

Back in February 2020, I was heading up to the Lakes for a few days with my wife and 14 year old son – a request for coffee and a loo break (less than 20 miles from home!) led to us calling at Blackburn Services. On arrival, my son (Ben) and I were instantly attracted to the sound of cars being tested to their limits close by. After a few minutes of watching, we ended up chatting with a friendly chap marshalling the event, who gave us a great explanation on the event and how easy it was to get involved, we were hooked!



After leaving the services, Ben immediately began scouring the internet for K11 Nissan Micra's for us to buy – a monster was created!!! 4-5 weeks later, we found a reasonably priced car in shabby but overall decent condition, ready to start Ben's motoring journey. Fast forward a week or two, Lock Down began. For most, generally this has been an incredibly difficult time, however for Ben and I, it gave us time to work on the car together, Ben wanted to develop his driving skills. We also booked ourselves onto the first available Under 17's Club Event post lockdown to have a go.

A few phone calls and e-mails with Steve and Tracey from the club helped get us organised and understand more around what we needed to do helped hugely.

Saturday 18th July started with a fair bit of rain (and nerves) for our first day of Autotesting. On arrival, Ben met up with the other learners and his instructor (highly recommended) to spend some time behind the wheel – I could then take my first opportunity to drive competitively in the PCA Autotest (petrified of getting the course wrong, crashing and or being completely rubbish) we both LOVED IT! The time flew by. Ben got lots of time behind the wheel and a chance to run the course several times, I got a chance to push myself and our little car to the edge of our comfort zones!

Sunday 19th July – better weather, a little more serious, with a bigger field, a longer course and more opportunities for me to get it wrong (which I did a couple of times, but without any harm). Wow! It's amazing what fun you can have in a £425 Nissan Micra with a bunch of like-minded folk!

The friendliness, hints, tips and support of the other drivers and team at the club was just brilliant. My confidence grew as we had more attempts, we felt very welcome and included in the whole event – we've booked for September already! Ben can't wait to do his first timed event. Not many events/experiences will engage a teenager as much as this – Ben was made to feel part of it from the off.

Thanks to everyone at U17MC(NW) – Highly recommended!!!!
Andy Norman



