RESULTS – KIDDERMINSTER, JULY 2026

Report is by Kevin Dyras, Photos by Kevin Dyras and Dave Govier.

The heatwave was back so what better than to organise a trial on the steepest site we use. After all, 30 c + temperatures, brilliant sunshine and not the slightest breeze, all make for the right ingredients for a relaxing day in the countryside. Dave Govier and I arrived on site at 9.30 on Saturday morning to make a start, and we were soon were joined by Dave Round and friends. The landowner had mowed a lot of the site for us to use as the long grass was completely dry and a big fire risk. Everywhere looked bone dry and rock hard, so we knew we had a lot of hard work ahead of us.

A very dry site

For those of you who have not been to the Kidderminster site, it is a long, very steep, grass hillside that goes up to the top of a very high hill. There are tracks that have been cut into the hillside over the years to allow access to some of the higher parts of the hill. If it rains then you may as well just park in the car park and stay there. However when it is dry it can give some very interesting and taxing trials sections. We knew the ground was rock hard so, armed with a cordless drill, canes and cane tops, we set out to see what we could do.

One of the woodland tracks

The first section that we laid out was by the entrance, on one of the steepest parts of the hill. As the ground was so dry we thought we could use a short, very steep bank that we had not used before. Dave G set off in his 90, drove through the 10 gate, and the 9 gate, but then stopped before the 8 gate as his wheels just spun and the car went down into the very soft soil. Three or four attempts later he managed to get through the 8 gate and we stopped to have a think. It turned out that while the top few inches were very hard once you had disturbed that then the soil underneath was incredibly dry, almost like dust, and the tyres just dug it away. This was going to be more interesting than we thought.

Section 1

As we had only used the bottom half of the hill for the first section we thought we may as well put the second section above it. We climbed up and down, backwards and forwards, until we had the lines we wanted, then walked back down to the car to collect the canes and started to lay out the section. When I was climbing back to the top of the hill to put the 3, 2, 1 gates in I suddenly became very hot and dizzy, and my pulse was racing, so I had to lie down on the grass in the shade to recover. Dave stayed with me, making sure I was alright, (Thanks Dave!) and after a while I checked my pulse, only to discover it was still 125 bpm. Dave suggested that I wait for a bit before doing anything else, so I went and sat in the car with the aircon on full, while everyone else laid out the next two sections.

After about 20 minutes I felt well enough to resume laying out so I headed onto the top of the hill at the far side with Dave Round, leaving Dave G and the others in the middle of the site, and we started to plan another section.

There is an area of undulations here which in the past have provided a lot of axle twisters. The problem this time was that the grass was over a metre high so, as I tried to find the dips, I could not see the ground through the grass. Martyn, the landowner, arrived to see how we were getting on, so after a chat with him we went back to sorting the section. All the while I was standing outside in the blazing sunshine without a hat. Bad idea, especially for someone who lived in Australia for 10 years and should know better!

Eventually Dave Round and I finished laying out the section, but I was feeling very odd again. My pulse was up to 130 bpm, so I decided enough was enough and set off for home, leaving the others to finish off. On the way home I called into Aldi and bought a couple of trays of water for the Sunday, just in case we needed it. On arriving home I contacted my cousin, who is a sister at a large hospital, and told her what had happened. She quickly told me I had sunstroke, told me what an idiot I was in no uncertain terms, and how I should know better, and generally made me feel like a fool. Well done Cuz!

Marshall parking only

Sunday morning I loaded my car with a couple of drums of water and a sprayer, just in case we had a fire on site. Dave G had brought a large fire extinguisher with him as well so hopefully we were prepared. When I had arrived home the night before a local farm had a grass field alight, with fire engines attending from 12 stations. It was a very powerful reminder of what can happen, so we took precautions on site and everyone avoided parking in the long grass, thanks to everyone. We only had 6 entrants on the day and, because everyone was signed on by 9.20, we decided to make an early start so we could have an early finish and could avoid the 30+ temperatures of yesterday. We held a short driver's briefing, mentioning the need to avoid the long grass and to keep hydrated, and then set off to the first section which was just 10 feet from where we held the briefing.

The fire close to me

The first section caught most of the drivers out. It started on the car park and then used two banks as climbs to try to stop the drivers by circling back around so they had to climb the steep banks five times. Andy Springthorpe went first and cross axled before reaching the 8 gate, just as Dave Govier had the day before. Dave and Louis in the only long wheelbase had to use their shunt there, with Dave almost failing to make it up too.

Louis Cotterell

Ben Lawton scored a 9 here by taking the obvious route to the 8 gate, unfortunately missing out the 9 gate on the way. Dave and I had wondered when we laid it out if anyone would do that, turns out they did. Well planned us! Mark Howell and Lee Bow both stopped at the 8 gate just like Andy, so after just one section Dave and Louis had a very healthy lead.

Mark cross axled on section 1

Ben Lawton

The second section surprised Dave G and I as everyone cleared it, but Dave had had real trouble getting up the steepest part the day before when we were laying out. Lee cleared it in his unique style of driving the Panda flat out.

Lee powering up section 2

As we finished the second section Roy Hart arrived. Roy was a member of the MOC for many years, taking part in trials and comp safaris, as well as looking after the club radios. He has not been in the best of health in the last few years, but only lives a few miles away, so I had invited him to come along and told him that I would drive him around the site. It was nice to see him again and he put a drone up to film a couple of sections, so hopefully he will have some footage for us.

Section three had a couple of axle twisters and some off camber uphill sections. Most people cleared it, but the camber at the two gate caused the cars to lean downhill and both Andy and Louis clipped the passenger side cane with the rear quarter of their cars.

Andy clipping the 2 gate

Section 4 was cleared by everyone except Mark, who collected a 3.

Section five had the longest uphill section of the day and it was badly rutted as well. Nobody expected the Panda to be able to reach the 8 gate, due to its lack of ground clearance and the steepness of the slope, but once again Lee surprised us by reaching the 7 gate where he ran out of ground clearance. Andy Springthorpe also collected an 8 on this section by taking the line from 9 to 8 too tight. I think he was more concerned of getting a fast run up the steep hill and forgot about the 8 being offset.

Lee running out of ground clearance

Section 6 was cleared by everyone, except Lee, who collected a 1.

Andy Springthorpe on section 5

Section 7 was the one on the top of the hill, at the far end of the site and provided some very entertaining action. Steve Burrows was on site all day filming the proceedings, and I am sure when he edits the video we will have some great footage here. The section was basically a series of humps, joined together, and getting steeper as the section went on. The first couple of cars struggled from 10 to 9 and then found the climb from 2 to 1 very hard. Lee looked at the 10 to 9 and thought that if he could make it to the 8 he would be happy. Andy hit the bank with his winch bumper at the start of the uphill to the 2 gate and put his foot down the scramble over the mound to clear the 1 gate.

It's amazing how fast a 90 diesel accelerates in low range as Andy found out. The car became airborne and landed on the other side of the 1 gate on the bumper again. After inspecting the car Andy found that the impact was so hard that it had bent the steel winch bracket, fortunately not too badly, but at least he cleared the section. Mark Howell also had trouble, but also managed to scramble over for a clear. Now it was Panda time.

Mark scrabbling for a clear

If the club gave a prize for the most entertaining driver of the day, Lee would win it every time. He set off from the 10 gate at high speed and literally bounced through the 9 and 8 gates. A fast scramble through the 7 and 6 gates brought him round to the 5 gate. A quick bit of air under the wheels and he was through the 5 and 4, and approaching the 3. Again he bounced at this gate, but this time it was backwards as his front bumper just hit the bank and he rebounded, scoring 3 and a round of laughter.

Lee about to hit the bank at the 3 gate

We broke for lunch as this point while Dave Govier and I went off to alter two sections for the afternoon. We had asked the drivers and they were all in agreement that as the temperature was beginning to rise we would complete the 10 sections and then finish early before it got too hot. I opened the supply of water for a couple of people while everyone else had brought plenty of their own. After a leisurely lunch in the shade we set off for the final three sections.

For those of you who know the site, section 8 started at the far end where there used to be some large concrete pipes part buried in the ground. The landowner has been steadily removing them, but has not quite finished. It did mean that we could use part of the area to give some really interesting obstacles. When the ground is this hard and dry it is very difficult for the people laying out to make the course challenging enough to stop the drivers without being dangerous or damaging, so you rely on either cross axles or a sharp uphill turn to try and stop them. Exactly what cars with short wheel travel like Mark in the Vitara and Lee in the Panda don't like. Section 8 had both. Mark managed to get over the 5 gate with a lot of wheelspin, but Lee struggled, and was almost over the hump, when we had to stop him as he had slid to the side and was about to hit a very large piece of concrete. It did give a give good picture though, showing just how dusty the site could be.

Wheelspin

A great effort from Lee and provided more entertainment for everyone watching.

Just about to hit the concrete!

Section 9 was roughly section 6 in reverse, starting at the top of the hill, dropping down to the bottom, and then a dog leg back up to the top. Dave G jumped in with Andy as navigator, and directed him the wrong way at the bottom of the hill. At the last moment Andy saw the gate he would have missed and just managed to squeeze through. Well done Dave!

Section 10 was section 1 in reverse, or at least that's what we had intended. When I started to change the numbers around I realised that the five uphill climbs providing the hard part of the section in the morning, were now five downhill decent, giving no challenge at all. Time for a rethink. I changed the start from the bottom to part way up the hill and instead of an uphill start we now had a downhill. By mixing section 1 and 2, we ended up with a long section going down and up the hill a couple move times, with a tight turn between 6 and 5. While the tight turn was not a problem for Mark and Lee in their short wheelbase vehicles, everyone else struggled to make the turn. Dave and Louis in the long wheelbase made use of their shunt to get around the turn. Andy and Lee tried their best, but could not make the turn, scoring 5 each. I didn't say anything at the time, but during the driver's briefing we had told everyone that they could loop anywhere on the sections, which in the morning they did. Nobody thought to make a loop on section 10, which really surprised me.

At the end of the day all the drivers pitched in and collected the canes while we sorted the scores. At prizegiving all of the remaining water in my car was handed out as the temperature had risen to over 20 degrees. Dave Cotterell was first overall after a perfect drive, clearing every section without any fault. Well done Dave. Louis came second on 2 points, just behind his dad.

Dave Cotterell 1st overall

Mark Howell

Ben Lawton on section 10

A very pleasant day for everyone, no damage was caused, except for Andy's bent bumper, and it was one of the most relaxed, and enjoyable trials I have been to in years. A big thank you must go the Martyn the landowner, Dave Round and friends for helping us lay out, and to everyone who took part.

The next event is at Park Farm, Ettington, on the 6th of September, we hope to see you there.

Kevin Dyras.

12 July : Kidderminster

name	scoring											rank
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	total	
Cotterell, Dave	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cotterell, Louis	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Lawton, Ben	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	14	3
Howell, Mark	8	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	15	4
Springthorpe, Andy	8	0	2	0	8	0	0	0	0	5	23	5
Bow, Lee	8	0	0	0	7	1	3	5	0	0	24	6