

## Omagh Motor Club Committee Member Profile - Margaret McKane

I was born in Whitehead, a farmer's daughter. After my early schooling, I went to QUB in 1971 to do a Joint Botany /Zoology Degree.

I met Alistair there and got married in 1976 when we both moved to Omagh to live and joined the Motor Club. I started my teaching Career in September 1976 as a Science teacher at Strabane High School where I worked until 2011 when I retired.

The interest in Motorsport started as a teenager, going to watch Autocross and then joining QUB Motorclub in 1972 after meeting Alistair.

In Omagh, I joined the Committee in 1979, and since then have been Event Secretary for Moffat's Quarry for several years in the 1980's, the Bushwhacker Rally from the late 1980's until Barry O'Neill took over in 2011, Secretary for some Autotests, and for 18 years, Chairman of the Club. During that time, I have carried out PR work for Navigation Rallies, Marshalled on various events and helped at signing on and helped with results. From the start, Alistair and I have been Timekeepers on events for different clubs, doing Finish controls, Time Controls on Navigation Rallies, Regroup etc.

I only competed a few times. I did some Fuel Economy runs in the early days and one Autotest at St Pat's school. I also took part in the N.I. Road Safety Quizzes for several years as part of the Motor Club team until our team won the overall competition in 1981.

I did one Navigation event in 2003, driving for Jonathan in the event organised by QUB Motor Club, when Gary almost scuppered our chances by telling Patrick McCollum that we didn't like water. There was a small flood on part of the route. However we ended up Third in the novice class. Alistair drove for him the rest of that season, so I missed my chance.

Jonathan did the Navigation Rally Championship as a novice that year with some success, including 1<sup>st</sup> in class in the Pre-Circuit. Michael and Jonathan are both engineers, Jonathan in Aberdeen and Michael in Welwyn Garden City. They tried some 12 car events in the Midlands when Jonathan was at University but nothing since.

My interests include gardening, crafts, dancing, reading and travel as well as cars. When on holiday in Sweden, I enjoy going to Motorsport events, including classic car shows, tractor pulling, drag racing, demolition derby, ice racing, concours judging of classic cars and have been to Rally Sweden twice, a unique experience.

As Gary will remind everyone, my most embarrassing moment occurred when taking out officials to set up passage and time controls for, I think, the Pre-Circuit Rally, one year after really heavy rain. I ended up in the Fairywater which was across the road. The cars behind had managed to stop in time but the other drivers had to wade in to attach a rope to pull me out. While I was watching the water gradually creeping into the footwell, Michael and Jonathan in the back had decided to get stuck in to the picnic which we had brought with us for later. They obviously had their priorities right. Alistair was in Sweden at the time, so I had to tell him later, after Kenny Murray had dried out the diesel engine and checked it was still working, fortunately for me. I wasn't the only one who had a problem with water that night as one of the other course cars had an encounter with a ditch. No names, no pack drill!!



Officials of Omagh Motor Club and their guests pictured at the club annual dinner dance and presentation of prizes in the Royal Arms Hotel. They are from left, Ashley Armstrong, chairman; Miss Jocelyn Hadden and her father, Mr. John Hadden, guests; Mrs. Margaret McKane and Alistair McKane, secretary; Mrs. Margaret McDaid and Hugo McDaid, vice-chairman.