



FROM YOUR EDITOR

We all send our heartfelt condolences to Bob Selby after Ann passed away during an operation before Christmas. Ann was a regular helper on the refreshments at Dream Rides as well "rehoming bears" at other events. It is appropriate that the first of the 2014 presentation photos show Ann and Bob, along with George and Sheila Dodds, attending the presentation they organised to "Smile for Life" which was the charity to benefit from last year's Corbridge Classic. Bob and Ann have again nominated them for this year's event. When asked if they enjoyed the cakes Bob replied that unfortunately they were only a prop for the photo but they were indeed real as they were being sold in the little cafe which the charity operates to help youngsters into work.

Paul 'Grizzly Bear' Bonsall is organising the Norther Gambol Too - see his advert. Thanks to Barry Milsom (and Nathan), Fiona Davies and Andrew Carrie for contributions to this bumper edition.

WELCOME

We have six new Polar members; John Rutter from Chester-le-Street. Martyn Ashmore from Washington, Don Price from Whitley Bay, Graham Craig from Hexham, Laurence Hogarth also from Hexham and Eric Richie from Carlisle. Welcome to you all and we hope to see you soon.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

As you may have heard, Fiona and Mike have stepped down from their post as area representatives for the Polar branch of Sporting Bears, and



have been succeeded by Pat and me. I'm sure you will all join us in thanking Fiona and Mike for their years of outstanding service and commitment to the Polars, and I trust they will remain as active members for years to come. The official handover took place at the Christmas lunch at the Collingwood, where they were presented with a one off special edition of Polar News, splendidly put together by our Editor, with lots of photos of the happy couple at various events over their years "in office". A suitable card was signed by all present, and a bouquet elegantly presented by Mary-Jane.

how to do stuff, and a myriad of boxes, files and folders relating to various arcane practices, most of which we didn't even know existed. Also many messages from "on high" from various secretaries of this and that; all of whom wished us well. We also thank all the members who attended the lunch for their support and offers of help, and those members who have sent us messages since then. I can assure all that we will be calling on them for this help on a regular basis!

Which brings us neatly on to the real business. We would dearly like to run everything as well as we

well last year and the organisers have asked us back so come along and enjoy the racing: there is also the Scottish Antiques Centre which is worth a look. Let us know if you intend to come and if you will be bringing a car for the stand. Numbers are limited but I'm not sure to how many, probably ten at the most.

We have been asked to bring Dream Rides to the Forres Classic Car Show. This request came from one of the organisers talking to Fiona at the NEC. We've decided we will go along on a fact finding mission to check numbers, location, suitable routes etc., with a possibility of doing more next year. Come along if you fancy an outing to the Scottish Riviera. Also to all far Northern Polars; please get in touch and come along if you can.

The Northern Gambol Too is in the capable hands of Paul Bonsall.

Then we come to Thirlestane. Since we have not sent cards around with regard to who's coming, please advise us of your intention to come along and what duties you would be prepared to undertake. The list of required jobs is in this issue. Myself or Pat will be in touch personally with any volunteers but we'll also try to establish the helpers at the lunch in April. Also not forgetting the lunch for the Saturday helpers in the setting up, Kate in action once again?

Hoping to get plenty of volunteers and ideas to start off our term.

Best regards to all our fellow Polars  
Pat & Dick

## CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Twenty-five Polars had a most



Unfortunately our pleasure in becoming the representatives for the Polars has been marred very recently by the passing of our much loved friend and fellow member Ann Selby. We all admired her humour and tenacity in the face of illness of herself and Bob; just when it seemed that they were turning the corner and with surgery imminent she took a turn for the worst. Our heartfelt condolences go to Bob and their family.

Prior to and since the handover we have received an intensive and gruelling course from the Davies' on

have come to expect from Fiona & Mike. But we realise there may be other things members would like to see happen. Can I offer a plea to anyone who has any ideas at all on events or how we do things, or anything else, please get in touch. For this year, the calendar is in the usual place in the magazine. First up is Doune Hill Climb; just a friendly get together really to start the year off. We will be rehoming bears and Fiona and Mike will supply another soup and sandwich lunch in exchange for a small donation to the charity. This went



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enjoyable festive lunch, again at the Collingwood Arms. We socialised over coffee and pre-prandial drinks, admired Mary-Jane's shoes, had the delicious Christmas meal, played with the cracker Spitfires and had the raffle.



This raised £160 for Whizz Kidz, which means they'll receive £425 in total.

Fiona dealt with the first items on the agenda and let us know that the NEC 2014 Dream Rides had raised an incredible £48,000 (now



updated to £49,250). She went over the charity updates before handing over the role of Polar Representatives to Dick and Pat Nortcliffe - with a huge sigh of relief me thinks!

Dick took over and thanked Fiona for her incredible spell as Polar Rep and Pat presented Fiona with a



'Special Edition' Polar News from Helen, a card that Sheila had got everyone to sign and flowers from Mary-Jane.

Dick then went over the proposed calendar for 2015, which you can see at the end of the newsletter.

Again we thank Fiona and Mike for all their years of work for the Polar Bears and give our support to Dick and Pat.

### **PRESENTATION TO HEARTS & MINDS CLOWNDOCTORS**

The Sporting Bears weren't the only organisation celebrating a birthday in 2014. To mark the 15th year of founding the Hearts & Minds Clowndoctors a special celebratory evening was held in Edinburgh when supporters were invited to join them for a reception and screening of a specially

commissioned film. This gave a moving insight into their work in the hospitals, hospices and care facilities around Scotland - the hankies were out by the end. We were all given a copy of the DVD which we will be screening at a future lunch so more of our Polars will have a chance to view it. Earlier in the evening Andrew Carrie, Mike and I took the opportunity of presenting the Artistic Director and Co-founder, Magdalena Schamberger and Pip Quinn, the Fundraising and



Communications Officer (otherwise known as Dr Dosh) with our cheque for £315. This was the amount raised at the Bo'ness Hillclimb Revival. During the evening the three of us had great fun, and some difficulty, in identifying all the Clowndoctors who were there - but not in their colourful working attire! Fiona Davies

### **LE JOG 2014**

After failing to complete this rally in 2013, I decided to have another attempt in 2014. I managed to convince my navigator it was a good idea and he agreed to take part. I thought it would be a good opportunity to raise money for ClicSargent and to promote Sporting Bears - what is a little more pressure?

To date the amount raised is £1010.

I would like to thank every one that has made a donation. A big thank you to my wife Margaret who baked bread for 2 weeks and sold it at the livery yard, and my daughter Marie who made a huge amount of cupcakes and sold them at RAF Wittering. Also a big thank you to Nathan for navigating on the rally, it is a very difficult job, spending many hours bent over staring at

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maps, travelling over rough terrain in the light and dark, and having to put all your trust in the driver to stay on the road and the right way up. Not forgetting the car, a 34 year old MG BGT, loaded up with tools, spares, snow chains, spare fuel and oil, our luggage and hundreds of maps. A couple of minor problems, but apart from that completed a total of 2400 miles, 1460 of those being rally miles, over rough roads, through forests and quarries, and being thrown around cones on tests.

[LEJOG 2014 – a personal view by Nathan 'the Navigator'](#)  
Day 1

After attempting Lejog last year as a complete novice, this year's adventure started in a slightly more relaxed manner. We departed Wittering on Thursday morning and took a steady bumble down the country without any nerves, no sickie feeling building up inside, stopping at a greasy spoon en route for the mandatory bacon sandwich and brew and were quickly on our way again, arriving

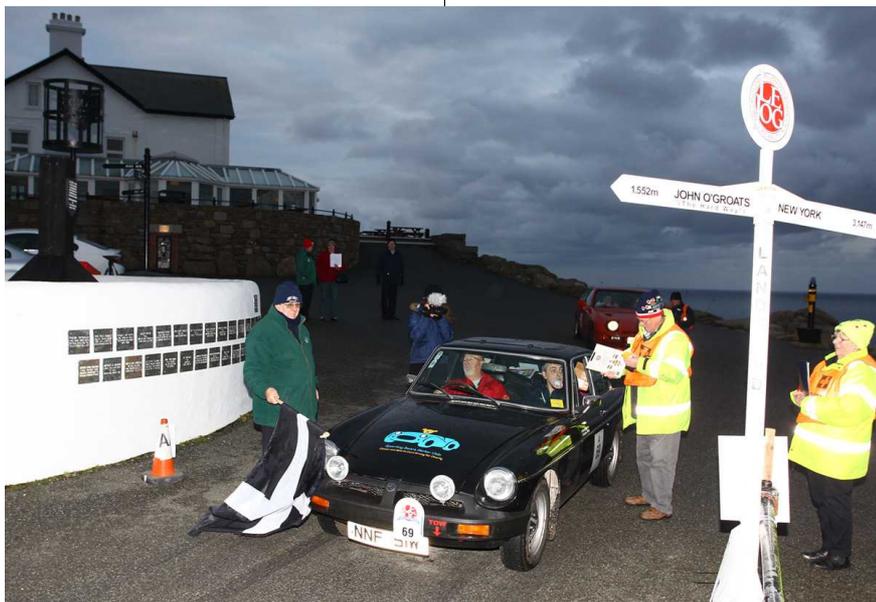
at our hotel at Sennen Cove with plenty of spare time before the Navigator's briefing at Lands' End. I decided that although I had been swatting up on my map skills, the briefing may be beneficial as I hadn't done anything along these lines since our unfortunate retirement at last year's event. Armed with my pencil, little notebook and pint of ale, I sat quietly like an excited little child waiting for the teacher at the front to start. At his first question "has anyone here not used an eight figure grid reference before?" several people raised their hands and at this point I let out one of my 'I feel your pain' gasps, and it took me a while to realise that people were actually laughing at my childish noise.... I was however the one having the last laugh as I realised that there was hope, and perhaps we wouldn't finish last after all. The wise man at the front went through all the different types of things we would come up against, tulip diagrams, herringbones, descriptive, gridlines, spot heights, London maps.... London what?? Whoa! we haven't seen these before.... Every day is a school day.... After the briefing it was back to the hotel for some food and a few pints before a decent night's sleep.

Day 2

Day 2 started quite leisurely, nice breakfast at the hotel and then up

to Lands' End to get in the queue for scrutineering, as last year we made the mistake of waiting and were there all day. When we were a few cars from the front, I asked Barry to put the lights on so we could start our checks, only to find we had an indicator out, No-o-o-o!! Quick check proved bulb ok, fuse ok – oh dear it's a loose connection somewhere. No problem, Barry quickly dismantles the grille on the car and locates the problematic wire and we're back in business. Ten minutes later we have a green light and that all important stamp on the Scrutineer's card... My next job was signing on so off I trundled to collect my route book and Navigator's information. I returned with my arms full of paperwork and much to Barry's disgust, two huge bags. "You're not supposed to be shopping, we've got no space as it is". However when he discovered that these bags contained our gift watches from the event sponsors, Elysee, he changed his tune and he allowed them space in the car. All signed on, paperwork complete, and it was back to the hotel for five and a half hours map plotting. Now plotting is extremely time consuming for beginners, as there are so many different types of instruction that it's almost enough to make your brain explode. But calmly does it, no mistakes.... Several of the more experienced crews came over to check how we were coping and asked if I'd like them to check my work. Not wanting to turn down their kind offers, I was pretty made up to find I had made no mistakes.... That'll do me nicely.

With my work all done for the day it was time to don our DJ's ready for dinner where we got chatting at the table with some of the other crews who also happened to be in MG's, so the decision was made to form a team for fun, which we called it the 3-2-1-Club, based on the fact Justin and John had done it 3 times, Barry and I were on our second attempt and Tim and Alan were event virgins. With the Dinner finished, we returned to the hotel



**Happy New Year to all you Bears!**

and Barry being on his best behaviour, because he had an early start behind the wheel, went to bed, whereas I went to the bar for a nightcap.

### Day 3

Up and on it, down to breakfast, coffee, coffee and another coffee. Checked out the hotel and round the corner to the start at Lands' End. Suit bags loaded onto the support vehicles so they don't look like they've been slept in when we get to John O Groats, because this year, unlike last, we were both confident we would actually be joining our suits at the end. With a bit of time to watch the first few depart and it's soon 08.38 and we're in the car, clipboards, maps, pencils, rubbers, Barry is studying the first test paper making sure he's got his lefts and rights sorted. Before we know it, we are sat on the start grid having our picture taken, and the count starts... "Going in 10...and.... 5.4.3.2.1" The flag lifts, Barry is on the throttle and we're gone, banging through the gears, "left of cone A, hairpin right onto right of cone B, left of C, right of D, stop astride line" 20 cones down and the first test is in the rear view mirror with no faults.

The day was really long, several tests and regularity sections saw us pass over Bodmin moor, Exmoor to Porlock hill for a check point and start of test. The big problem here was we had to descend to the bottom to start the hill climb challenge and we had some serious smoke issues from the brakes by the bottom. I'm sure even behind Barry's calm face, he considered using the escape lane to slow us down.... At the bottom and cooled down, we're straight into another test. Again the pair of us are smiling from ear to ear as I call out the instructions.

Well, the hill ruined us, the poor old GT is boiling over, spitting coolant out the overflow, it's getting dark, Barry does his thing, I study the maps....30 minutes later we are back on the road in the pitch black night and I unknowingly miss a road junction. Nobody's perfect we've all

done it, we're following the map I've plotted minus one turn and it takes a while till I discover I have made a major mistake.

Unfortunately due to the fact we are now on Dartmoor, somewhere we have to keep driving until I find a road sign. Well behind and still laughing, the car overheats again. Time for Barry to top up the coolant, my time to plot some magic and get us back on track. Gordano services on the M5 is our rest stop. Armed with our meal vouchers, we arrive 30 minutes before we are due to depart, after our car problems and my daft mistake. Our 2 hour break is greatly reduced, MAN ALIVE, I'm getting tired now, really hungry, Barry looks broken..... I decide to cut a regularity as it will buy us time to eat and keep our morale up, and anyone who knows me will tell you, I am the morale officer.... All fed and watered, windows and lights cleaned, we're off again. That's 12 hours done, across the bridge into God's Country (Wales) and we're soon back on the tests and regularities, Brecon, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Bala, Ruthin, Mold into Chester for our nightstop for 03.30.... Nightstop???

### Day 4

My alarm went off at 06.45 and I swear I nearly cried, after what can only be described as the worst night's sleep ever, I was pretty grumpy. I spent 10 minutes wandering around the hotel reception looking for Starbucks for my morning caffeine fix, only to fail. The receptionist laughed out loud as she pointed me in the right direction, 5 metres to my front, big huge green sign.... Okay, I look a bit silly now!! My sister phoned to say her and my Dad were on their way to see us off, it was really nice to see their smiling faces and it perked me up a bit. 09.00 and we're off again, short motorway section to Lymm truckstop for our first test of the day. We fluffed it..... pretty bad, 3 hours sleep is clearly not enough! We laughed it off and carry on.

Another short section to Salmesbury Airfield and we're a bit more awake, and 5.4.3.2.1 we're away. "Left of A, right of B, 180 right of C, 360 D to left of E, 360 to F, 180 G..... NO BARRY... 180, not 360" reply "Sorry mate, having too much fun!!!" Another brilliant regularity section from Clitheroe through the Ribble valley and forest of Bowland, probably one of our favourites, then across into Yorkshire with a lunch stop at Leyburn where Barry's wife, Margaret, was waiting to see us. Quick spot of lunch in the pub and we head North West through Weardale into Carlisle for our nightstop. We arrived in Carlisle at 21.30 at the Crown and Mitre hotel our final checkpoint for the day. Our hotel was "just round the corner" hmmm....we finally got into the carpark through the 800 metre maze about 22.00....I think it's fair to say we were both pretty happy to check in, we dumped our bags in the room, straight into the bar for a cheeky pint and some food. Feeling relaxed and full, it was shower time and bed...

### Day 5

Day 5 was all about getting there. Our first test of the day was in a snow covered, frozen quarry. It was pretty mental. I'm glad Barry was in the hot seat and I was giving out the orders, the stop astride lines all seemed to be on hills. Now that's fine but getting going again is pretty tricky.... "hairpin right Barry", "whoa, whoa, whoa", "don't worry mate, we'll get it this time". We were stopped at the next test. The next regularity was cancelled due to heavy snow. Heading north west, Cumbernauld, Stirling onto a night stage through Laggan forest. This was amazing, deep snow, closed roads, real fun, got the trip running, reading the notes out, then round a tight left to see a gorgeous Porsche that had been involved in a collision. Unfortunately it didn't win that battle. Carrying on, we headed up to Loch Kyle of Lochlash for a rest stop, we check in on time..... result!.... 2



hours, and we walked into this nice hotel, the food tables are laid, the chefs are all stood to attention waiting with plates in hand, "what would you like sir?" "anything please mate, lots of it" loaded up with chips, rice and a giant heap of chicken curry we sat down to see people sleeping under tables, on sofas, under OS maps, basically anywhere they could get some shut eye.... Fed and brewed, I plotted the remaining maps all the way to John O Groats. Around Loch Carron into a regularity, the snow is coming down, not too heavy but it's starting to stick and the road is getting slippery, we are climbing.... and its steep, from 18 metres above sea level to 429 metres and there are some mental drops down the sides. This will be Applecross pass then. We crack on a bit gingerly, round hairpin after hairpin to be greeted by the sight of two Marshalls stood in the now heavy snowfall... Its constant, Barry is working flat out, keeping the car on the road, quick glance up... "Barry there's a deer"... "Barry there's a deer"..... "BARRY THERES A DEER!!!!!"... We are both tired, in fact I think it's fair to say we are running on reserve, but we follow the coast all the way into Ullapool. Again we are on time. We decide to have a power snooze. I set my alarm for fear of not waking up again.... But we are woken to the sound of one of our team mates hammering the exhaust back onto

his Dad's car. We laughed and went back to sleep, it's too cold to be getting under people's feet.... The night feels like it drags on forever, in fact it does. The stages are that long, they put word boards in the most obscure places imaginable just to break up the drive and keep you alert, but by now conversation is minimal apart from the occasional "You ok mate?"..... Sunrise is slowly upon us and we're right on the North of Scotland. A few more regularities and we're on the home straight. We rolled up the road into John O Groats about 10.30, the wind was unreal. You could literally only just stand up, quick run to the final checkpoint building and onto the finish point for photos.... That's it, it's done, what now? It's a strange feeling after 3 solid days battling the elements. We head into the café for breakfast and reflect back on what we've done.... 1465 miles on 9ish hours sleep, we've laughed, we've been moody, we've had car problems, we've been lost, we've fixed stuff, we've been hungry, we've been happy, we've seen every type of weather, we've dodged several animals and seen some amazing scenery....But all in all, we've done it and we're still talking to each other.... It is fair to say, that it is one of the craziest, most demanding challenges I have ever taken on and I did it with my 69yr old Father in law. After a few hours kip we descended on the bar

for a few celebratory drinks, quick shower, shave and the tuxedo was back out for the evening. A brilliant end to a great few days, food, wine, beer... There were plenty of medals and trophies handed out, unfortunately we didn't win any of those, but I think we were more than happy to have made the end as over 30 cars dropped out on the way.... I would like to thank Barry for asking me a second time to go on this epic challenge with him, it was amazing, and I feel very privileged.

### **CHEQUE PRESENTATION TO ABF**

7 November 2014

Those of you who attended and helped with the "Classics in the City" event in Edinburgh will remember that the weather wasn't at its kindest. We still managed to raise over £650 for the Army Benevolent Fund though!

We arranged a cheque handover with the ABF at Edinburgh Castle for 7 November, and we were concerned that the weather on the days before was again not very pleasant – but it brightened up for the day itself.

For various reasons, we couldn't do the presentation on the Esplanade, with the castle as a backdrop, but we were delighted when Claire suggested that we could make the presentation just after the one o'clock gun.

For those unfamiliar with Edinburgh, a gun is fired from the Castle at 1pm each day except Sunday. Why? Well in the days of sail, ships used sextants to plot their latitude using the height of the sun when it is exactly south, but to measure longitude, they had to compare the time when the sun was south, with the time on the ship's chronometer – and the gun was a signal of the right time to set that clock, for ships leaving Leith. (There is also a visible signal of a "dropping ball" on the Nelson monument on Calton Hill, which the ships could observe through telescopes, but not when it's foggy). Now the gun (and the dropping ball) are entirely

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ceremonial, but still handy if you are a sailor without sat-nav. I met up with Mike and Fiona Davies, and also Mark McKail, and we were invited to the ABF office, before we headed down to the "VIP" area right beside the gun. We were introduced to Sgt Dave Beveridge, who produced a set of earplugs each, before going round the other side to "warm up" the tourist crowd.

Then it was on to the ceremony. He marches up, loads up the shell, produces a watch from his pocket, and then everything stops... You know it's coming, you brace yourself... any second now... any second... BANG! And you still jump! Before the echo has died away, he calmly ejects the still-smoking shell, picks it up and marches over to us for the cheque presentation and photographs.

I worked in Edinburgh and heard the gun daily for 15 years. I don't flinch in Princes Street while the tourists are diving for cover, and I've been in the Castle to see it a couple of times – but this was up close and personal, and a memorable day for all of us. Many thanks to Claire for organising it. Most of all, though, thanks again to all who supported the event in Edinburgh, and made it such a success. *Andrew*

(Additional donations totalling £570 have been raised by Nimal Jayaratne during 2014 and this

amount has also been sent to ABF with his specific request that the money is used for the benefit of children of veterans of the Afghan war. *Helen*)

### THIRLESTANE VOLUNTEERS FOR SUNDAY DUTIES

The following non-driving posts must be filled to ensure the smooth running of this event ; -  
Safety Officer, Driver/Passenger Liaison, Garage Boss, Garage Hands (6 urgently needed), Booking Desk and Cash Handling, Passenger Loading, Driver Refreshments Coordinator and Assistants, Charity Representative Liaison. Cool Wall, Collecting Tins. Please contact Dick asap.

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**12 April** Sunday Lunch and meeting at The Collingwood Arms, Cornhill-on-Tweed. Contact Pat 01358723845

**19 April** Doune Hill Climb. Contact Dick 01358723845 or email polarbears@sportingbears.co.uk

**3 May** Forres Vintage Vehicle Day - individual entries. Contact Dick 01358723845 or email polarbears@sportingbears.co.uk

**15-17 May** The Northern Gambol Too - new participants especially welcome. Contact Paul Bonsall 01539623242

**7 June** Dream Rides at Thirlestane Castle. Setting up 6 June. Contact Dick 01358723845 or email polarbears@sportingbears.co.uk

**5 July** Classics at Corbridge car show. Contact Bob Selby email cobra.gpt290s@blueyonder.co.uk

**18 July** Classics in the City, Edinburgh. Contact Andrew Carrie 07798646844 or email Andrew@acarrie.net

**10 August** Children's Dream Rides at Teesside Autodrome. Contact Tony Beverley 07968823172 email - tonybev52@gmail.com.

**23 August** Sunday Lunch and Meeting at The Collingwood Arms Hotel, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland Contact Pat 01358723845

**6 September** Boness Hill Climb. Contact Andrew Carrie 07798646844 or email Andrew@acarrie.net

**13-15 November** NEC Dream Rides contact Andrew Lake email treasurer@sportingbears.co.uk

**6 December** Sunday Lunch and Meeting at The Collingwood Arms Hotel, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland. Contact Pat 01358723845

**Happy New Year to all you Bears!**