

Looking around the streets of Stornoway on any given lunchtime, evening or weekend, one could be forgiven for thinking that Lewis has some fantastic pedigree in motor racing, we have a particular car plant on the island, or that we have a dealership offering mouth-watering discounts on one specific make of car.

We don't.

The superbly talented Graham family aside, there is nothing to link the Outer Hebrides with international rallying except possibly the lack of folk using their indicators or the disdain and horror a roundabout can unexpectedly create.

Yet every second car on the streets would appear to be a Subaru of varying age, condition and deformity. With wings, spoilers and intakes adorned with decals displaying affiliations to other associated "fast car" products, the boy racers of the town certainly appear to have taken the name of their chosen chariot seriously. "To gather together". How very apt.

I had noticed myself the growing number of "Imprezas" circling endlessly between Manor and James St roundabouts, but not until a visitor to the island commented to me that there must be a nearby circuit did I look to count them. Like the wildebeest of the Serengeti they are too numerous to estimate.

Then I decided I needed to take a good look at myself and see if I could figure out why they annoyed me so much.

Never having been much of a "petrol head", I was late to driving (in my twenties, and only because I was given a company car) and I don't know the first thing about engines. I can put the petrol in, top up the water and oil,

put air in the tyres and that's it. Luckily for me my cousin and neighbour is a man who knows about these things, so when I am stuck wondering why I'm not going anywhere, a quick, usually embarrassing, phone-call to him normally resolves. I now know what an immobilizer is and the calls have gotten shorter.

The boys in the Subarus look like they know their stuff and they have exhausts that proclaim they should. They growl in front of you at the traffic lights like caged animals yearning for a bit of "open road" freedom (cut out the safari metaphors). I don't like slow, but I'm a bit scared of barely sub-sonic in a car and I hate crazy.

The real reason, and as we pass the half-way point in the year I find this is defining everything I am; is that I have become, what every male nearing fifty may need to accept, a grumpy *old* man.

The boys in the fast cars are something I'll never be again: combined with watching my stomach expand, the barber spending more time in my ears than on the top of my head and forgetting why I went upstairs, it becomes very obvious that despite what my brain tells me, I'm not still twenty one.

I mocked the gathering together of like minded youngsters earlier but realise it's exactly what I/we did at their age. Be it through music, sport or cars.

Then as I pull up in the golf club car-park between the other Hondas, Lagunas and Audis, and we change into our Foot-Joys, I realise that we hardly dare to be so different. We are fairly uniform in what we do that seems to bind us. We do it with less vigour but no less realisation that we are pretty much the same. Black trousers, black shoes and navy

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sweaters. Black caps and dark bags. Cobra drivers and Titleist Pro-V 1's.

I'm going to buy some orange slacks.

Combined with my golf I do know this looks like a crisis.

No such crisis at Scarista where the hosts entertained Askernish last weekend and maintained their 100% start to the inter-club season. Kenny Morrison informs me that having won 3-2 Harris would have expected at least some bragging rights after their encounter. Not apparently when Ralph Thompson is around. Following the usual sumptuous buffet at Lena's and several libations, his tap-in putt for par (and a point) at the last became a monster effort, thence a birdie and finally a chip-in eagle to win the match for the ferry, the boys from Harris almost thought they'd lost.

Speech-Play. Still a vital element in modern sport. Even after the match is over.

Here at Stornoway the club hosted the annual Multiple Sclerosis Trophy last weekend with members helping organisers Willie and Margaret Smith raise funds for this most deserving of charities. There are individual prizes for the best scores in the ladies and men's sections and once out on the course everyone is drawn into teams of four. Willie and Margaret then spend the day preparing a fantastic buffet for all participants, organising the raffle and keeping tabs on all the results as they come in.

Unlike many competitions where the best X scores of Y count, the MS trophy is alone in requiring everyone to complete their round (Stableford scoring naturally!). Obviously this leads to there being great interest around the leaderboard as the players return to the clubhouse and enhanced scrutiny of the permutations as the

last scores filter through. It leads to some choice adjectives being used to describe close acquaintances and fellow members who have had less than prolific rounds, but then some folk are already talking about the Winter League so we'd better all get used to it.

Winners on the day were the team of Ian Morrison, Arthur MacIntosh, Norrie MacKenzie and John R Gilles with a total of 139 points. Individual winners were Coinneach MacAulay (below) with 41pts and Jane Nicolson with 35 pts.



Round of the day was Murdo "Griddy" MacLeod's excellent gross 69, marred only by four closing bogies when standing at the 15th at three under par, gross. A golfer of immense talent, he has been practicing with commitment of late and will surely be a threat in the forthcoming Western Isles Open and Club Championship.

The main event last week for scratch golfers was the second and concluding round of the "Barber" trophy. Winner for the third time in four years was

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Murdo O'Brien (below) with a gross score of 143, pipping Norrie "Onions" MacDonald by a shot. The handicap trophy was claimed by young Kenneth Cunningham with an aggregate of seven under (nett), two ahead of John Fraser and Alasdair Henderson.. By the time the Askernish team left

