled out fuel starvation due to the baffled tank and powerful fuel pumps that would push copious amounts of fuel to the business end rear swirl pot which had however come under some scrutiny with its capacity being less than expected. My Shelsley performance was yet again disappointing despite being just two tenths of a second off my fastest A610 time.

Between the Shelsley and Lydden events, Bob and I came to the conclusion that returning fuel from the rails back to the tank and not to the swirl pot could possibly have caused the swirl pot to be sucked dry under intense demand and in doing so was sucking fuel back down the return pipe which in turn was at times was also sucking air from the tank on hard cornering. On reflection the fluffing always occurred a few seconds after coming out of a bend. Were we on to something? Firstly a non return valve was fitted to the swirl pot return line and secondly the fuel line was swapped back to it returning to the swirl pot.

Lydden was the test and with a good dry track and with nothing to stop me pushing hard, the result was unbelievable. The GTA was more than two seconds quicker than my best time of 88.20 seconds in the A610! Had we resolved the problem?



The much improved paddock at Lydden

At my next sprint at Goodwood, it was again hot and sunny and once more the GTA was quicker, 1½ seconds less than previously - this was more like it.

The French event at Étretat was two and a half weeks away, so I decided to fit two fuel coolers that I had acquired. The first, a small dinky one from BMW (forgive me Lord) was mounted on the rear quarter with an inline switched fan drawing cold air from the side vent.

Lydden was the test and with a good dry track and with nothing to stop me pushing hard, the result was unbelievable. The GTA was more than two seconds quicker than my best time of 88.20 seconds in the A610! Had we resolved the problem?



Rear cooling arrangements

The second was a large radiator type fuel cooler (eBay) mounted under the bonnet just behind the tank. I redirected the brake cooling hoses from the front ducts up through the under bonnet into a low engineered cowling which, despite its looks works very efficiently. This was all in the interest of cooling the fuel to improve all round performance, something the A610 achieved through the use of its air conditioning and an improved injector air ducting system.



Front fuel cooler

My entry at Étretat proved to be a resounding success and on the first run on Saturday, I achieved a new personal best with a time that put me third overall. I had hoped I could improve on this on Sunday. Sadly, however, one of the French National Championship cars overcooked a corner necessitating the driver taking to an escape road where two marshals were sat on the bonnet of their car. The male marshal managed to dive off out of the way but the female (his wife) received facial injuries and lost the lower part of her leg when the race car struck their car. I have since been told she has recovered well but this was a tragic accident that should never have happened. The quality of course management, which sadly is not up to UK standards, left numerous concerns over the positioning of some marshals. The Gendarmerie were involved and there was doubt whether the event would carry on but at the express wishes of the injured marshal's husband the event continued. By the afternoon it had started to drizzle and no quicker times were posted. Whilst the event as always was great fun, topped off by the usual raucous prize giving, it was marred by the accident which hopefully will not cause problems for the organisers next year. As the warnings say Motor Racing is dangerous.

The next event was at Harewood. My previous experience in the A610 wasn't the best I seem to remember, as I had travelled up, starting at 4am, to do a one day event. So as not to repeat this and to allow myself a good shot at it, I travelled up in convoy with Team Gibson on the Friday and slept under canvas for two nights with Johnny Hulme and Nobby and Sheridan and Sarah Bell as neighbours.

The Club Alpine Renault class consisted of; Sheridan - Turbo 2, Johnny - newly acquired Renault 5 GT Turbo Cup, David Holden - A110, Bob - A110, Neil Brogden - Peugeot 205 and me in the GTA. David just took part in the Saturday event and an event it certainly turned out to be. Come Saturday morning, on his first timed run Bob blew his engine just off the start line which I think I am safe in saying was a first for him of the worst kind. Sheridan's car started having engine timing issues which resulted in such a hot rear end that marshals were following him around with fire extinguishers and Johnny wiped his rear end off early in the proceedings. I can't remember an event with so many high calibre casualties. Team Gibson decided to travel back later on Saturday to mull over preparation for an event at Eelmoor. Sheridan, despite a sterling effort, finally had to throw in the towel on Sunday morning when his



Étretat race control



In full flight at Harewood – photo by Mike Wood

overnight repair gave out and Johnny and Nobby took to the Five's rear end with a roll of Alpine blue gaffer tape. With such a depleted field it wasn't the best of showings, albeit keeping the marshals and the tow truck busy but nevertheless I posted a personal best time, a full 4 seconds quicker than my A610 time.

Nigel Patten and Dave Wheeler in 8 Gordinis, Andy Owler in his A110 and me. It was a very enjoyable day, I managed to trail Bob by four tenths of a second which was more rewarding than the rather hollow class win, a total a mismatch between Johnny, Andy and me, sorry chaps.

Three weeks later I entered the last two events on my competition calendar, Goodwood and Eelmoor. Although I had 'done' Goodwood previously, I was keen to see if I could better my time since fitting the fuel coolers. I picked the worst day to test them as storms rolled in and promised to drown the event. The organisers decided to try and get practice and at least one dry run in before the deluge. Unfortunately it started raining around my first timed run and during the second runs, it was just wet with cars crashing and slipping off all over the place. With two of the timed runs completed the organisers called it a day declaring the times final. I did not better my time but I did win my class which given the conditions, I could not have been happier. I drove up to my B&B near Aldershot in pouring rain disbelieving promises of a weather miracle and sun all day on Sunday. Despite early morning fog I am glad to say the weather pundits were spot on with a clear sky and sun from 9am. Eelmoor is a great Alpine event with our own class and although I had never done it before I was hoping to set a respectable P.B. In attendance were Tony G in his A110, Bob in his re-engined A110, Johnny in the 5 Cup,

So after a disappointing start to my season, I clocked four new personal bests, a second and two Firsts in Class which for some may not seem a lot but personally after the three seasons of pain and woe, it was pretty satisfying to say the least. There is still plenty of unfinished business at Prescott, Shelsley Walsh and several other venues where I have yet to beat my personal bests but they can wait till next year. As for lessons learnt, I think they boil down to two really, the first being the swirl pot is not big enough to cope under competition load and the second is that cooling the fuel does help. One point worthy of note is that I have been running on the same Toyo R888 tyres for the last three seasons 195/45/16 (soft) front and 245/45/16 (hard) rear and they still look and feel good. Would Kumhos be quicker? That and the improvements made since can wait for the next edition of the Journal. Thanks to all who have helped, listened and offered advice throughout the season which is what makes the competing so enjoyable.

Best wishes to you all, safe journeys and have a great Christmas.

CAD Rallye Touristique By Barry Jayes

Les Falaises Blanches -Saturday 20th October, 2018

In October 2017 I attended Club Alpine Dieppe's (CAD) annual rallye touristique in my A610 and thoroughly enjoyed it, so when Jean - Jacques Blondin, the President of CAD sent me an invitation to attend the 2018 event I quickly got my entry form filled in. The event regularly takes place on a Saturday in October and the organisers always seem to be able to find some wonderful routes along with magnificent scenery and buildings, all of which makes for a great event.

My plan was, as the last year, to travel over to Calais on the Shuttle on Friday morning, drive down to Dieppe, where I had booked in the Ibis Hotel for two nights and return on the Sunday afternoon. The trip over was uneventful but I have to say I do so love driving on the French motorways, with marvellous road surfaces and so little traffic. Last year I took out a subscription to SANEF Tolling, so when I arrive at any motorway tolls I simply drive through the channel marked with a T and continue onwards, no stopping, trying to find the right change or trying to grab a ticket on a wet, windy day. The toll charge is then debited to my bank account later.

I arrived in Dieppe early afternoon so took the opportunity to drive up to Avenue de Bréauté to the site of the Alpine factory in Dieppe just to drive around the perimeter and peek through the fences where lines of the newly built Alpine A110, under their smart white covers, were lined up waiting to be transported to the dealerships in France and worldwide.



The Alpine factory (shame the old signage has gone)



New A110s in their "all-weather" gear

I managed to get a photo of my A610 by the main gate before Security came over and asked me to move on.



Outside the main gate

Despite me telling them my A610 was built there 26 years ago the security guards clearly weren't impressed, so I left feeling slightly miffed, drove back into Dieppe to fill up with fuel and headed for the hotel, booked in when the room number I was given was 110...spooky!

In 2017 two Belgian couples attended this event in their immaculate A110s and their cars were on the car park so I caught up with them later for a beer and we spent a pleasant evening having a meal together and catching up on the last 12 months gossip before getting an early night. As I was attending this event alone, Jean-Jacques had arranged for me to have a CAD co-pilot for the event, Pierre Lauray who spoke some English...always handy. We had arranged to meet at 7.30am on Saturday morning at the hotel and all those present travelled in convoy, met up with more participants at an aerodrome car park, then on to the Renault Garage in Yerville where coffee and croissants were being served and road books were issued.

There was a lot of interest in my A610 given that it was the only right hand drive Alpine participating. In total there were 34 cars and crews, a sizeable turnout making a great display on the garage forecourt area.



Forecourt Parking at Yerville



There I was thinking I was the only UK participant when who should turn up but George and Sue Hamill in a white A110. George and Sue had decided to enter at the last minute as they were in France, had entered this event previously and thoroughly enjoyed it. The event took the usual format of a morning and afternoon stage with a long lunch break with cars leaving Yerville at one minute intervals. There were also clues to be found along the way with prizes being awarded in the evening for those that got the majority correct.



View over Étretat from the Chapel

I was certainly thankful to have Pierre as my co-pilot, without him I would have certainly got lost and missed lots of clues into the bargain, he too was enjoying himself once he got used to being in the nearside seat of a right hand drive Alpine. The lunch stop was at the Auberge du Puits Fleuri in Vattetot sur Mer, a lovely restaurant in a pretty village.

After aperitifs there was a three course meal with more wine ...better be careful though as I needed a clear head for the afternoon stint which proved as much fun as the morning with lots of forest areas and spectacular views.

The event finally ended back at the hotel with time to grab a beer, relax and catch up with the other participants before getting ready for the evening awards presentation prior to the event meal. Of the 34 participants Pierre and I came 19th so not bad at all and we each won prizes, a bottle of CAD champagne, a small bag of dark chocolate flying 'A's specially commissioned by Jean-Jacques for the event, which proved very popular with the ladies present and an Alpine book, so we were well pleased! The meal was at 20.30 in the Ibis restaurant and I met up with George, Sue and Pierre. The meal followed the usual format, four courses with lots of wine, very leisurely, lots of conversation and good humoured



View over Étretat from the Chapel

banter with coffee finally arriving about 23.00. I made my way to my room about midnight, tired but having had a great day and evening.

Sunday morning and after breakfast it was time to goodbyes to both old and new friends that I had made. Before leaving for Calais and the Shuttle I called in the local Auchan Supermarché for a bottle of wine... or three and other French goodies before filling up the A610 with fuel and heading towards Calais and home. Happily the car behaved itself perfectly throughout given my total mileage to, from and during this event was in the region of 660 miles. The CAD rallye touristiques are great events to attend so if you fancy trying a French event in 2019 then do consider this one, I'm planning on going again in 2019.

Alpines in Provence

By Paul Roberts

We holiday in the south of France twice a year and it has become our custom to try to find a car event that might feature an Alpine or two, while we are there.

Event 1

In March we found an event in le Cannet-des-Mures. It was a large classic car gathering and autojumble, with vendors selling used spares. As usual in France, they had taken over the town centre car park, so we were well catered for with the nearby cafes and restaurants all open for business. The local Alpine club - Var Alpine Légende are based in the town and as such had the most prominent display, with ten cars.





Event 2

The 'Trophée Des Alpes' classic car rally starts and finishes in Cavalaire-sur-Mer (in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region) in September. Following scrutineering on Sunday, the cars were parked up and the public were welcome to walk around amongst them. I took the opportunity to take a few photos of the Alpines. The entry list was quite staggering, with everything from an Audi S1 short wheelbase Sport Quattro through a number of Porsche 914s and 911s, Escort Mk1 RS, Lotus Europa, to a Triumph TR2 and a Healey 100/4. The course car for the event was a beautiful 1976 Berlinette 1300.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL5tuDKqYac>

Event 3

Also while in the South of France in September, we came across a classic car show in the lovely village of Trans-en-Provence, where the cars had taken over the whole town amongst which there were a number of Alpines, old and new.



Goodwood Festival of Speed 2018

By John Sweet

I had not been to the Goodwood Festival of Speed for quite a few years. In the early days CAR had a stand at Goodwood but we (together with other small car clubs) were charged an awful lot of money for a very small space on the periphery of the event. In those days, at our events we might get fifty members or more bringing their cars so having a club stand where they could park their cars was key. Of course GTAs were much younger and more numerous then but you would also get a good turnout of driven (not trailered) A310s, A110s and Turbo 2s.

However, for this year we had an invite from Alpine UK which meant Mandy and I parked next to a tented village in the grounds of a local hotel and, after breakfast, got shuttled to the circuit entrance a few minutes away.

As was common during the rest of the rather unusual summer, the event took place in glorious hot sunny weather, I guess this helped to bring out the crowds. Although busy, nowhere was so overcrowded that we couldn't get a decent view of what we wanted to see. Of course, it is a massive corporate event these days, on an even grander scale than Silverstone Historic with multiple hospitality units that would not look out of place in a modern Formula 1 paddock, these are mostly open to all. Of course lots of them are flogging stuff of no interest to the modern day Alpine fan (Monster drinks anyone?) but enough of them have classic cars in them to warrant passing interest. Luckily, despite growing commercialisation since the early days, the paddocks remain the same, rather cramped but open to all and overflowing with classic motor racing cars from all eras.



Gerry Judah's sculpture celebrating 70 years of Porsche

This year marked 70 years of Porsche so, of course, there were many examples of early 904s right up to the latest 919s. However, once again, Renault were well represented with the 442B that won Le Mans in the Sports Racer class and an RS01, RE40, Lotus Renault 97T, Williams FW15C, Red Bull Renault RB8 and Lotus Renault E20 in the F1 classes.



Alpine A442B



Renault RS01 F1 car

Out on the hill, cars were going up in their classes, so you had to be there at the right time to catch the cars you were interested in. As a result, I completely missed the new A110s going up the hill. However, I did witness the F1 cars as they stormed up the hill and then cruised back down. Later on we walked round the trade and paddock areas and got a good look at the Renault historic racing cars and got to shake hands with René Arnoux who was driving the RS01.



Yours truly with René Arnoux



René Arnoux in RS01 on the hill

We then headed over to the Alpine stand where I met John and Tim from the Alpine branches in London and Solihull. There were two cars on the stand – a new Pure car and a GT4 race car, both finished in dark grey and were attracting lots of interest in the summer sunshine.



A110 GT4 race car

Of course Goodwood is all about anniversaries and this year (apart from being the 25th anniversary of the Festival of Speed itself) saw 70 years of the Jaguar XK, 60 years of British saloon car racing, 60 years of Lola and the big one – 70 years of Porsche. Of course, these were all

celebrated with racing examples over the years and the Porsche Sports cars were fantastic. You have to take your hat off to a marque that has produced so many diverse Sports car champions over the years.

The Style et Luxe area is not normally my cup of tea but it was nice to see an Edsel there as well as a Bugatti EB110 and a McLaren F1 – both cars I saw racing at Le Mans in 1994 and 1995. Sadly these were all static displays but great to see nonetheless.

Periodically, the sounds of even the loudest cars were drowned out by a bloke with a jet-pack.



Death wish or what?

He was able to hover up and down the track, passing under the bridge, generating an enormous amount of noise and heat for not much lifting capacity. Made a nice spectacle but as practical transport it needs some development.

At the end of the day we headed back to the hotel where we chatted to other guests about the merits of the A110 parked on the grass as we watched the Red Arrows performing. All in all an excellent day and, despite the crowds and the commercialisation, I am likely to make a return visit.



Red Arrows in formation

New Alpine A110 What the press said

and a personal reflection - By John Sweet

This article was written over a number of months during the year.

I first became interested in Alpines in about 1989 – I was living and working in Stuttgart, very near to the Porsche factory in Zuffenhausen. At the time I was in my late 20s, unmarried and looking for a step up from the hot hatchbacks I was driving at the time. After deciding the 911 was far too common I chanced upon a GTA in a local Renault dealership and discovered that they lost half their new price in depreciation in their first two years. Three years later and back in the UK I was a proud owner of a four year old 'atmo'. I then lived through the end of Alpine production in 1995, since when there have been lots of

Specification

Price (Première Edition) £51,805 on the road
Power 248bhp @ 6000 rpm, Torque 236 lb ft @ 2000 to 5000 rpm
Weight 1103 KG 0-60mph - 4.7sec, 30-70mph 3rd/4th/5th - 4.5/6.0/7.9 secs
Fuel consumption - Track/Tour/Average 17.9/45.6/28.5 mpg

Design

All the magazines loved the design and the clear links to the original A110. As Autocar said "Styling is a triumph of modern 'retro' design in a market where recent homages of classics have, as often as not, been bungled or half-baked. Designed to be both lightweight and have a low centre of gravity the car does not need the stiff suspension and wide tyres that other makes employ". They praised the double wishbone suspension, comparing it favourably with the cheaper MacPherson struts found in the Porsche Cayman. They compared the layout to Alpines of old – the engine, sadly, no longer sits behind the rear axle but in a much more conventional mid-engined layout. After getting cold feet about selling the GTA in the US it is hard to imagine Alpine going out on a (rear-engined) limb with the new car which needs to sell in many global markets to be successful. The other contentious issue is of course the gearbox – no manual is available – instead a seven speed dual-clutch Getrag gearbox delivers power to the rear wheels. Much is made of the cars low weight and the many weight saving techniques employed to achieve it.

rumours of a new car over the years (and even the odd interesting Renault – Spider, Clio V6). So when the new collaboration with Caterham was announced about 6 years ago, I did not hold my breath but I did get excited when the new car didn't just appear as a prototype but Renault finally seemed committed to building it. Having waited this long for a new car I refrained from putting down a deposit on the Première Car – preferring to wait until I can drive one before committing.

So here we are in 2018. Autocar (edition 18th April) got their road test to print first, followed swiftly by the monthly magazines. So what did they all think?

Interior

The new A110 is a two seater with two smallish luggage compartments, front and rear. Autocar liked the easy access and the comfortable, supportive seats. The interior of the car is beautifully designed, with a very sporty feel and lots of nicely stitched leather. The body coloured doors with their quilted leather and French 'tricolore' are a highlight of the interior and help to overcome the slight lack of perceived solidity that you might find in its German rivals. This is not helped by the inevitable parts bin raid for some of the minor controls like cruise control and steering wheel stereo controls. Thankfully the main touch points are good quality – namely the small, flat bottomed steering wheel and chunky aluminium gearshift paddles. Autocar commented on the ample space for tall or long legged drivers but also on the paucity of interior storage space. They were impressed with the luggage space given the overall dimensions of the car.

As with more and more cars these days, the dashboard information is all carried via flat screens, both in the centre of the dash for heating, navigation and entertainment and to provide the instruments ahead of the steering wheel. These are undoubtedly very flexible in what they can show but as an older contributor, I can't help feeling a twang of regret for the demise of classic chrome surrounded speedometer and rev counter.

Performance

Autocar was very complimentary about the engine – it revs nicely out to the 7000rpm red line and makes lots of nice turbo whooshing and fizzing noises over the top of the metallic exhaust note. Autocar thought its 0-100 mph and 30-70 mph in fourth gear were both quicker than the Cayman S but the detailed in gear figures recorded in EVO didn't back this up (perhaps this was due to Autocar using a manual Cayman whilst EVO used an automatic). EVO did a three way comparison between the A110, the Cayman S and an Audi TT RS. If anyone saw the Top Gear comparison between the Porsche and Alpine, that also found the Porsche to be faster in all out acceleration, although the difference was small.

Model	Weight kg	Power bhp	Power/Weight bhp/tonne	Power/Weight + 100kg driver
Alpine	1094	249	231	207
Porsche	1449	345	242	222
Audi	1487	394	269	248

So the Alpine is down on straight line performance although with a power hike to 280 bhp it would be right up there.

For EVO, the Porsche four cylinder boxer engine is great – lots of power and well suited to the twin clutch gearbox. But – and this is a big but – it sounds awful. They much preferred the nutty, hollow bark of the Alpine (although, in their test, the in-line five cylinder engine in the Audi sounded the best). Alpine (and Renault Sport) philosophy has never been about outright power – it is much more about handling and this leads us to the next section.

Ride and Handling

Autocar gave the Alpine five stars. They were amazed by the feeling of the car – it has quite soft, long travel suspension but the low centre of gravity reduces lean and the car has been setup to feel like a rear engine car. The steering has excellent turn-in and feel but the suspension gives it a forgiving ride and suppleness over bumps that is immensely satisfying. All of this excellence is the reward for lightness – the Cayman requires active damper control, much stiffer suspension and much wider tyres to provide similar levels of grip and feedback.

The car has electronic power steering with 2.2 turns of its small steering wheel from lock to lock. Autocar found it much nicer than the unassisted setup on the Alfa 4C. Although EVO

The engine installed in the A110 produces 248 bhp which is quite modest for a 1.8L turbo these days – this will certainly increase through the lifetime of the car. Given my experience of GTAs, I suspect the biggest barrier to more power will be engine bay cooling – a small rise in temperature can reduce the lifespan of all sorts of components. Given the reliability expectations of buyers today, Alpine cannot be complacent in this area. Of course it is interesting to compare the Alpine with the Audi and Porsche.

was very complimentary about the steering in the Porsche – offering even more feedback than the system in the Alpine, they thought the Alpine gave an excellent account of itself, flowing nicely along with the lightest of touches, effortlessly composed.

Buying and Owning

All the 1955 Première Edition launch cars were sold out some time ago and Alpine are busy finishing and delivering this production run. The more mainstream Pure or Legende will be what new buyers need to put their deposits down on. Mille Miles reported in their most recent edition that production had passed 1000, so they are making them in numbers now.

Prices for the Pure and Legende have not been released yet (between €55,000 and €60,000?). The price will sit between a Porsche Cayman and Cayman S which, in reality, are the competition for this car. When Autocar tested it they got 45.6mpg on a run in the Alpine with an average of 28.5 mpg – a pretty amazing set of figures for a car that can do 0-60 in under five seconds. EVO recorded an average of 34.4 mpg for the Alpine, 24.6 for the Cayman S and 23.0 for the Audi TT RS. Emissions on the three cars are Alpine 138g/km, Porsche 167, Audi 187 – again showing up how lean and light brings advantages.

Depreciation

Autocar thinks the Alpine will retain 55% of its value after three years compared with 60% for the Porsche. This makes an interesting contrast to Mille Miles which found car number 34/1955 sold at an Artcurial auction on the 8th April for €74,000. It will be very interesting to see what happens. Will people use their Alpines on a day to day basis, racking up mileage and wear and tear? Or will they be locked away in garages, only seeing the light of day on dry, summer days? Will Renault get the reliability right? You would certainly have very high expectations of a similarly priced Porsche.

Verdict

I sensed an overriding desire to love the new A110 in the journalistic writing. Autocar put it ahead of the Porsche whereas EVO gives the Porsche a slight edge although the Alpine has the much nicer engine. Having been an Alpine owner for over twenty years, I would be interested to try the Porsche before being parted from my money but it would be the Alpine or nothing for me (well – nothing includes the blue GTA Le Mans sitting in the garage so perhaps not quite nothing).

Credits

CAR magazine issue 671, June 2018; EVO magazine issue 249, July 2018; Autocar issue 16th May 2018

Alpine A110 - My Own (Brief) Review September 2018

My financial situation has improved recently which means I could afford to buy a new car. After perusing the online adds for Première edition cars (typically looking for £60,000 to beat the waiting list), I decided to phone my local dealership (Orpington in Kent) on the off-chance they might have a demonstrator. As a result, the following Saturday, Mandy and I turned up for a run out in the new car. We met Max – the very polite salesman for the car and got to look around the two cars in the showroom – one blue and one black. This was my first experience of the car in black and I can't say I would choose it. I think it works really well in blue and white and I really liked the dark grey car at Goodwood.

Then it was off to their demonstrator. Being a two seater, we took turns and Mandy chose to go

second so Max and I jumped in and off we set. As is often the case, our drive was quite short on urban A-roads although the many roundabouts on the route did give some idea of how the steering feels and some quiet dual carriageway offered opportunities to experience the acceleration and gearchange. I have never used a paddle gearbox before and it took some getting used to. But I could see that on the traffic riven roads I often drive on, having the automatic would be a big benefit. All too quickly, we were back at the dealership and it was Mandy's turn for a drive. So what were our impressions?

Interior

We turned up in Mandy's MX5 – a sports car you really get down into before you feel like you are sitting on the floor, my GTA feels very similar. The Alpine didn't feel like that – it was much easier to get into and felt quite spacious inside. Although the seatback is fixed it felt very comfortable and everything fell nicely to hand. Interior storage is limited (just like the Mazda). Apart from some rather odd seams on the passenger dashboard and a less intuitive touchscreen, it all felt very quiet and comfortable on the move with a very agreeable engine note, light but positive controls and lovely steering.

Ride, handling and performance

So, without the chance to drive extensively on some nice sweeping bends or tight hairpins it was hard to get much of a feel for the steering. The performance was very impressive – put your foot down and you soon discover you are well over the speed limit – your senses fooled by the impressive composure and refinement at speed. On the short run I had, it felt very composed and comfortable, quite softly sprung and well controlled in the corners.

Back at the dealership, Max explained that new Legende and Pure cars would not be available until autumn next year but the blue car in the showroom was available at the list price for the Première version.

Verdict

Mandy thought it was lovely although an awful lot of money, especially as on a warm day it is much nicer to lower the roof on the Mazda (which we did on a trip to Eastbourne the next day). As for me, I love the car and am trying to work out how I could justify the outlay. It would be my daily driver so working out if I can live with the limited bootspace is also something I need to consider carefully.

Annual reviews in the motoring press – October / November 2018

The motoring press is now in annual review mode and many magazines write up their favourite cars in different sectors, especially sports cars. The November 2018 issue of CAR is typical – comparing the following cars.

Model	BHP	Weight Kg	Cost £	0-60 sec	mpg
Alpine A110	248	1103	51,805	4.5	44.1
BMW M2	404	1575	51,930	4.2	31.3
Aston Martin Vantage	503	1630	120,900	3.6	26.8
Ferrari 488 Pista	710	1385	252,765	2.9	24.6
Porsche 911 GT2 RS	690	1430	228,548	2.8	23.9
McLaren Senna	789	1309	750,000	2.8	22.8

In this exalted company the Alpine came fourth in their view, only beaten by cars costing at least four times as much, with the three more expensive cars ordered according to price, very close between the Ferrari and the Porsche. I don't know how meaningful this is as a comparison – it fills some pages and some journalists certainly got some fun out of it.

It is interesting that at the time of writing there were eight cars for sale on Pistonheads, all over the £52k list, presumably hoping to achieve a premium price. Obviously, car sales are generally a bit flat at the moment but it is interesting that these have not all been snapped up. I think, until it establishes its reputation in terms of reliability and resale value, its appeal will not be huge, no matter how good it is (and by all accounts it is refreshingly brilliant).

There are galleries of official publicity pictures on the following websites which may help when read alongside this article.

<https://alpinecars.com/en/media/special-report/alpine-a110-premiere-edition-en/>

and here for the racing car

https://alpinecars.com/alp-content/uploads/2017/10/Alpine_Europa_Cup_2017.zip



Thanks to Andy Sargeant who saw this in The Barn Antique Centre in Long Marston (near Stratford on Avon). He hasn't yet let on whether this now has pride of place on his fireplace.



*Berlinette convertible, newly restored by Willy Goudezeune, seen at Etretat hillclimb 2018.
Photo by Cynthia Winning*



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