

## Bristol Motor Cycle & Light Car Club

### THE FIRST ROY FEDDEN TROPHY TRIALS

#### 1935 - 1938

By the mid 1930s the Bristol Motor Cycle & Light Car Club had plenty of experience of organising both motor-cycle and car road trials, beginning in 1913, two years after the club's formation. With the southern Cotswolds not far to the north of Bristol, and the Mendip Hills to the south, there were numerous challenging trials hills within easy reach of the city. Early events were mainly for motor-cycles, plus a handful of light cars, but in July 1925 the club ran its first trial just for cars, the Chappell Cup trial, won by WH Goodenough. Ten years later, in 1935, Roy Fedden, chief of the Bristol Aeroplane Company's Engine Department at Patchway, Bristol, presented the Club with a new trophy for an event that would quickly become recognised as one of the classic short-distance car trials of the pre-war period.

#### 1935

The first Roy Fedden Trophy Trial, on Saturday 2nd November 1935, was however a fairly modest event, with just twenty cars starting a route in Somerset which featured some hills familiar to the Bristol club's Allen Trials of more recent years. Extremely bad weather caused two hills to be cut out as unclimbable, leaving Elwell, Chicken Run, Burledge and Uplands, with a stop and restart and a special test to help decide the results. Uplands provided the greatest challenge, stopping all but eventual winner Bryan Winslett, and Joe Waller, both in MGs. Fedden runner-up was Cecil Evans, while other trophy winners in an MG dominated awards list were John Jones, Austen May and Eddie Goodenough.

#### 1935 Results and Awards

Roy Fedden Trophy – BHM Winslett (847 MG)
Alexander Duckham Cup (runner-up) – CC Evans (847 MG)
Best performance under 1100cc – JES Jones (939 MG)
Best performance over 1100cc – CAN May (1287 MG)
Best performance by a Bristol MC&LCC member – EH Goodenough (847 MG)
Team Prize – Bristol MC&LCC 'A' team (CC Evans, EH Goodenough, J Waller)
Third Class Awards – SO Roach (972 Singer), EH Startin (972 Singer), J Waller (847 MG), EE Hughes Williams (1287 MG)

#### 1936

The following year the event was moved to new territory north of Bristol with a 33 mile route including four sections new to trialling. Start and finish were at the Prince of Wales Hotel, at Berkeley Road on the A38 Bristol to Gloucester road. Forty-seven entries were received, with 43 starting – one of the non-starters was Mrs Aileen Moss (Stirling's mother) whose Marendaz caught fire and burned out on the way to the event. While the trial, on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1936, ran in bright sunshine, heavy rain beforehand had left the first section "Tramps Paradise" a quagmire and, after the first eight cars got nowhere, it was abandoned. Another section, Weighbridge, had been blocked by an earth fall and was omitted, leaving just four observed hills: Hodgecombe Farm, where 25% failed, many having to be towed to the top by a cart horse; Nailsworth Ladder; Old Hollow and, finally, Middle Drag near Dursley. Here, quite a large crowd gathered to watch the fun, and just ten runners made it to the top. Winner of the 1936 Fedden was RA (Robert) Macdermid (1408cc MG Magnette), and runner-up was John Jones' MG. Other trophy winners were Bert Hadley (Austin 7), Philip Flower (paralysed from the waist down since childhood, Flower's MG was fitted with hand controls), Cecil Evans and Ben Round (both also in MGs), while the MG CC South-West Centre took the team prize.

## Roy Fedden Trophy Trials 1935-38

## 1936 Results and Awards

Roy Fedden Trophy – RA Macdermid (1408 MG)
Alexander Duckham Cup (runner-up) – JES Jones (939s MG)
Anthony Cup (best supercharged performance under 1100cc) – HL Hadley (747s Austin)
Daphne Trophy (best unsupercharged performance under 1100cc) – PS Flower (847 MG)
Club Cup (best unsupercharged performance over 1100cc) – CC Evans (1287 MG)
Basil Barber Memorial Trophy (best performance by a Bristol MC&LCC member) – ARB Round (939s MG)
Team Prize – MG Club SW Centre team (RA Macdermid, JES Jones, JW Thornley)
First Class Awards – G Warburton (30-98 Vauxhall); AR Kendrick (939 MG); JW Thornley (939 MG); B Cree (847 MG)
Second Class Awards – TCG Butler (847 MG); MH Lawson (972 Singer); S Curry (3622 Ford); J Waller (847 MG)
Third Class Awards – NV Terry (1911 Frazer Nash-BMW); TH Dowler (1750 Alfa Romeo); H Wood (1493 Singer); KB Steadman (847 MG)

## 1937

By 1937 the Fedden was becoming well established and received a 57-strong entry (49 started) including the “Cream Cracker” and “Musketeer” MG teams, two teams from SUNBAC, and one each from the North West London and Ford Enthusiasts clubs. Start and finish were at Berkeley Road as before, but this year there was a 45-mile route, with seven observed hills within ten miles of the start, three being new ones (Narkover, near Leonard Stanley, Cow Kilcott and Tor Hill near Wotton-under-Edge), along with Hodgecombe, Nailsworth Ladder, Horsley and Old Hollow. For once the weather, on 13<sup>th</sup> November, was fine and dry and the event ran in glorious sunshine, competitors having a relatively easy time. That is until they reached the stop and restart test at Old Hollow, which proved to be a real sting in the tail, as Autocar graphically reported: *“It was a sad tale. Wheelspin caused failure after failure. The competitors who were waiting just round the corner at the bottom of the hill, must have shivered in their shoes as they listened to the screaming engines and howling tyres above them. Smoke from burning tyres mingled with the steam from boiling engines as car after car tried in vain.”* Thirty-five failed, but among those going clear were overall winner Dennis Buckley (747cc supercharged Austin) and runner-up Philip Flower in his hand-controlled MG.

## 1937 Results and Awards

Roy Fedden Trophy – CD Buckley (747s Austin)
Daphne Trophy (runner-up) – PS Flower (847 MG)
Committee Cup (third best) – KN Huchison (3622 Ford)
Alexander Duckham Cup (fourth best) – WJ Green (939s MG)
Anthony Cup (best supercharged car) – RA Macdermid (1292s MG)
Club Cup (best unsupercharged car) – CC Evans (1287 MG)
Basil Barber Memorial Trophy (best performance by a Bristol MC&LCC member) – PS Flower (847 MG)
MCC Trophy (best novice performance) – VSA Biggs (1911 Frazer Nash-BMW)
James Shield (Team Prize) – Bristol MC&LCC ‘A’ team (RA Macdermid, PS Flower, JES Jones)
First Class Awards – AE Frost (BMW); AG Imhof (1292 MG); BB Phillips (747 Austin); AR Kendrick (939 MG); CL Goodacre (747s Austin)
Second Class Awards – AB Langley (1292 MG); JES Jones (1292 MG); AH Langley (746s Austin); MH Lawson (1497 HRG); H Symmons (3622 LMB)
Third Class Awards – EH Goodenough (939s MG); JA Bastock (1292 MG); JM Toulmin (1292 MG); VGK Walters (1292 MG); WH Scriven (747s Austin)

**1938**

The final pre-war Fedden, on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1938, was once more based at Berkeley Road. Again, the Cotswolds route was varied, taking in Tin Pan Alley, Old Hollow, Hodgecombe (where 18 of the 40 starters failed), Narkover (very narrow and long, with lots of leafy mud, where all but seven failed), Nailsworth Ladder, and Stancombe, although police intervention ruled out a special test at Ferriscourt. At Narkover, Norman Terry's Ford Special broke a drop arm and was stuck broadside across the section for about an hour. The resulting delay left most competitors tackling the final section, Juniper, north of Stroud, and perhaps the toughest of all Cotswolds hills, in the dark, just eleven going clear. Guy Warburton (Allard) won the Fedden Trophy with Leslie Johnson (Frazer Nash BMW) runner-up, while other major trophies went to Mike Lawson (HRG) and AH (Alf) Langley (Austin), and the MG "Musketeers" won the team prize.

**1938 Results and Awards**

Roy Fedden Trophy – G Warburton (Allard)
Daphne Trophy (runner-up) – LG Johnson (Frazer Nash-BMW)
Committee Cup (third best) – MH Lawson (HRG)
Alexander Duckham Cup (fourth best) – AH (Alfred) Langley (Austin)
Anthony Cup (best supercharged car) – JA Bastock (MG)
Club Cup (best unsupercharged car) – TW Dargue (Frazer Nash-BMW)
Basil Barber Memorial Trophy (best performance by a Bristol MC&LCC member) – PS Flower (MG)
MCC Trophy (best novice performance) – VSA Biggs (1911 Frazer Nash-BMW)
James Shield (Team Prize) – The Musketeers (RA Macdermid, JA Bastock, AB (Archibald) Langley – all MGs)

**Post-War.**

Following the Second World War the Bristol club recommenced the Roy Fedden Trial in 1946, again based in the southern Cotswolds. Over the following years trials specials developed to the point that sections used became too difficult for production-type cars, and the Fedden Trial became a 'Sporting Trial', eventually confined to a single venue with no linking road sections. As such it has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Meanwhile the mantle of the Bristol club's premier classic road trial has been taken over by the Allen Trophy Trial, which includes some of the historic sections used on Fedden trials of earlier years.

**The Roy Fedden Trophy**

The sterling silver Roy Fedden Trophy, presented to the Bristol MC&LCC by Roy (later Sir Roy) Fedden in 1935.



*Image © Bristol Motor Club*

**Note:**

Film of the 1936 Roy Fedden Trial can be viewed at:  
 Tramps Paradise & Hodgecombe [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLj5dZrszz8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLj5dZrszz8)  
 Nailsworth Ladder [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MNeKnRCZig](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MNeKnRCZig)  
 Old Hollow [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JT4nxqywyow](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JT4nxqywyow)  
 Middle Drag [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwFOL5V3K7c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwFOL5V3K7c)

**Sources.**

Results and other event details obtained from Light Car, Motor, Autocar, Motor Sport & Bristol MC&LCC Journal reports.

*Pete Stowe  
 January 2021*

*Roy Fedden Trophy Trials 1935-38*

Westcountry Motorsport History

Website <https://bpmc.org.uk/petestowe/wmh.htm>

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