

## Autograss Racing - What is it?

Story by: Malcolm Brown

Solway Autograss Club was formed about five years ago and they used several tracks around Carlisle. Because of Foot and Mouth they never raced last year and the move from the site at Pirelli fell through. They put an article in the local paper asking if anyone knew of any site that they could use, I seen the article in the Cumberland News and I rang the number. I spoke to Richard Lewthwaite the Chairman and I suggested the Airfield, I then spoke to the landowner and put him in touch with the Chairman. After a few site meetings a deal was agreed and May 12th was to be the first race. A lot of hard work was then put into place to turn a field into a race track and move all the posts, tyres and cabins through



to Silloth. This was done in time for the first race after a lot of hard work from the Club members.

Autograss is an oval based off road motorsport. Specific to the United Kingdom and Ireland, it is enjoyed every weekend during summer by many competitors and spectators. The cars used to race range from Austin Minis to purpose built vehicles using 5.7litre V8 engines. Building a car can be as cheap or as expensive as you want. With the cost of racing starting around £400 per season it is real grass roots motorsport. Autograss is a great spectator sport, lots of overtaking on a slippery surface and a

great day out for all the family.

Autograss has evolved from a form of racing, known as Jalopy racing, that was popular in the 1970s. Natural surfaces have not always been used to race on.

The tracks are oval in shape, with two long straights joined by wide corners. The surface is natural, either grass or mud. Armco railing or steel rope fencing, and catch fences are provided for spectator safety

Meetings are staged in unused fields, with a track remaining at a location, usually for at least two years. Although you won't find stadiums or shelter at most autograss tracks, catering and conveniences are always available. Parking is sometimes at trackside, so if you need shelter your car is the best bet.

Racing is broken down into 10 classes of vehicles, ranging from virtually standard Minis to purpose built, supercharged, V8 'specials'.

There is a class for every pocket depth and driving experience

The sports governing body is The National Autograss Sports Association. It is a democratic body whose committee is made up only of people who have been league chairmen. Ensuring that those in charge are never far from the grass roots of the sport, indeed many of the members still compete regularly

Autograss is one of the most popular grass roots motorsports in the country. There are 53 clubs currently affiliated with the National Autograss Sports Association, the sports governing body. Almost

every weekend, from the beginning of May until the end of October, there is an autograss meeting somewhere in the UK.

If you want to race, you will need a licence. There are three types of licence, Mens, which is open to men or women, women opting for a mens licence can only race within mens races; Ladies licence allows women to race in ladies only races and Juniors licence, open to anyone aged 12-16 who has the consent of their parents. Juniors are restricted to class one cars. Clubs welcome anyone to their meetings. If you don't want to race there are many ways in which you can be involved. Clubs always require marshals, lap scorers and Pit controllers.

Visit our web site at: [www.solway-autograss.co.uk](http://www.solway-autograss.co.uk) for more details.

## Silloth Junior Football

The Seaside's latest under 10's girls played their first match losing 0-4 to a strong Abbeytown team. The girls were not dismayed and will be training regularly on Thursday evenings at 5:30pm under the floodlights at the Eden Street playing fields. Anyone interested in joining, please come along.

## Silloth F.C.

The club's Race Nite was a great success and £450 was raised for club funds. Anyone interested in going on a club tour around May or June 2003 please contact S. Hart on 31517 soon as possible. Congratulations to Malc Wise on winning the Seaside's Manager of the Month Award.

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