

# *Corsa Rossa*

*Italian Sports car Club*

June '09 Newsletter



Stuck Land Rover with helper

Hi, and welcome to the June 2009 issue of the Corsa Rossa newsletter.

It is good to be back in the states. Several items in this months issue, starting with a new meeting place and many updates for events. In general the picture at the start of the newsletter has no bearing on anything in the newsletter, it is whatever seems interesting to me. This month is different as the picture does relate to our featured speaker. Land rovers and halfingers are not what people traditionally think of with a sportscar club, but they can be fun and sporting particularly with the right crew.

Finally I need stories – moonshine rally stories – car fix stories – trip stories – why your significant other puts up with your car addiction - please send me some info.

Kevin Harper

Special thanks to Jerry Metscher for the presentation on Roger Barlow as it was very entertaining

## New meeting place

Hey, so we had to move. At the last minute we had to move from our old place to a new venue. The new place is called the "Celtic Café." I will say that I liked the place. We have or choice of the outside patio or two upstairs rooms, this is all dependent on the weather. This place reminds me of the English pubs where one would go to show off your toys and discuss the finer points of the internal combustion engine and the likelihood that the horseless carriage will become viable. As an added benefit for those who partake it is also 2 dollar domestic night. Just control your consumption as not to endanger others.

So join us every month on the second Tuesday for our club meeting at the Celtic Cafe near old Salem in Winston Salem. It is a small gathering of car enthusiast who join for food fun and camaraderie. We usually have a speaker who gives a short presentation. This has varied from technical details of a specific car to a light hearted discussion of why a person drives a gold car.

This months meeting CORSA ROSSA MEETING is on the 9<sup>th</sup>.  
The Corsa Rossa group, <http://www.corsarossa.com/> is going to the Celtic café <http://thecelticcafe.com/>

Corsa rossa meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month.  
The address of the Celtic Cafe is 924 South Marshall Street • Winston-Salem • NC • . This is just a little off business 40. 336-245-2828

### Future Speakers

June – Chuck Biggs – Life with Range rovers  
July – No Speaker – Free mic night  
Aug – Steve Jones  
Sept – Kevin Harper  
Oct – Open  
Nov – Open

Working on the Map it will be in the next newsletter

I have plenty of openings, and am open to suggestions.

Schedule for the meeting-  
Arrive around 6-6:30 and chat in the parking lot.  
Around 7 order dinner –  
7:15ish speaker will start

### 50/50 auction

This is how it works - In order to pay for the meals and expenses of the speakers and to perhaps cover any club incidentals we have a 50/50 auction. We are going to sell tickets through the night, the price of the tickets is 1 dollar per ticket or 7 tickets for five dollars, at the end of the night one ticket will be drawn, and the winner gets half the pot. Please see Jim or myself for tickets.

Lots of events for this month so check the calendar for updates

## Upcoming events

All events are available on Google Calendars. Search for Corsa Rossa Calendar on google.

### **May 30<sup>th</sup> WHAT: TECH SESSION**

Apex Vintage, Inc  
(Cecil Boyd and Team)

- Tour of facility\_ new and exciting projects
- Alfa Four cylinder valve adjustment demo
- Bosch Tester Overview
- Open discussion/forum

**WHEN: Saturday, May 30, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**WHERE: Apex Vintage, Inc.  
8613 Barefoot Industrial Rd, #C  
Raleigh, NC 27617-4758  
Phone: (919) 781-1871**

Complimentary fresh brewed coffee and bagels provided by the Mid-Atlantic Alfa Romeo Club  
Please notify Don King by May 26, if attending!

**June 6<sup>th</sup>– Coffee and Cars** — Penny's restaurant in Jamestown NC. Start time around 8AM, finish around 10:00 or so. Take your car off for a little jaunt and Join the Austin Healy/British car club for a morning of coffee and cars. This will get your weekend car addiction satisfied without filling up the whole day.

Penny's restaurant is located at 727 W Main St. In Jamestown NC Tele (336) 454-4818

**June 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>** – Gold cup races at VIR - Three days of vintage sports car, stock car and kart racing begin June 5 at the Heacock Classic Gold Cup Historic Races at VIRginia International Raceway.

Bringing something for every road racing fan, the Gold Cup weekend attracts some of the cars and drivers who created the history of road racing at VIR. With cars ranging from thundering historic stock cars to spidery MGs, formula cars and unique GTs, the Gold Cup will thrill auto enthusiasts all weekend.

This year's featured event is the Peter Morgan Memorial race for Morgans, plus a Morgan 'parade' and car club gathering by the Morgan Car Club. Feature races including the OPTIMA Batteries Sprint Series Races, MotorCheck Enduro Series sprint races, plus the MG Vintage Racers focus event and historic stock cars. Capping the schedule each day is the Woodbridge Kart Club, with their vintage racing karts. Running at breath-taking speeds but only an inch or so off the ground, these are a reminder of all the racing stars who began their careers in karting.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>** – Walkertown LeMons work day – Those poor souls who are involved know what, when and where of this event.



# Dixie FiatFest

June 26 - 28, 2009

Winston-Salem, NC

Sponsored by the Carolina chapter of FLU

**An eventful three day weekend in the western Piedmont of North Carolina.**

## Itinerary:

### Friday June 26, 2009

3-5 pm Event registration (lobby of [Hawthorne Inn](#)) Packet pickup for those who preregistered

6 pm Dinner at [Old Salem Tavern](#) (Open menu with Entrees \$15-\$24)

8 pm Go kart racing at [Grand Prix Greensboro](#) (\$45 per person)

### Saturday June 27, 2009

8 am Event registration (lobby of Hawthorne Inn)

9 am Line up for Fiat Mini Miglia rally

9:30 am Driver/navigator meeting

10 am First car off

1 pm Meet at Denise's house for cookout (\$6 per person)

3 pm Tour to Dick Bear's metalworking shop or Classic Automotive Restoration Specialists

7 pm Italian buffet at [Winston's Eatery](#)

### Sunday June 28, 2009

8:30 am Breakfast buffet at [Winston's Eatery](#)

10:00 am Autocross (Wake Forest's BB&T field) (\$20 per person)

Autocross pizza lunch (\$6 per person, drinks not included)

## Sign up Now online

For registration and to purchase prepaid events go to

<http://www.flu.org/carolinaflu/>



## Swapmeet

**July 25<sup>th</sup> From 9am to 1 PM** Swapmeet in Summerfield with Chuck Biggs owner of "Rover Fixer".

Chuck has offered the use of his facilities for a swap meet or tech session.

Bring your old car parts, magazines, posters, even cars to buy trade or swap. Anything can be sold as long as it is car related. Chuck has a lift so we can have an informal tech session on someone's car.

There will supply of BBQ for lunch available so let me know who all will be there.

[KevinHarper1@gmail.com](mailto:KevinHarper1@gmail.com)

Rover fixer

5315 Highway US 220. *Summerfield*, North Carolina

**Aug 14-16** – The **MAARC Cinquecento mille** - MAARC Mid-Atlantic Alfa Romeo Car club tour in the Mountains of NC/SC – This is a 500 mile tour through the mountains of North and South Carolina. Starting and ending point will be in Morganton NC, which is about 2 hours west of Greensboro. The drive will last three days with approximately 4-4 ½ hours of driving each day. For those arriving on Thursday we will stay at the Hampton Inn in Morganton. The remaining two nights will be spent at Inn along the way. The hotel cost is approximately 100-150 per night. Breakfast and dinners will have set locations to meet, lunches will have suggestions. The recommended hotels and reservation information will go out via email by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Each morning we will break into groups of 4 or 5 cars, and leave the hotel in 2 minute intervals. I will try to break the groups up into driving styles for maximum enjoyment.

Everyone will have route notes which will include the directions and points of interest along the way.

There will be two sets of directions given to different groups, as there is a loop on day two which half the participants will go one way and the rest the other. This will allow us to wave at our friends as we pass.

Many of these roads and venues are used by car tour groups such as the Carolina trophy group at a cost of close to 5k for two people. With this tour you will have great roads, excellent accommodations, and good food for well less than a grand.

**Sept 12-13 LeMons south** – Carolina motorsports park - There are at least 3 Italian cars that I know of that are prepping for this event. One has an Alfa spider in the Va beach area, another has a Fiat in the Walkertown area and the third has an ugly as hell Milano in Milton. Stories are required from each group.

For those who do not know what LeMons racing is please checkout <http://www.24hoursoflemons.com/>

**Sept 26th MINIpalooza** (new and classic Mini gathering) at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC

**Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> Mebane Rally** – TSD Gimmick rally – Cancelled due to insurance requirements – Maybe back next year if I can work this out. Sorry.

**October 24<sup>th</sup>** - Woolly worm Tour – Elkin NC



## Pictures Wanted

Hi, an in effort to get to know people by name and what they drive, and to eliminate those silly name tags, I have a request. Please send me a picture of you and your car. I don't care if it is a garage queen, a daily driver, or a candidate for junkyard hero. Also if you are like a few of us and you have more than one car, please provide multiple pictures. I prefer JPG format but can work with about anything.

These pictures will be added to a slide show and shown during the meetings. If you do not send a picture I will make every attempt to take a picture of you, in a hopefully compromising position, and post them. So send them in to [KevinHarper1@gmail.com](mailto:KevinHarper1@gmail.com)

Thanks to those who have sent them in.

## Copenhagen Classics

Classics in Copenhagen are pretty thin but your intrepid reporter managed to ferret out a few. During my time there I only saw a few classics and for the most part I did not have my camera handy. I did manage to see an early 70's alfa spider, a lotus 7 clone, a couple of MGB-GT's and a few pagoda roof Mercedes. Classics are far more common in both Italy and England, with the English easily leading the pack in their enthusiasm for classics.

I did manage to find one classic car dealer with a few interesting items in Copenhagen, and I did have a camera handy. So enjoy a few shots.



246 Dino



Triumph TR-2



2CV – Deux chevaux



MG TF



## Mr. Murphy

Many of us are familiar with Mr. Murphy and he obviously enjoys old sports car. The following story is a little bit of a tech session, a heaping helping of stupidity, and proof of karma.

I play tennis with a friend of mine Richard nearly every weekend, weather and schedules permitting. Richard also has the Alfa virus owning a GTV-6, a Duetto, and two Milanos. This particular morning we had just completed our morning session, with a lot of trash talking thrown in, which is amusing in that, well, lets just say you will not see either one of us in the US open any time soon. Anyway Richard has recently gotten his Milano back on the road and is in the process of debugging it. Now the Milano is really starting to run well, but it does have this annoying problem of when you first try to start the thing it just spins the engine. You have to crank it turn it off and crank it again and it usually catches.

This particular morning was no different in the behavior of the Milano. It was also a warm pleasant Feb morning, and I dropped the top of the Spider while jawing with Richard that it was too bad he could not do that with the Milano, and the final coup de grace was that I said watch this and turned the ignition key for the spider which it of course started on the first turn. (What you expected something different). Richard of course gave me the much deserved one finger salute.

It was then off to Biscuitville to negate any health benefits of the morning tennis. Sometimes Richard joins me, but this morning I went solo. Nothing exciting happened on the way there and I had my morning breakfast of a Ham egg and cheese biscuit. I then went out to the car to stroll home, and where karma struck. When I turned the ignition key the motor cranked away. After a few tries I got out to star checking few things. The two main reasons for non start are either spark or fuel. Fuel is a little difficult to check on the road therefore I started with ignition. After pulling one of the plug HT leads it was obvious that I was not getting spark, a quick check of cap and rotors revealed nothing so I called AAA for a tow home. AAA was pretty quick today and got me home in about 30 minutes.

Now I had the car at home and the tools to test it. Now an Alfa Spider only has a few items that will cause loss of spark. These are in no particular order – Cap, rotor, distributor, coil, rev sensor, TDC sensor, ECU, wire shorting, bad grounds and low voltage. The wire shorting is the most difficult and thankfully rare, low voltage is quiet common and easily the most annoying. If a post '82 alfa spider has about 10.5 volts the motor will spin over wonderfully, but for whatever reason the ECU for either the FI (Fuel Injection) or the Ignition will not work. Therefore the first thing I always check is the battery voltage which read 12.7, not quiet the optimal of 13.2 but close. Too cover myself I hooked up the battery charger just in case and this of course had no effect.

At this point you have to evaluate the system and start checking components. You can do this with an ohm meter for many parts or if you are like me you have another spider that you can quickly switch parts to. But first the thing to do is to check the obvious. As stated before the battery is first the next item is the wires/plugs/cap/rotor. I group these together as they are somewhat integrated. I had also recently changed these parts and it is fairly easy to get something cocked and break a rotor, or cap. Well the plugs looked good, as well as the rotor and cap, a quick check of the wires and they ohmed out OK. The distributor in the spider doesn't do a lot more than spin. It doesn't have a hall effect sensor, weight or anything that will generally cause problems. The only thing that can happen is that it strip a gear or it loosen up and disengages the gear. Both of these failures lead to the distributor not spinning. Easily checked by grabbing the rotor and seeing if it spins freely, it should not, and then cranking the car to see if it is turning, it should.

After all these checked out I did verify the grounds were OK. Now there are two areas to check, one is on the right side rear of the head, where there is a 6mm (10 mm hex) bolt that has 2 or 3 wires to it the other is on the valve cover in which the two bolts which hold the idle air compensation valve also ground two wires. The ones on the valve cover are frequently stripped by ham fisted mechanics, this one included. When the threads strip of course the grounds loose contact. If they are stripped the wires are frequently moved down on the cylinder head, which will work, but with the larger gang of wires in the stack up it increases the chances of loosening. The other is the ground strap under the car at the drivers footwell. This connects the body to the transmission bell housing. Having said all of this the grounds were great.

After this I decided to check the coil, I first checked my leads to insure that I was getting power to the coil, which I was. I then grabbed an old coil off the shelf, doesn't everyone have one, and tried it. Nothing still no spark. I was not completely sure if the coil I had pulled off the shelf was good so I took the one out of the car and tested it on my other Alfa, again doesn't everyone have a spare car, it of course functioned brilliantly. Now what next.

I decided to try the ECU, Alfa spiders run two ECU's one for the FI and the other for the ignition. The ignition one sits vertically behind the passenger in the side panel. Now I am sure way back when there was a tester to check functionality of the ECU, but I did not have one but I did have the running car to test it in. These units are easily removed with about 3 screws holding in the panel and 4 bolts holding in the ECU. In less than 5 minutes I had the unit out and over to the good car, and it functioned great.

Hmm now what I was down to the rev and TDC sensors, so I pulled out the lower sensor, which if memory serves me correct is the TDC reference point sensor, and tried it in the good car. No start, hmm this could be it. I tried the sensor out of the good car in the broken car, still no spark. Hmm much head scratching now. I then reinstalled the sensor from the good car back into the good car. And disaster struck as it would not spark. Now I had successfully killed two cars in one day. A little bit of panic now ensued as these were the only two cars currently road ready in my collection. Yes I know it is bad not to have a "reliable" car in the collection, but the closest thing I have to dead reliable is a GMC pickup and it has its engine out. So the panic was justified as I had killed my two runners. So I started checking connectors, and wiring and kept coming up empty. During all of this I had been promising myself that I would have lunch as soon as I fixed the car. Now I know there was a Biscuitville in this story earlier but that was 4 hours ago and the hunger pangs were starting to hit. So I decided to step away for a few and have a bite to eat, halfway through making a PBJ I remembered "ECU" had I plugged it back in. Leaving a mess on the kitchen counter I ran out to the car and checked and yes I had forgotten to plug it back in. after plugging it back in I tentatively turned the key, while hoping I hadn't screwed up anything else, and I got the satisfying vroom, from the back up car. This lead to the "snoopy happy dance" around the garage, which amused my wife, and some what counterbalanced the mess I made in the kitchen. After having a nutritious lunch of a PBJ and spaghetti's it was back to the original broken car.

The final piece to try was to try the upper sensor, or engine speed sensor. FYI this sensor counts the teeth on the flywheel. It operates by system called Hall Effect, and the sensor itself is basically a little electromagnet, as your flywheel spins the teeth on the ring gear cause a change in the magnetic field density, also known as magnetic flux density. While this may sound somewhat complicated, it is nothing more than a wire wrapped around a rod. They rarely give trouble unless they are physically damaged. OK I will quit geeking and go back to fixing.

To remove the upper sensor is a bit of a pain as the 5mm hex socket has to slip in between the idler arm and the bolt. The only way to do this is to cut an allen wrench to fit. To no ones surprise I already have one in the toolbox, and it is known as the "upper sensor removal tool" as it is not good for anything else. While doing this I was trying to think what else could have gone wrong. BMW's use a similar system, and are notorious for knocking off the piece on the flywheel used as a TDC reference. It is a pull the

transmission job and not quick or easy. While I am not aware of Alfas suffering from this it had me worried. Also there is the possibility of an ignition switch problem, but I seemed to be getting power to all the items. The final was of course the dreaded broken wire in the harness. While Alfas may have a bad reputation for electrical maladies it is usually a ground or connection, and not a severed wire. Needless to say the mind was swirling with possibilities.

Finally I got the sensor out and tried it in the good car, and great it would not start. Again I had two broken cars. In a final act of desperation I tried the sensor out of the good car in the broken one. Cranked the key not expecting much and Vroom, much relief and joy. Time for the Happy Dance.

## Stories

Your stories make the newsletters. Add pictures if you can. By having an electronic newsletter, pictures add a lot and do not cost anything. The story does not have to be of a recent event it can be a story of trial and tribulation of working on a car, great driving roads etc. Please send them in.

## Advertise for Free

If you or a business would like to advertise in the newsletter or web page let us know. All advertisement must be car related and is at the discretion of the authors.

## For Sale

I have it on good account that Alfa does really stand for Always Looking For Another. Therefore in order to attempt to unload some of my crap, uhh I mean valuable parts, I am going to add a for sale section. While I encourage you to try and sell your stuff in many different places I will take ads and run them for 4 months. This is available to all sports and interesting cars and parts

Bill Longyard is looking for a good windshield for a Fiat 850. 336-768-5996 [longyard@ix.netcom.com](mailto:longyard@ix.netcom.com)

***For sale 1994 164Q - 107K original miles, red with black interior. Extremely rare one owner car well maintained and in good condition, seen at a number of events in the Carolinas. Maintenance records are available as well as carfax. This has been an extremely painful decision, will only be sold to a good and caring Alfista. You guys get first bids before listing in the Alfa Owner and Ebay. Price is negotiable but I am looking something in the low teens. Price is secondary to a good home and visitation rights will be required. Call Amedeo at 704-807-7242 or email for pictures [decame@gmail.com](mailto:decame@gmail.com)***

Finally, if you or someone you know would like to receive this newsletter, please have them contact me with their information. Also if you want off the mailing list just drop me a line and I will expunge you.

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