



CUTTINGS



BRITISH LAWN MOWER RACING ASSOCIATION

As if by magic, here we are at the end of another year! Whilst we still haven't got the old COVID monkey off our back, we have at least managed to run a successful season despite restrictions and navigating our way through all the other issues that have dogged us and indeed all mower clubs in the country. Thankfully we're still standing and planning our 2022 season, keeping half an eye on our 50 year anniversary in 2023 and ensuring the club lasts for many years to come.

I'll get into some of the whys and wherefores later on, but this Cuttings may stand at something of a turning point in how we communicate with you. With my serial tardiness this season, it may come as no surprise that I've decided to take a bit of a step back to relieve some pressure. As such I'll still be nominally at the helm here at Cuttings, but my intention is to release it no more than quarterly and to simplify things a bit so that someone else may be tempted to take over (I can dream!). This will mean that there may be a need to send more ad hoc emails than we have been of late, which may well be an improvement!

In the meantime, may I on behalf of the Committee wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Graham

Committee News & AGM

The last couple of years haven't been much fun for anyone and they have certainly been challenging for the committee.

It takes both time and passion and a couple of us have realised that we're struggling for one or the other.

Long standing member Pugs Reeves will be standing down in the new year. Once called the Lewis Hamilton of Mower Racing (only once), Pugs has become pivotal in the production of our event calendar and in the organisation of facilities such as toilets, first aid and blocks or bales prior to each event.

As many know, he is a bit of a masochist and the various extreme fitness events he takes part in have taken over his life in recent years. His hope is that stepping down will enable him to continue to dip in and out of mower racing without the chore outweighing the treat.

We will miss his help, his passion, his sense of humour, his occasional rant, but most of all his beard. Thanks Pugs.

Although not standing down per se, I too will be standing aside; this largely just comes down to time. It came to a bit of a head mid-season when I ended up doing mower repairs in the car park at work at lunch time—time I had already set aside for writing event sheets and Cuttings to avoid too much time sat at the computer in the evenings (when I should be doing "more important" things around the house). Needless to say, something had to give and I can't afford to quit work (at least not this century)!

Having overcomplicated everything, I will continue to author Cuttings and the event sheets, but will stay away from committee meetings unless needed. I will be frantically trying to simplify things so someone else can take it over. Volunteers are not forthcoming...

As always, we'd like to invite anyone with an interest in helping out to put yourself forward for election. We already have two prospective ~~victims~~ volunteers, but many hands make light work as they say!

Changes will be formalised at the AGM, which we intend to hold, along with a prize giving ceremony, in person at the end of January. Obviously this is subject to the prevailing government restrictions at that time. We will share a provisional date when we have one and confirm this nearer the time.



Pugs on his Group 4 at the Reservoir Dip earlier this year

Rules and Regs

As expected, the outcome of the Rules and Regs meeting was mostly just a series of tweaks and corrections, including a somewhat amusing correction to our drug and alcohol policy so that it doesn't imply that we'll be holding fun races involving drugs (sorry, no Bong relay!).

One change that has been made for Group 4, in the interests of safety, is that there is now a maximum hole size in foot plates. This is designed to prevent feet getting trapped in any oversized holes in the event of a spill and will be measured using a golf ball—if the ball will pass through any hole in the footplate, that hole is too big and will need modification.

There are no other significant changes and we'll post the 2022 handbook online just as soon as it's ready.

Whilst we opted not to include anything in the rule book, we did discuss Tourist entry at length and just wanted to reiterate that tourist entries can only be accepted from members of other clubs, and their mowers must be approved by that club—for which we will ask to see the log book. We must insist that our own mowers comply with BLMRA rules.

We really want to forge positive relationships with other clubs, but we must make sure that tourist entry is the exception rather than the norm.

Club Finances

One of the fundamental principles of the BLMRA is to keep mower racing a cheap motorsport. Unfortunately as a club, we have a history of not watching our bottom line, and so whilst we have managed to keep membership and race entry well below most other motorsport clubs, we have in recent years either made a net loss or come perilously close to it.

Part of the problem is that we've never really tracked our incomings and outgoings over a season. As a bit of a bandage we have been ratcheting up the prices in recent years, but with our implementation of the Xero program, 2021 is the first year we can really see how we're doing:

	Incoming	Outgoing	Profit
O'heads/membership	£12104	£12771.40	-£667.40
Test weekend	£466.07	£157.20	£308.87
Reservoir Dip	£825	£643.71	£181.29
Newdigate	£1340	£1183.55	£156.45
Winchester	£1229	£1187.14	£41.86
5 Oaks	£712	£776.80	-£64.80
Double 4	£1645	£1062.62	£582.38
Reservoir Dip	£1016	£496.31	£519.69
Codicote	£1494	£520.81	£973.19
Total	£20831.07	£18799.54	£2031.53

Not too bad right? Well there are a few things to point out: these figures include an £809.14 profit on engines, free insurance (effectively a refund of last year's premium), camping fees, free venue and toilets at Codicote and free use of the Reservoir Dip. So there are a couple of things to consider—we can't really rely on engine sales every season, 2022's insurance will not be free, we have not been invited back to Codicote, we used the Dip more than we would like (and we don't know for how much longer it will be available), the Winchester venue will be more expensive in 2022, we still need a couple of new venues and most importantly we intend to run a 12 hour, for which we no longer have a title sponsor and this is typically heavily subsidised by the income from Sprint weekends. Hopefully we will see the return of paying events in 2022 and maybe even more race entries, but we will need to continue to tighten our belts. We'd also like a barbeque at some point!

As part of our long term strategy, it was our intention to put up entry fees in the new year, but instead we have opted to make a modest increase to membership fees (£2 single, £3 joint) and keep the camping fee, as this comes with some other benefits; namely helping determine how much camping space we need and to spread the burden between racers and non-racers.

We know this will be unpopular with some, but please see it for what it is: a way of making sure your club can afford to put on the events that we do. With no events, there is no Lawn Mower racing!

P.S. on the Loncins: a new batch will come available in the very near future and we don't intend to increase the price, despite being considerably cheaper than the competition...

Winter Fuel Storage

With all the craziness that has been going on at the pumps lately, it's likely that you've already siphoned the petrol out of your mower to get you to work, but just a quick reminder that the change to 10% ethanol E10 petrol at the beginning September typically halves the shelf life of petrol to around three months (in ideal conditions).

Petrol in an unsealed container, i.e. a fuel tank, can start to break down much quicker than this, so it's well worth thinking about draining your mower before gum, varnish, corrosion and that delightful smell can build up. Just be mindful that the inside of your fuel tank may rust if it's left empty!

As an added bonus: ethanol is also hygroscopic and a solvent, which means that it can absorb water from the atmosphere and deposit it around your fuel system, condensing in fuel tanks and corroding components in the carb, whilst also slowly eating through things like rubber, plastic and fibre-glass.

Good stuff!

Oh and as usual: don't forget to charge your transponder every few months and empty the caravan tanks and toilet before they freeze...

Provisional 2022 Calendar

Since the last issue of Cuttings the 2022 calendar has come along quite well, though there are still some holes. Below is a very provisional sneak peak at the dates, with most venues to be confirmed, please be aware that there may well be a reshuffle before final issue as we seek to plug the gaps.

In a further development the landowner at Newdigate has requested a year off, so unfortunately this has left another hole, though we're hopeful of a return next year.

With the loss of Blake House, Codicote and now Newdigate from the calendar, now more than ever we need your help in looking for potential venues. If you have any ideas or you know someone willing

and able to host us for a weekend, please get in touch!

May	
7-8 th	Venue TBA
21-22 nd	Venue TBA
June	
4-5 th	Double 4, Venue TBA
18-19 th	Venue TBA
July	
2-3 rd	Venue TBA
16-17 th	Venue TBA
August	
13-14 th	12 Hour, Venue TBA
27-29 th	Venue TBA
September	
10-11 th	Venue TBA
24-25 th	Venue TBA

Website

It probably hasn't escaped the attention of most that our website needs a bit of a birthday—some information is out of date and it's becoming increasingly 'buggy'. Race entry is also getting increasingly hard to handle at our end.

Unfortunately the problems are more than skin deep and the whole thing needs a complete ground-up rehash, which we aim to do in the very near future. Watch this web space!

