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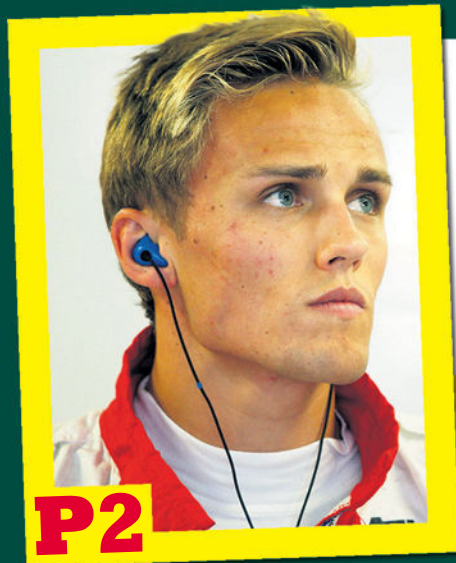
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Ex-F1 man will become a rare grand prix

CHILTON



Chilton will join reigning champ Scott Dixon as team

By Rob Ladbrook

Max Chilton will become the first British Formula 1 driver to switch to the American IndyCar Series for 12 years after signing for top squad Chip Ganassi Racing this year.

Former Marussia racer Chilton has inked a deal to join the multiple title-winning squad to handle a Chevrolet-powered car alongside team-mates Tony Kanaan, Charlie Kimball and reigning champion Scott Dixon. Ganassi has won six titles since IndyCar and Champ Car merged in 2008.

Chilton, 24, contested a part season in the Indy Lights category last year alongside driving for Nissan with its troubled GT-R LM NISMO LMP1 Le Mans project. He finished fifth in the Indy Lights

points despite missing three races.

The last British F1 driver to tackle IndyCar was the late Justin Wilson, who was killed in an accident at the Pocono Raceway round last year.

"I'm the first British F1 driver since 2004 to go across to IndyCar, Justin was the last," said Chilton. "There have not been too many in the last 25 years and Nigel Mansell was the first in that period. I don't know if I will start a new wave going across, but people will start looking at IndyCar in a new light."

"I remember saying I'd never do IndyCar but then I gave Indy Lights a go and it went on from there. So I'm really excited."

"I've got the best opportunity to do well with Ganassi. Dario Franchitti has been a big influence and as he still works for Chip, he will be at a lot of races helping me."

"I'm fully aware that people will expect me to be at the front and I'm really looking forward to it because I've had several years of not having a car I could win in. The last time was GP2 in 2012, and I won then and I have no problem believing I can win races."

"There's added pressure

[because I have switched from F1], but I haven't had that pressure for a few years because expectations in the car were low [at Marussia]. Some tracks will be very hard, especially the ovals, but the tracks I do know give me a few races and I'm quite confident I can go for some victories and some podiums this year."

Testing deal

Chilton readily admits that his deal to join Ganassi is a late one, which will leave minimal time for pre-season testing.

He will have just five days to acclimatise to the Chevrolet-powered Dallara DW12. Chilton said: "[The lack of] testing is the one hindrance I have. I had the option to test at the end of last year with one team, which I didn't take. But I probably should have as it ended up taking so long to get the contracts done [for the Ganassi move]."

"I won't test until February 10, and the first race is in March so I have a few days in a car I've never driven before, three of which will be on an oval. It will be tough but I'm pretty sure I've got enough



Chilton raced for Marussia

Briton on the IndyCar grid

TARGETS INDY WINS



INDY'S BEST BRITS

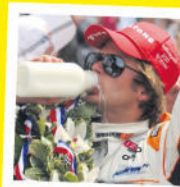
Max Chilton is the latest British driver to turn his hand to open-wheel racing in North America. If he can be half as successful as the drivers in this list, it will have been a great career move. **Edd Straw** picks out the top five British drivers in over a century of this style of racing in the USA, encompassing a variety of sanctioning bodies stretching from the AAA through to today's IndyCar Series.

Dario Franchitti

When the Scot embarked on his maiden Champ Car campaign with Hogan Racing in 1997, he can't have dared hope how much success he would have over the following 18 years – ignoring his ill-fated flirtation with NASCAR in 2008. After a title near-miss in '99, it was in IndyCar that he thrived. Four championships, three Indianapolis 500 triumphs and a total of 31 wins make him not only the most successful Briton, but one of the most successful of any nationality.

**Dan Wheldon**

Who knows how much more success Wheldon would have had if he had not lost his life in 2011 when his career was back on the up following an unlikely second Indy 500 triumph? His first came during a stunning 2005 campaign for Andretti Green Racing that also yielded the title during a successful career in which he particularly thrived on the ovals, despite his road-racing background.

**Dario Resta**

The Italian-born, British-raised, American-domiciled racer enjoyed a stunning 1916, winning the Indy 500 (held over 300 miles that year!), the AAA National Championship and prestigious Vanderbilt Cup. His tally of five championship race wins would surely have been greater but for the interruption of racing by World War I. Resta died in a speed record attempt at Brooklands in 1924, aged 42.

**Nigel Mansell**

The reigning Formula 1 champion came, saw and conquered on his switch to America with Newman/Haas Racing in 1993. Surprisingly, he excelled on the ovals, taking four of his five victories on them after a debut win at Surfers Paradise. A poor restart cost him victory in the Indy 500, and his American adventure came to an end after a winless '94 season amid dominance by the rival Penske team.

**Justin Wilson**

There were several contenders with Indy 500 wins to their names for the final slot in this list, but none of them achieved what Wilson did when he took the first win for perennial struggler Dale Coyne Racing. Wilson didn't achieve the success his talent and professionalism deserved before his career was brutally cut short, but his seven wins proved his tenacity and earned him universal respect.



experience to learn the car's cues and be ready for [the first race in] St Petersburg [on March 13]."

A season in IndyCar will offer Chilton a mixture of street, permanent and oval circuit races. He adds that the challenge of handling something new on unfamiliar territory is exciting.

"I love street tracks – there are five on the calendar – five streets, five ovals and five road courses so it's a good split. I'd rather more races on [road and street] tracks because that's the way I've been educated in racing but it's nice to try something new.

"I'm a very accurate driver, so street circuits suit me. I've always said on street circuits treat the walls as your friends and get as close as you can."

Preparation can pay

Chilton says his part-season in Indy Lights with the British Carlin team can pay off this year when he moves into the top flight of American single-seater racing.

"Lots of people gave me respect last year for stepping down from F1 to Indy Lights as it's a big drop," he added. "People thought 'fair

enough, he's willing to drop down and have a go'. A lot of people aren't willing to do that. People like Stefano Coletti [multiple GP2 Series race-winner] went into IndyCar [last year] and didn't do a great deal [he finished 19th in the points] and I think at times he will have thought 'I wish I'd learned in Lights cars first'.

"Last year wasn't brilliant in Lights, mainly because it wasn't my full focus. When I was working with Nissan I had that to concentrate on and I did 28 trips across the Atlantic last year.

"I had my first win [at Iowa], and Nissan was over by then and I knew I was pretty strong. I could have won [the season finale at] Laguna Seca too, but I made a mistake and turned in too early for the Corkscrew and took a valve out of my tyre. I was a lot stronger during the second half of the year when I had nothing else to worry about and I could focus."

F1 door still open

Chilton has also reiterated that he hasn't turned his back on Formula 1 completely.

The Briton contested 35 races

with the Marussia team between 2012-2014, but failed to score a point as the team struggled financially as one of the newer outfits on the grid.

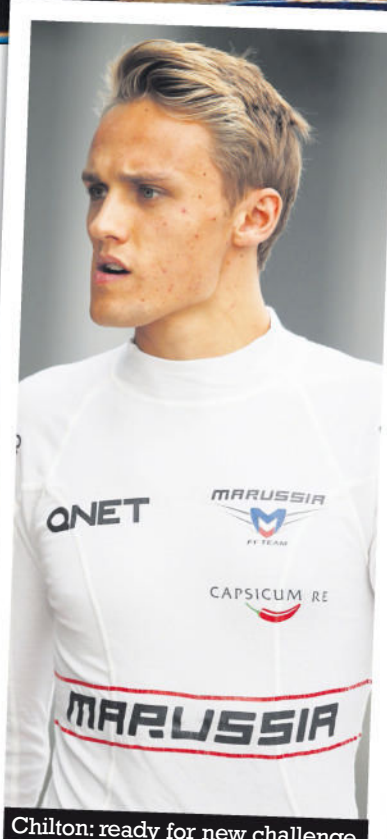
Chilton had options to continue in F1 after 2014, but opted to look elsewhere due to the financial strain of the sport.

"Whatever people say, anyone in the back 10-12 cars on the grid is expected to bring vast amounts of money. And I couldn't," he says. "My backers had done F1 for two years. I would have felt bad for them doing it again because it was at the back.

"Instead I can go off and do things like this where teams are willing to bring a sponsor to you. You go to a top squad like Ganassi and they bring sponsors. They are more welcoming.

"I won't ever say F1 is off the cards. Say I win the IndyCar Championship and a top or midfield F1 team contacts me then I'd love to do it. It was my goal since I was a kid. But you have to be realistic sometimes and just move on."

Additional reporting by Edd Straw



Chilton: ready for new challenge

RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

F1 ROUND-UP

Capito free

New McLaren CEO Jost Capito expects to have freedom to change aspects of how the team works when he joins later this year. Capito will leave Volkswagen's World Rally Championship juggernaut to join the struggling F1 team. McLaren currently runs a matrix management system where staff have more than one manager. Capito said: "I have freedom to do what needs to be done. At the moment the system there is quite a matrix. You have to make the relationships work, it has to be one team, no matter where the people work. But I have worked with the Japanese [Honda] before so I have good experience with that!"

Holding back Bulls

Williams chief Claire Williams reckons that holding off Red Bull Racing in the Constructors' Championship and cutting the deficit to Mercedes would be a big achievement for the squad. Williams was third in last year's teams' chase. "We need to cut the gap to Mercedes and Ferrari this year," said Williams. "That would be a real achievement when our resources aren't as strong as some other teams. If we can keep the Red Bulls behind it'll be an even greater achievement."

Scandinavian race

Sauber's Marcus Ericsson believes a Scandinavian grand prix would be a huge success should one ever rejoin the F1 calendar. The last race in Scandinavia was the 1978 Swedish Grand Prix, but with three Scandinavian drivers on the grid this year – Kimi Raikkonen, Valtteri Bottas and Ericsson – fan interest could be high. "I don't see it happening for a long time but it would be great to have a race in northern Europe," said Ericsson. "There's a lot of motorsport tradition in Scandinavia so to race there would be very, very good."

Esteban's risk

New Haas F1 Team driver Esteban Gutierrez reckons that joining Ferrari as its reserve driver was the biggest risk of his career. Having made his grand prix debut with Sauber in 2013, Gutierrez lost his seat at the end of 2014 and spent 2015 on the sidelines working as Ferrari's test and reserve. That role has led to his return to a race seat with Haas, which has a Ferrari technical partnership. "It was the biggest risk of my life probably, but in life you have to take risks," he said.

MAGNUSSEN SET TO JOIN RENAULT

Dane will replace Pastor Maldonado at reborn works team after sponsorship loss



Maldonado has lost PDVSA cash

Magnussen has had talks

By Rob Ladbrook

Danish ace Kevin Magnussen will be revealed as a Renault F1 Team driver in a launch event in Paris today, after the team's contract with Pastor Maldonado was terminated.

Venezuelan racer Maldonado was originally set to stay with the team, having signed a new contract with the team when it was still Lotus back at September's Singapore Grand Prix.

However, sources suggest that since Renault bought out the team there has been a disagreement over funding between the French firm and Maldonado's long-term backer, Venezuelan oil and gas firm PDVSA. This dispute has led to the contract being dissolved.

Renault has already held talks with Magnussen, with the 23-year-old visiting the Enstone factory for two days earlier this year. Magnussen parted ways with McLaren last year, having been told just four months ago that he was surplus to requirements at the Woking team with both Jenson Button and Fernando Alonso staying on.

Magnussen will be unveiled alongside Briton Jolyon Palmer when Renault launches its 2016 outfit at an event in Paris today (Wednesday).

The loss of his Renault seat leaves Maldonado without a spot on the grid this year. He did have options at Manor; but with a deal requiring swift negotiations with pre-season testing due to begin in Barcelona on February 22, Maldonado has confirmed he won't start the season.

He said in a statement: "In recent days, there have been a number of rumours about my immediate future in Formula 1. I most humbly inform you I will not be present on the starting grid for 2016."

Bentley plays down speculation over LMP2 programme

Bentley Motorsport manager Brian Gush has poured cold water on speculation that the British firm is close to signing off on an LMP2 programme with which it would make its sportscar return.

The Crewe marque was linked this week with a return to sportscar competition in the LMP2 division. Comments made by Bentley head Wolfgang Durheimer led to reports that the team had begun research and was close to testing a modified version of the four-litre twin-turbo V8 it runs within the Continental GT3 race cars, with a view to powering one of the spec chassis that are being brought in for LMP2 from 2017 onwards.

Bentley's focus was primarily said to be on the IMSA United Sportscar Championship in America along with outings in the European Le Mans Series. Both series would have allowed Bentley to run its own engine

along with customised bodywork to brand the car.

It would have marked Bentley's first foray into sportscar competition since it last won Le Mans in 2003 with the Speed 8 LMGTP machine. However, Gush told *MN's* sister publication *Autosport*: "Yes we would like to do it and, yes, it would make a lot of sense because it is a good fit, but it remains on the backburner. We don't have the planets aligned just yet."

Gush cited the current financial difficulties with Bentley's parent company, the Volkswagen Group, amid its emissions scandal as a prime reason any plans had stalled at this current time.

"There are a lot of things we can't discuss, but everyone is looking at what is going on with the group," added Gush. "At the moment we are happy to concentrate on GT3."



Bentley currently runs Continental GT3s in American and European races

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'GP3 was the best choice for me'

Hughes steps up, p23



Photos: Jakob Ebrey and LAT



LMP2 Ligier topped tight 24 hour race

EXTREME SPEED'S LMP2 CAR WINS THE DAYTONA 24 HOURS

An LMP2 car won the Daytona 24 Hours race for the first time last weekend thanks to the Extreme Speed Motorsports team.

Pipo Derani, Johannes van Overbeek, Scott Sharp and Ed Brown took the overall win by 26 seconds in a Ligier-Honda JSP2.

The ESM squad enjoyed a pace advantage over the Daytona Prototypes that enabled Derani to build an advantage by the flag.

"I have no words," said the Brazilian, who has raced in British Formula 3. "It is amazing to win my first race in America."

The Wayne Taylor Racing

Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette of Jordan and Ricky Taylor, Rubens Barrichello and Max Angelelli finished second despite suffering from a problem that caused exhaust fumes to enter the cockpit. Angelelli had to be taken to hospital post-race for tests.

Meanwhile, Alex Wurz managed fifth in his final race before his delayed retirement, driving a Chip Ganassi Riley-Ford.

Other frontrunners failed to finish, including the Delta Wing-Elan which crashed with a Prototype Challenge car while the pole-winning BR Engineering

BR01 endured a brake issue.

The race featured a thrilling battle between Chevrolet Corvettes in the GT Le Mans class. In the end they finished just 0.034s apart at the flag, Oliver Gavin, Tommy Milner and Marcel Fassler beating Antonio Garcia, Jan Magnussen and Mike Rockenfeller.

It was also close in the GT Daytona division as Rene Rast was able to cling on to win as the Magnus Racing Audi R8 LMS he shared with Andy Lally, Marco Seefried and John Potter ran low on fuel.



Corvette finish was one of the closest in history



Kristensen: 'retired' racer

Kristensen wants Daytona outing

Sportscar legend Tom Kristensen could be tempted out of retirement should a chance arise for him to contest the Daytona 24 Hours in the future.

The nine-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner was the grand marshal at last weekend's American endurance showpiece, and said during the event that he'd love to make a return to the driving seat for the event, which he has never contested.

"My dad always said 'never say never' and if I was tempted back, Daytona would be the venue," said Kristensen. "I am determined about the decision I made to retire and I am firm about that. It would just be for fun."

Kristensen's comments followed a pledge from team boss Chip Ganassi during an official sponsor event, during which he signed a piece of paper reading: "I Chip Ganassi will run a car for Tom and Allan [McNish] at the Daytona 24 Hours when they are 55."



Hughes will join top French squad DAMS for GP3 this year

Hughes ties up GP3 Series move with DAMS

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award nominee Jake Hughes will move into GP3 this year with the DAMS team.

The 21-year-old Briton narrowly missed out on both the Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup and ALPS crowns last season.

The 2013 BRDC F4 champion will now graduate to GP3 after also testing FV83.5 and F3 machinery during the winter.

"I'm tremendously excited for this year," said Hughes. "DAMS' record speaks for itself. They have a track record of going into new championships and being on the pace right away. The new

generation of car should even it out with the other teams. Some can carry stuff over from last year but DAMS knows the characteristics of the Pirelli tyre construction from GP2.

"It's going to be difficult as it's going to be the strongest grid GP3 has ever been. I like a challenge so it would be great to come out on top."

Hughes will join DAMS for its maiden season in the category, but he also tested for Arden and Koiranen GP at the end of last year. He will be joined by Formula Renault rival Kevin Jorg and European F3 driver

CV

Jake Hughes

Age: 21 **From:** Birmingham
2016 GP3 Series with DAMS
2015 Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup, sixth
2014 Formula Renault ALPS, second
2014 Formula Renault NEC, eighth
2013 BRDC Formula 4, champion
2010-2012 Karting

Santino Ferrucci at the team.

Team boss Jean-Paul Driot said. "It's extremely competitive and full of fantastic drivers, but Jake, Santino and Kevin have lots of potential."

● *Hughes steps up, page 23*

Fittipaldi takes MRF title and moves up

Pietro Fittipaldi, the grandson of double Formula 1 world champion Emerson, secured the Indian MRF Challenge title last weekend.

The 19-year-old took two race wins in the season finale on the Irungattukottai circuit near Chennai. Fittipaldi led BRDC Formula 4 graduate Harrison Newey home in both races to tie up the championship title.

Fittipaldi contested the Indian series as part of his preparations to move up from Formula 3 to Formula V83.5 this year with Fortec. It was Fittipaldi's third car racing success, following titles in Junior NASCAR and Formula Renault BARC in the UK.

"It means a lot and is something else to put on my CV," he said. "I start 2016 with one foot forward. Fortec were champions in 3.5 last year so they'll give me everything I need to succeed."

Mick Schumacher, son of F1 legend Michael, took a podium finish on his MRF racing debut.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Salvador Duran will race for Team Aguri in Formula E for the rest of this season. The Mexican will replace Nathanael Berthon who has split from the team. Duran was due to race for Trulli but did not test and lost his drive due to a "breach of contract" before the team's withdrawal from the series... GP2 race-winner Arthur Pic has switched to the Rapax team for his third year in

the category. The Frenchman previously drove for Campos and despite winning at the Hungaroring last year he could only manage 11th in the standings. "I wanted to be part of a frontrunning team that can challenge for the title, and Rapax has shown over the years they have the pedigree to deliver very strong results," said Pic... **A round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge series at Austin in March has**

been cancelled after a lack of interest from European teams. The new-for-2016 category, organised by SRO, was due to have a 1000km race in the US this year but its introduction will now be postponed to 2017. This leaves three events - at Bathurst, Spa and Sepang - for



the inaugural season... Privateer LMP1 team Rebellion will field an unchanged two-car line-up in the World Endurance Championship this year. The lead car will be driven by Nicolas Prost, Nick Heidfeld and Mathias Beche, while the second entry will again be piloted by Alexandre Imperatori, Dominik Kraihamer and Matheo Tuscher - who replaced Daniel Abt for the final two races of 2015...

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RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

Pattison uncertain

Having contested last season's Knockhill round of the Renault UK Clio Cup with Cooksport, Lee Pattison was back with the team for the first general test of the year at Donington Park. He finished runner-up in Clios in 2010 and was a frontrunner in the Mini Challenge last season, with four wins and four other podium finishes. "I am not sure what I am doing this year as I am having a wrist operation after my accident at Brands last season," he said. "If I miss the opening rounds of any championship it's too much to catch up. So I might sit this year out and save up for 2017!"

Nicosia to JHR

Ginetta Junior driver Geri Nicosia will switch to JHR Developments for this season. The 2014 Fiesta Junior champion finished 15th in the points last year with Elite Motorsport, having been top rookie in the previous year's Winter Series. "JHR were a force in 2015, so I am hopeful we can see some of that pace continuing into this year," he said.

Belcher steps down from BTCC race seat

British Touring Car Championship team owner Simon Belcher will step down from driving this season to concentrate on running his Handy Motorsport team. Handy is aiming to run two cars in the championship this year with Rob Austin signed up to drive the first of the operation's Toyota Avensis.

"Our longer term plan is to become a frontrunning team and, as such, 2016 will be a crucial year for Handy," said Belcher. "The plans mean that I have had to make a personal sacrifice in terms of my own racing in order to head up the team in a management role. Now we have the deal in place with Rob Austin, we can push forward with the plans for a second car."

"We think a two-car team is a reality this season and we are in talks with several drivers to make this happen."

GP3 MAN MORRIS GETS BRITISH GT BENTLEY

Single-seater convert to join Team Parker



Team Parker will field two Continental GT3s

By Rob Ladbrook

GP3 Series racer Seb Morris will switch to sportscar racing this season after signing to lead Team Parker Racing's new Bentley GT3 programme in British GT.

Welshman Morris, 20, will campaign the team's first factory supported Continental GT3 alongside former GT4 division champion Rick Parfitt Jr this year. Drivers for Team Parker's second entry have yet to be revealed.

Morris finished a disappointing 18th in the GP3 points last year, running with the Status Grand Prix team. He previously finished third in the Formula Renault NEC points and claimed titles in both the Formula Renault BARC and Ginetta Junior categories.

"This move has come about through budget and career prospects," said Morris from Wrexham. "We didn't have the best budget in GP3 and we could wind up spending millions in single-seaters to only move to GTs down the line anyway. I

have time on my side so switching now is better. I had the chance to go and do Blancpain, but a learning year in Britain seemed the better option.

"There are more chances to become a paid driver in GTs and with Team Parker I know I have a car capable of winning straight away. GTs do take some adapting to, such as the extra weight and sitting on one side and having a roof. But my experience will serve me well. I know Rick very well too – since Ginetta Juniors – so we'll make a great pairing."

Team head Stuart Parker said: "If you look at any of the top GT drivers they have all had single-seater experience at some point in their careers, and Seb has served his time in Formula Renault and GP3.

"I've known Seb since his Ginetta Jr days and watched him race on the TOCA package and he has all of the qualities to make it as a top GT driver. Rick too has come on so much in recent years.

"As a pairing they will be great for the championship as they're young, fast and full of potential."



Gallagher will race VW CC

Gallagher becomes first driver signed to B-TEC Development Series

Kieran Gallagher has become the first driver to sign up for the B-TEC Development Series by inking a deal to join Team BKR.

The Glasgow driver, who took part in the British Touring Car Championship last season with Team Hard in a Toyota

Avensis, has signed a one-year deal with the outfit.

He will drive one of the team's Volkswagen CCs.

The series will operate for older-spec BTCC machines fitted with the GPRM-derived parts.

Gallagher said: "I knew as soon

as I read about this series that it would be a wise move for me. I am keen to progress in NGTC machinery and what better way to do it than to move forward with Team BKR."

The series kicks off at Brands Hatch on March 27.

Formula Renault NEC will continue despite ownership disagreement

The future of the Formula Renault Northern European Cup is not in jeopardy, despite a conflict arising over the ownership of the championship.

The Formula Renault NEC has been owned and organised by Mick de Haas's Mdh AG company since it was formed in 2005 by a merger of the German and Dutch Formula Renault championships.

However, it is understood that Renault Sport Germany wants to have a controlling role in the way

the championship is run. There will be a meeting in Germany this week to sort out the ownership agreement, but both parties insist the championship will go ahead this year.

Formula Renault NEC is expected to have a grid into the mid-20s and entry fees from many top teams have already been taken.

De Haas said: "The timing of these talks is totally wrong, as our initial entry deadline was the end

of January and we now find ourselves in this situation. But regardless of the outcome the championship will happen this year and beyond – I am 85 per cent certain of that. The circuits and dates are booked and the calendar is in place so we will race."

Filippo Zanier, International sporting coordinator at Renault Sport Technologies said: "We share Mick de Haas's view that the championship will go ahead. Everything is in place."

Fittipaldi name returns to the UK as Enzo joins Ginetta Junior class

The grandson of double Formula 1 champion Emerson Fittipaldi will compete in Ginetta Juniors this year.

Enzo Fittipaldi, 14, was a finalist in the Ginetta Junior Scholarship last year and will now make the step up from karting into cars. He has won numerous karting races in the USA and was second in the Rotax Grand National Championship in 2013.

Fittipaldi will partner

Ginetta Junior Winter Series champion Stuart Middleton at Douglas Motorsport.



Enzo Fittipaldi will race

"Switching from karts into cars will be a challenge," said Fittipaldi. "Ginetta Junior allows young drivers like myself to familiarise with all of the UK's tracks, while also being a highly competitive and well-televised series."

Fittipaldi's brother Pietro has also raced in the UK, securing the Formula Renault BARC title in 2014. He also won the MRF Challenge last weekend.

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"I've not been this excited for years"
Huffy gets a Honda, p20

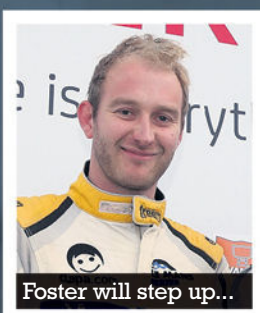


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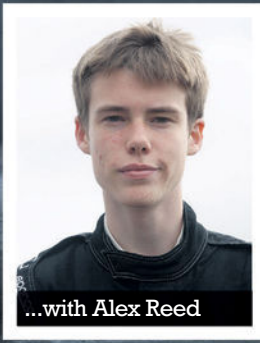
FOSTER JOINS LANAN FOR GT4



Lanan has two new Cayman GT4s



Foster will step up...



...with Alex Reed

Formula Ford star Joey Foster will switch to the British GT Championship this year to share Lanan Racing's first Porsche Cayman Clubsport GT4 with young ace Alex Reed.

Lanan Racing has become the first team to register a full-crewed Cayman Clubsport GT4 for the British championship, with triple Walter Hayes Trophy winner Foster, 33, and Lotus Cup UK racer Reed, 17, in the first of its two cars.

Cornishman Foster, a former Australian F3 champion, has worked as a driver coach for

Lanan's BRDC Formula 4 team in recent years, which has led to this opportunity.

Reed will become one of British GT's youngest-ever drivers, having impressed by taking two race wins in his maiden season of sportscar racing with a Lotus Exige last year. He formerly raced Renault Clios.

Foster said: "This chance has been a long time coming and I still can't quite believe it's actually here. I've wanted to do GTs for a while, and to get into British GT with Lanan is

brilliant. The team feels like family to me, so I already have the relationships there.

"I've not worked with Alex yet, but his record last season speaks for itself. He's clearly a young lad with a lot of potential and hopefully some of my experience can rub off on him and perhaps he'll teach me a few things too as we'll be learning the new car together."

Reed said: "The Lotus last year was ideal preparation and showed I can be quick at each of the circuits on the calendar. I'm confident I can be fighting for

wins with Lanan and Joey."

Lanan will take delivery of its two Cayman Clubsport GT4 chassis in March, leaving little time for pre-season testing. Foster added: "It will be tight but Graham [Johnson, Lanan team head] knows his stuff when it comes to car set-up and we'll probably be able to factor in a test day or two before the first race. GT4 will be more competitive than ever this year so we're up against it, but I believe we've got all of the experience in place to make this work."



Optimum's R8 is now full

Optimum signs Ratcliffe and Moore for GT3

Optimum Motorsport has signed Ryan Ratcliffe and Will Moore to crew its new Audi R8 LMS GT3 in the British GT Championship.

Welshman Ratcliffe, 22, rejoins the championship for his first full campaign since 2013, but has GT3 experience from being a part of the Triple Eight Racing Driver Development scheme. Moore, 26, graduates to GT3 having impressed in the GT4 division last term with the Academy Motorsport Aston Martin team.

The pair will run in the Silver Cup category, so will carry additional weight, but will still fight for the outright title.

Optimum team boss Shaun Goff said: "Ryan and Will are a very promising pairing. Ryan has been in our GT3 plans for a while now and Will wanted to step up so it came together nicely."

"We ran our Audi for the first time in the Dubai 24 Hours. The reliability and engineering in it make it very accessible."

750MC revives Hot Hatch class after break

The 750 Motor Club is reviving its Hot Hatch series.

The category has had a hiatus from the club since 2009 but will return sharing grids with the Stock Hatch category.

It will have 14 rounds but will not run as a championship. There will be three divisions based on a car's power-to-weight ratio.

"There's an opening for making the most of modified hatchbacks," said the club's James Winstanley.

"We've introduced classes based on power-to-weight ratio to try and replicate the excitement of last time a generation later."

"There's been a great response and we are expecting a good mix of cars. We've been able to trade on the success of the series in its last incarnation and if it's as popular as we expect it will probably become a championship again."

Likely entries include Minis, ex-Clio Cup cars and Fiesta STs.

TF Sport adds a European GT3 programme

TF Sport will expand into both the Michelin GT3 Le Mans Cup and the International GT Open this year running a single Aston Martin Vantage for Euan Hankey and Salih Yoluc.

TF fielded the pair in GT Open rounds toward the end of last year, taking race wins at both Spa-Francorchamps and Monza. Hankey and Yoluc will now contest both championships, with the GT3 Le Mans Cup offering a Le Mans 24 Hours grid slot for 2017 as its prize. TF will also run two cars in British GT.



Hankey/Yoluc are in Aston

TF boss Tom Ferrier added: "It's exciting to be running in Europe again and the GT3 Le Mans Cup is particularly interesting. My ambition is to run a car at Le Mans eventually so it's a top prize." *TF Sport profile, page 22*

Donington works to improve fan viewing

Donington Park has undertaken more work in an effort to open up additional spectator viewing areas later this season.

Track bosses have completed the demolition of the old hospitality suite block on the inside of the Craner Curves. That section of land has yet to be fully repurposed, but is expected to be turned into a new spectator viewing area.

In addition track operators are working to install a new, banked area on the inside of the Robert's Chicane. The new areas are not expected to be open this year but the majority of the infield section of the track is due to reopen.



New banking at Robert's

Donington Park sporting director Bob Adams said: "We're always looking at ways to improve the spectator experience. The Craner Suites have come down and we are finalising ideas on what to do with that area, but it's expected that it will be made into an improved viewing area for the fans."

THE VOICE OF NATIONAL RACING

MATT JAMIES

"The MSA has a great academy"



Team UK drivers were put through their paces

It is great that the sport's governing body in the United Kingdom, the Motor Sports Association, has thrown its weight fully behind training and developing the latest raft of racing and rallying talent in this country through its academy programmes, as you can read in David Evans's feature on page 24.

There is always a debate about how young talent in this country should be backed and developed. The easiest argument, and one which the top brass at the governing body find infuriating, is that it should have a bottomless pit of cash to throw at any driver who shows themselves to be halfway capable of reaching the top of the sport.

This has been done by other countries with varying degrees of success. Perhaps the most successful examples of this come from rallying, with both Sebastien Loeb and Sebastien Ogier, who were both well backed by the French motorsport federation, the FFSA, in the earlier stages of their career.

Of course it is important for a country's representatives to do well at the highest levels of the sport. In the purest sense, a successful British driver in racing means a successful British Grand Prix and that, in turn, means a successful UK motor racing industry and infrastructure.

But the desire to just give huge chunks of cash to up-and-coming drivers and then crossing your fingers and hoping that they make it to the top level is highly risky. No driver is guaranteed to get the right breaks, no matter how talented they are and the funding required for just one driver to make it to the very top level is huge.

There is a clamour from people who are very unrealistic about the finances of motor racing for the MSA to give rising talents a blank chequebook. That is a very short-sighted opinion.

Through its Team UK scheme, the Motor Sports Association and its gurus have come up with another way of helping the next raft of rallying and racing hopefuls. It gives the best of the British talents a chance to mature and to pick up new skills and tips to enhance their career through training and personal development.

This scheme has been a decade in the making and it means that Britain can produce dozens of highly qualified and race-ready talents, rather than putting all of its weight behind just one or two and then hoping that they turn out to be good enough.

We could well end up with a huge swathe of top flight drivers, which will only serve to protect the future of motor racing in this country.

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

BARC runs RoR

This year's third annual Race of Remembrance charity event at Anglesey Circuit will be organised by the British Automobile Racing Club. The event takes place at the Welsh venue on November 11-13 and will feature a 1000km race with an interlude for Remembrance Day at 1100hrs on the Sunday. The BARC will assist with the organisation of the meeting alongside Mission Motorsport. BARC's chief operating officer, Drew Furlong, said: "We're impressed with the work that Mission Motorsport do and are happy to be a part of the race."

MSVR back in FE

MotorSport Vision Racing has been re-appointed as the organising club for this year's FIA Formula E race in London. MSVR staged last year's inaugural ePrix event in Battersea Park and will again provide officials, staff and support vehicles to this year's races on July 2/3. MSVR's David Scott said: "We're looking forward to building on last year's experience to help make the London ePrix bigger and better."

Mission donation

The Borough 19 Motor Club has donated £1,000 to the Mission Motorsport charity after a series of fundraising events. The club presented a cheque to the charity, which helps with the rehabilitation of injured service personnel via motorsport, during its awards ceremony in Essex. Guest speaker Perry McCarthy also donated half the proceeds from the sales of his autobiography on the night.

Donington tests

Donington Park will run a series of unsilenced test days across this month. All days costs £395 per car including the use of a garage and all running is on the National Circuit. Available days are: February 10, 12, 23 and 25.

Split the Max5s

MaX5 championship events will use split grids this season to cater for its two classes. The Mk1 and Mk3 MX-5 classes will start their races at separate times from 2016 for the first time since the introduction of the Mk3 model for the 2009 season. The championship's provisional eight round calendar also includes a switch to three 15-minute races at the Pembrey, Mallory Park and Brands Hatch meetings, as opposed to its traditional two 20-minute affairs.

Fortec's F4 signing

Fortec Motorsports has signed Omani driver Faisal Al Zubair as its first BRDC Formula 4 driver. The 17-year-old raced for the team in the Autumn Trophy last year and finished 16th in the main championship, driving for Hillspeed.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey and LAT

FILES TIES UP DEAL TO RACE IN GERMAN TOURING CARS



Files will handle an Opel



By Rob Ladbrook

Renault Clio Cup star Josh Files will graduate into German touring car racing this season after inking a deal with the Opel-supported Target Competition team.

Files, 25 from Norwich, has signed to race one of the squad's new Opel Astras in the new ADAC TCR German Series this year. The championship is an offshoot of the TCR International Series and takes place across seven

rounds within and around Germany.

Target Competition won both the drivers' and teams' TCR International Series titles last term running Swiss Stefano Comini in a SEAT Leon.

Files claimed the Renault UK Clio Cup and Clio Eurocup championships in 2013. He finished third in the Italian Clio Cup last season before making his TCR debut in Macau last November with Campos Racing.

"My aim has been to break into touring cars in Europe for the last few years and

my mentor [triple World Touring Car champion] Andy Priaulx helped me get to Macau last year and that race got me noticed," said Files. "The chance with Target Competition has come about through that and it's massively exciting because they are essentially a pseudo-factory team for Opel.

"The German racing scene is so strong at the moment with a lot of manufacturer activity so to be able to go into a new championship like ADAC TCR with the chance to do well gives you a great chance

to carve out a career with a brand."

The new ADAC Germany series is expected to boast a 25-car grid this year. Files has yet to test the new Astra, but said it was a step forward from the older Campos car he raced near the top 10 in Macau before suspension failure put him out.

"The new Astra is a great piece of kit," he added. "It's got much more sophisticated aero and Opel has done a lot of parts testing to ensure durability. It should be an exciting season."

Bushell heads back to Renault Clio Cup after BTCC chances dry up

Former Renault UK Clio Cup champion Mike Bushell will return to the series this year after being unable to secure a seat in the British Touring Car Championship.

The 26-year-old won the Clio title in 2014 and graduated to the BTCC last year driving an AMD Ford Focus. But Bushell endured a tough campaign, with a hefty shunt at Thruxton denting his budget.

Bushell will now rejoin Team Pyro in Clios this year, the squad he won the title with.

"Last year didn't go as well as I would've hoped," he said. "The BTCC is very easy to get drawn in to and it's like an addictive drug, it's very easy to make decisions that don't work out in the long run, so I've decided to go back to Clios."

"Pyro are great friends of mine. I helped Ciceley run in their new cars and then started talking to Pyro. It was great to get back behind the wheel."



Bushell will rejoin Clio Cup grid with Team Pyro this year

Pyro boss Mark Hunt said: "The transition to touring cars is very difficult. Mike was driving quite an old car and that makes it tough – it's like playing tennis with a smaller racket. Some people go into touring cars and you never see them again, so it's great to have Mike back."

Irishman David Dickenson will also rejoin the team, having previously raced in the UK Clio Cup and Clio Eurocup with Pyro. He also finished runner-up in the 2014 Clio

Race Series with the squad.

"There's no reason why Mike or David can't win the title," said Hunt.

Reigning Masters Cup champion Mark Howard will also remain with Pyro. "It will be nice to try and go for the Masters again with Mark," Hunt added.

Pyro plans to run a couple more cars in the series and the drivers of those will be announced in the next few weeks once the deals have been confirmed.

Jelley confirms Porsche Carrera Cup return

Former British touring car racer Stephen Jelley will return to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this year with Team Parker Racing.

Jelley, 33, was a winner in his first stint in the championship between 2010-2011, but failed to add to his tally of victories on his return to the series last year, finishing fifth in the standings.

"I found there was a bit of expectation on me from outside sources that I should have been a championship contender last year," said Jelley. "I just

concentrated on each weekend at a time. Each time I got in the car I was a bit faster, or a bit more savvy with the set-up.

"I learned a lot and I'm in a stronger position to go better this year. I've always had a great relationship with Team Parker and they are more than capable of winning the championship.

"They've made some improvements at their end and if I can improve too we'll be a competitive package. It was a no brainer to stick with the team."



Jelley has signed up with Team Parker for Carrera Cup GB

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'The pressure is on for TF Sport'
British GT squad, p22



Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Steve Jones and Richard Styles

MINI MIGLIA DRIVE ON OFFER IN NEW 'RAFFLE'



Winner will get a Mini Miglia outing

One driver will win a fully funded race weekend in the Dunlop Mini Miglia Championship this year as part of a new competition run by series regular Rob Howard and category legend Endaf Owens.

The competition will allow one driver to take part in the double-header Miglia championship round during the Brands Hatch Mini Festival on July 16/17 in a car prepared and run by the Owens Motorsport team. The prize is worth in excess of £3,500.

Series regulars Howard and Owens have come up with the concept of selling raffle tickets

for the prize at £20 each. Four drivers will then be drawn at random and invited to take part in a track day in the car. Of those four finalists, one will then be chosen by a panel of judges to win the competitive outing at the Kent track.

Howard said: "I rolled my car at Brands Hatch last year so I borrowed a bodysell from Endaf while he built me a new car. The build is nearly finished now so we have a spare Miglia sitting in the workshop. That's when Endaf came up with the idea of using it for a one-off prize drive to not only raise the profile of the club but also

to give a Mini fan the chance to race with us. It's a way to give something back to people who love Mini racing but perhaps have never given it a go.

"The test day gives the winners a chance to familiarise themselves with the car and the winner won't be picked on pure speed alone during the test day. We're looking for somebody with a good attitude and who works well with the team."

Howard added that any revenue generated would be donated to charities nominated by the Mini Se7en Racing Club.

M7RC commercial manager Colin Peacock said: "It's a

superb idea and we fully endorse what Rob and Endaf are doing. I'm surprised nobody has done it before. The Miglias are accessible for novice drivers and it gives somebody new the chance to experience competitive and friendly motorsport."

Tickets can be purchased online via a Paypal transfer to mini7racingclub@aol.com along with your contact details, or at Mini Miglia rounds this season. Sales close on April 30.

Winners must be responsible for meeting the MSA's licence requirements themselves.

Cunninghams join Britcar in Porsche

Father-and-son racers Peter and Mark Cunningham will enter the revamped Britcar Endurance Championship this season sharing a Porsche 911.

The pair previously raced in the Britcar Production Cup, sharing a SEAT Leon Supercopa, but have now upgraded to a Porsche 911 997 Cup car. Mark has contested Britcar since 2004, with father Peter joining him from 2005.

Mark Cunningham said: "We know we have a very steep learning curve ahead with the new car, however we are relishing the challenge.

"We have a lot of experience in endurance racing from many years in the Production championship. We know what it takes to win and there will be no lack of effort from our team."

Quaife invests in Ford Fiesta classes

Transmission manufacturer Quaife Engineering will provide every driver committed to the Ford Fiesta and Fiesta Junior championships with a free differential as part of a new sponsorship agreement.

The Sevenoaks-based firm has agreed to become title sponsor of both Ford Racing UK's Fiesta championship and the BRSCC Fiesta Junior Championship for this year, and as part of that agreement will provide a torque biasing differential free of charge to every driver signed up for the full series.

The agreement covers all models eligible for both championships, including the ST, Si, Zetec and Zetec S models. Each differential is worth over £600.

The differentials will be issued to top team Daniels Motorsport, but any drivers unable to fit the component themselves can take their gearbox directly to Quaife to have it fitted free of charge.

Exact entries across both the senior and junior Fiesta



Popular Fiesta ST models will benefit most from a new deal

series is not yet known, but the scheme would have been worth over £22,000 based on last year's numbers.

Company head Michael Quaife said: "At Quaife we've always been all for beginners coming into motorsport and giving a helping hand where we can, so this is a great chance to put something back into the sport.

"One of the Fiesta Junior drivers [Ben Swift] approached us at the Autosport International Show to see about sponsorship, and it seemed like the perfect chance to help the

entire championship out as Quaife has a long history with Ford as a manufacturer.

"The differentials should decrease lap times by up to two-seconds on longer circuits as drivers can get on the power sooner, and they will help reliability too as they reduce stress on the gearbox and driveline compared to standard differentials."

Ford Racing UK's Kevin Shortis added: "It's a great bonus for the championship and really shows Quaife's dedication to national motorsport."



Smith tested Gen 3 Mini

Eurotech joins Mini Challenge grid with F56s for Smith and Polley

Jeff Smith will contest the Mini Challenge this year alongside his British Touring Car Championship commitments.

Smith took part in the final round of the Challenge last season at Snetterton, scoring a podium finish in one of the new Gen 3 F56 machines. Smith has

now purchased two of the new cars and will field them under his Eurotech Racing banner.

Smith will race the first, while Jo Polley will step up from the championship's Cooper Class to race the other.

Smith will also handle a Eurotech-run Honda Civic Type

R in this season's BTCC.

"I was impressed with the Minis when I raced them last year," said Smith. "The cars are very quick and quite edgy so they are a good stepping stone into touring cars. It gives me valuable seat time between touring car rounds."

GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

ROB LADBROOK

"Huff saw his chance and bolted for it"



Rob Huff knows the future is bright with Honda

There are plenty of examples in world motorsport of drivers making a gamble or a decision based on their vision a few years down the line.

Think Lewis Hamilton moving from the McLaren powerhouse to the middling Mercedes for 2013. Despite more than a few raised eyebrows at the time, that worked out rather nicely in the end...

Having that little bit of insider knowledge or that faith in a future direction can pay off massively at the higher levels of the sport, and Rob Huff could well be looking at a similar outcome in a few years.

The World Touring Car Championship hasn't been the hotbed of interest it should be in recent years. The cars are superb, with good aero levels and 400bhp engines, they are the fastest pure touring cars on the planet with lap times not far off GT3 pace – by pure touring cars I mean not the prototype-esque DTM or Super GT offerings.

But something has been missing in the WTCC for quite some time – open competition. As you can read in my interview with Huff on page 20, he knows that competition is on the way back.

Citroen joining the WTCC was a real coup. The series needed manufacturer investment and interest, but nobody quite guessed the level Citroen would bring. With a colossal budget, a superb car and three of the best drivers in the game the Versailles team has swept all in its wake. Yes the addition of Sebastien Loeb brought some global interest for the first season, but fans quickly turned off when Citroens won essentially everything.

With Citroen now on the way out, it's time for a refresh. Volvo is coming in with a few superb-looking S60s and with Citroen gone at the end of the year there should now be a much more level playing field. Remove the Citroens from last year's timing sheets, and suddenly everybody is within the same time bracket to the second.

Huff has served his time out of the top seats. The privateer Munnich Motorsport option was never going to bring him a second title and the lesser-funded Lada works operation was simply dwarfed by Citroen.

Huff has seen his chance and he's bolted for it. Honda is upping its commitment to the championship this year by running three cars, and Huff will be central to all of it with a global manufacturer.

With Citroen leaving the WTCC, the top of the tree is vacant for 2017 and ready for somebody to step up. Huff knows success won't come overnight, but given time he has the resources at his disposal to climb the summit once again.



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HISTORICS

"It's a bit quicker than the Anglia!"
Rich's new Escort, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence, LAT

DOWN THE PUB WITH

IVAN SHARROCK

Age: 77 Lives: London
Competing for 50 years

He has been racing for over 50 years

"I still have the HRG 1500 I raced in the first Griffiths Formula race at Castle Combe in May 1966. The car was built in 1948 and was delivered to a test pilot who subsequently crashed and was killed and so the car went to a character called Richard Green, a farmer from Gloucestershire. He raced it a lot in the 1950s and then, after it had been through a couple of other owners, it came to me. I bought it in 1963 and raced it in the 1960s, but not that successfully to be honest."

He was in at the start of the HSCC

"The Griffiths Formula race of 1966 was interesting with the types of cars that were there and it was the start of what went on to become the Historic Sports Car Club."

He remembers the race

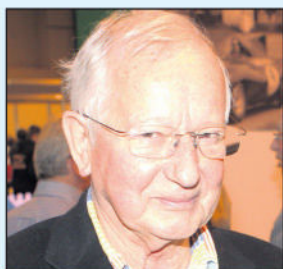
"Some of the other cars, like Neil Corner's Jaguar D-type, were hugely fast and I was only in a one-and-a-half litre car. On the straights they went zooming past, but I had a wonderful dice with the Ferrari of Bernard Worth. I could claw it back on the corners because the HRG has amazing road-holding."

Racing has changed a great deal

"The very first meeting for the HSCC was at Betty Haig's house and at the time I had the HRG and an AC Ace Bristol, and my wife was driving the AC Ace. Back then, one could just about afford to go racing. It has changed an awful lot over those 50 years and it was good to see the current range of historic cars at the Autosport International when we got together on the HSCC stand. It was great to meet up with some of the other drivers from that 1966 race, including Bernard Worth."

He now goes trialling

"The HRG is quite an extraordinary car and I still own it. I use it for pleasure these days and I have another one that I bought for spares in 1965. I eventually built that one back up into a complete car in 1995 and have been doing the MCC classic trials ever since. Sadly I rolled it in Cornwall on the Land's End Trial but it is now back in pristine condition again and ready to go, so it will be out again this year."



Sharrock: a HSCC veteran

CLASSIC F1 BEASTS OFF TO GOODWOOD

Ground-effect monsters of the '70s set for high-speed demonstration



Brabham BT49C will be in action

By Paul Lawrence

More than 30 ground-effect F1 cars from the late 1970s and early 1980s will take part in high-speed demonstration sessions at the Goodwood Members' Meeting on March 19/20.

Some of the fastest cars ever to run in public at the Sussex track will be a key highlight of the 74th Members' Meeting and

the entry will include iconic designs like the Ferrari 312T5, Williams FW07 and FW08, Brabham BT49C and McLaren MP4. Cars from Ensign, Fittipaldi, Osella and Wolf will also be in the line-up as the demonstration recreates an era when designers harnessed the airflow beneath the cars.

Leading historic racer Nick Padmore says it will be an incredible spectacle. He will

share the driving of the ex-Jan Lammers Shadow DN9 with the car's preparer, Sam Thomas.

"The aim is to show the cars off within sensible limits," said Padmore, who set the outright Goodwood lap record in a Lola T70 Spyder at last year's Members' Meeting. "Goodwood is one of those circuits you have to respect and it will make the lap very short. Fordwater and 'no-name' are so quick. The F1

car has the potential to be a lot quicker than the Lola and it will be seriously quick. We'll be chasing the circuit record if the conditions are right."

Padmore will also be racing the Lola again in the Bruce McLaren Trophy and is particularly excited by the chance to race the Mini Cooper owned by his father Keith in the Whitmore Cup pre '66 touring car race.



Barrett's Escort will rally

Barrett back out in British Historic Rally Championship after rebuild

Northern Irish driver Paul Barrett will return to England and Wales this season for a full assault on the British Historic Rally Championship in his Pinto-engined Ford Escort Mk2.

Barrett was one of the stars of the early rounds of the 2015 BHRC before a sizeable accident in Ireland curtailed his season.

"We had a big off into a tree and the car is only just fixed now," said Barrett. "I'm looking

forward to getting out and doing the championship again."

He will start his season on the Red Kite later this month. He missed the event a year ago after being stranded on a car ferry for 36 hours in bad weather.

Payne moves in to Roadsports in Lotus

Howard Payne, the 2014 Clubmans Sports 1600 champion, will switch to the 70s Roadsports series with a recently acquired Lotus Europa Twin Cam.

"I had an opportunity to buy the Europa and it seemed an ideal time to make the transition to historic events after racing in Clubmans for over a quarter of a century," said Payne.

"The Lotus was built for racing by Dan and Glenn Eagling of Lifetime Racing, who rebuilt my Mallock Mk20B after it was written-off."

The Lotus, like the championship-winning Mallock, will be run at events by Huntingdonshire Regional College students as part of a long-standing partnership between Payne and the College.



Cole raced for Ferrari in 1950s

Ex-Ferrari racer Tom Cole gets memorial race

The George Abecassis Trophy will be replaced by a race commemorating Tom Cole this season.

The Abecassis family has decided not to support the event for a fourth edition. John Turner, of organiser the Fifties Sports Car Racing Club, has therefore decided to dedicate a similar race to ex-Ferrari driver Cole, who was killed at Le Mans in 1953.

"Tom Cole's name appeared regularly in early post-war race

reports but is now largely forgotten, so I have taken this opportunity to bring his name to a wider audience," said Turner.

There will be some changes to the format of the race, which will take place at Silverstone on April 23. The 30-minute event will no longer include a compulsory pit stop. It will be open to sports-racing and production sports and GT cars introduced between 1946 and 1959, split across six classes.

Pre '80 Endurance Series dates set

A four-race schedule, starting at the Donington Historic Festival, will make up the second season of the Pre '80 Endurance Series.

The series is run by the HSCC with Flavien and Vanessa Marcais and is open to sports-racing, GT and Touring Cars of a type that competed in international races up to the end of 1979. There is also a class for pre '85 Sports 2000s.

The 2016 dates are April 30-May 2, Donington Park; May 21/22, Silverstone GP; July 1-3, Brands Hatch GP and October 7-9, Dijon.



Pre '80 Enduro will return

IN BRIEF

Killarney canned
The Killarney Historic Rally, postponed in December due to storms and flooding on the stages, has now been formally cancelled. The organisers initially hoped to rearrange the event for early this year but the popular closed-road rally will not now run again until December 2016. The Irish Historic Championship will now count the best seven scores from eight events.

Rich gets Escort

After making his rallying return in a Ford Anglia last year, Malcolm Rich is stepping up to a full-spec Ford Escort Mk2 for this season's British Historic Rally Championship. The Brecon driver plans a first test this weekend ahead of his debut in the car on the Red Kite Stages on February 21. "I'm nervous and excited," said Rich. "It's a little quicker than the Anglia!"

Historic Thunder

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club has added the Historic Thunder Saloon Championship to its portfolio. The new series will be for cars marketed before January 1983 and classes will be split at 3300cc. No turbo or supercharged cars will be permitted, but otherwise it will be open to a wide range of developed saloon cars.

Kelly's rally plans

Donagh Kelly, last year's Irish Tarmac rally champion and Irish National champion will field his historic Ford Escort Mk2 on a couple of rallies this season with his 17-year-old son, Eamon, co-driving. "It's a car I've had for a while and there's nothing overly special about it, it's got a Pinto engine and it's a nice little car," said Kelly, who plans to tackle the Killarney Historic again at the end of the year.

Manx Classic info

The annual Manx Classic will run for three days from Thursday April 28 on the Isle of Man. Competitors will take part in a sprint and two hillclimbs, all featuring sections of the famous TT course on closed public roads. The action starts with the Governor's Sprint, which begins at the TT grandstands and runs through the streets of Douglas. Entry details are at manxmotorracing.com.

Masters F1 points

The Masters FIA Historic Formula One Championship will now be scored over 12 races at six events. Previously, double-header rounds accrued points based on aggregate results but for this season all 12 races will score equally. The season starts at Zolder in April and has UK rounds at Brands Hatch (May 28/29) and Donington Park (July 2/3) as well as non-championship races at Silverstone (July 29-31).

Red Kite flying

Due to unprecedented demand, the organisers of the Red Kite Stages (February 21) have gained dispensation to increase the maximum entry from 120 to 130 cars. By the end of last week, all but one of the places had been taken. The Llandovery-based rally is the opening round of the British Historic Rally Championship and currently has 68 historic entries.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

MAKINEN ADMITS TO DRIVER HEADACHE

Finn is struggling with top drivers under contract next year



TMG is testing a '17 WRC engine

Toyota R5 could be on the way

Toyota will produce a Yaris R5 car – but not until 2018.

Tommi Makinen says his Finland-based organisation has already started thinking about the new car, with plenty of encouragement from Japan.

Makinen admitted this project could be taken on by Toyota Motorsport in Cologne. So far TMG's only participation in the car giant's return to the World Rally Championship is in the development of the engine for the Yaris WRC.

"As soon as we have time to concentrate on that, we will do," said Makinen.

"We are investigating different areas already. We talk to TMG people and, of course, Toyota Motor Company to see what is their overall market and situation. We have investigated that area. We also have the young Japanese drivers [Daiki Arai and Takamoto Katsuta] this could be interesting for them to work on the development of the car.

"This is definitely not for 2017. The first year would be 2018. If we could start now, we could have a car ready late in '17, but I don't see any point in bringing the production forward if the car is not fast enough.

"We will concentrate our production to make the car right."

Makinen has bolstered his squad with the recruitment of further technicians, including around five new staff who have come from the British M-Sport squad.

By David Evans

Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen will talk to two of the giants of world rallying in an effort to find a team leader for the Japanese firm's return next season.

With the sport's leading names – apart from Hyundai's Thierry Neuville – all under contract next season, Makinen told *Motorsport News* his driver line-up was causing him something of a headache.

The Finn has already talked to 2003 World Rally champion Petter Solberg and admits he will be calling Sebastien Loeb to discuss the chances of bringing the nine-time champion back.

Makinen was with Solberg in Finland last month and talked about the chances of getting Solberg in a Yaris WRC.

Makinen told *MN*: "We discussed different plans with Petter. We know Petter is a world champion and a fast driver."

Asked directly, if it was possible Solberg could test the Yaris this year, Makinen said: "Why not? I don't know. He is running his rallycross team and doing the championship again, but maybe something is possible."

Solberg told *MN* his plans were to defend his FIA World Rallycross Championship this season, but added that his future

projects beyond this season remained unclear.

"There are some different options for next season," Solberg told *MN*. "There's no doubt the future for rallycross is exciting and some of the options we have in this championship are really interesting. But, maybe there is still some unfinished business in the WRC. It's interesting to talk to Tommi and to hear about the big plans Toyota has."

Solberg won his world title in Makinen's final year in the World Rally Championship, when they were team-mates at Subaru. The pair have always enjoyed a productive working relationship.

Loeb is under contract to Peugeot, but sources have suggested that the Frenchman joining Toyota is not out of the

question. "I haven't seen or spoken with Sebastien yet," said Makinen. "There are a lot of rumours around, but so far I haven't done anything. If Sebastien would be interested to do something then of course I want to talk to him. We know he is one of the best drivers ever and still doing very well and continuing to drive."

Makinen has revealed that he opened negotiations with Sebastien Ogier in Finland last year, but soon realised that door was shut.

"I spoke with him in Finland and it's very clear his contract is until the end of 2017," said Makinen. "Everybody is always looking at winners and the best option for us is to have Sebastien Ogier behind the steering wheel

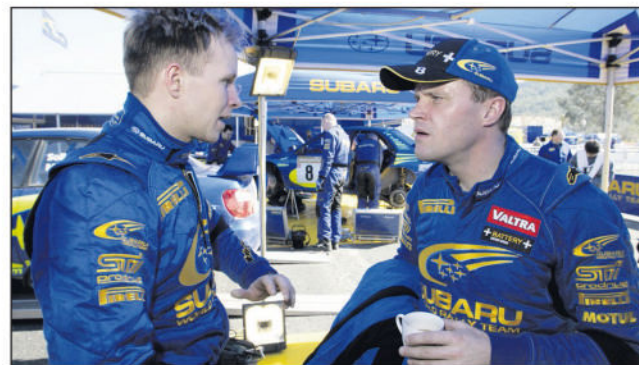
that would secure this for us. But it's complicated. Everybody reckons he's the best in the world. Would it be an interesting idea if you could have some newcomer and one day challenge him and even one day beat him? What would give the best return?"

Makinen admitted he was looking for that newcomer, while also continuing to develop young Japanese drivers Hiroki Arai and Takamoto Katsuta.

"One of the most important areas in the overall package are the drivers," said Makinen. "But now we have to be also realistic that there are not so many for us to choose from. Next year would be most probably a compromise for us for the drivers, we have to look at different ideas."



Makinen will be in touch with Loeb regarding TMR seat in '17



Solberg (l) worked with Makinen in the Finn's last WRC season

JONATHAN PRINGLE WINS A HECTIC DONEGAL MINI STAGES

PAGE 25



The Strength of Experience



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'MSA is developing
the next generation'
MSA Academy feature, p19

Photos: fiaerc.com, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

HYUNDAI i20 R5 BREAKS COVER



New i20 R5 was tested in France

Hyundai's all-new i20 R5 has broken cover, testing in the south of France for the first time last week.

Dutchman Kevin Abbring and Britain's Seb Marshall crewed the car during the roll out at Fontjoncouse. The pair are in for a long year of testing – once they've completed the work on the R5 car, they will begin an intensive period of running in the team's new-for-2017 World Rally Car.

The i20 R5 will not make its competitive debut until the

second half of the year, with homologation not planned until mid-season.

Team principal Michel Nandan told *Motorsport News* late last year it was possible that the car could be seen on WRC2 rounds at the end of the season, but it wouldn't be available for customer competition use until next year.

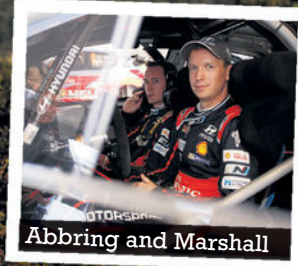
Customer division chief Andrea Adamo said: "Kevin carried out the initial test last week and we have really hit the ground running. The first

tests with the New Generation i20 R5 will be focused on reliability so we can resolve any teething problems as we develop a car that customers can enjoy driving without any compromise to performance. We are on target to deliver the first R5s around the end of summer. We are entering an important phase now, ramping up our testing programme and recruiting more staff to join our experienced team."

Adamo denied there would be any kind of factory Hyundai

team entering the WRC2 division next season.

"The R5 is made for customers and although Hyundai Motorsport will not participate directly as a works team in any championship, we are focused on providing our clients with the best service and support," added Adamo. "It's an exciting period and we hope to see the car competing as early as the end of this year in regional and national championships in the main European markets – and to see it more widely in 2017."



Abbring and Marshall

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Ogier got me thinking about this one"



I remember the first time I ever saw a Carlos Sainz edition Toyota Celica on the road. I was walking home from school. It stopped me in my tracks. Literally.

I stood and stared. I'd heard about this thing. Read about this thing. Dreamt about this thing. And there it was.

My mates were – most likely (I can't remember exactly...) – deeply engaged in an argument about whether Will Carling could really hold a candle to his England centre partner Jerry Guscott.

Such was the depth of debate, nobody noticed I'd stopped, until Richard Kingston asked me what I was doing. I pointed. In his own mind, Kingo knew a thing or two about cars.

"Nice Porsche."

Seriously?

I couldn't help myself. Didn't he know this was the Carlos Sainz (CS) Limited Edition car, with only a couple of hundred in Britain. It was a roadgoing version of the Turbo 4WD; I never appreciated it being labeled a GT-Four or GT4. It wasn't it. It was a Turbo 4WD. Except this one was even better on the road. It had more cooling vents in the front bumper, water injection on the intercooler and every single one was individually numbered.

That was the power of a rally special on the road.

After that came a legion of Ford Escort Cosworths, Mitsubishi Lancers and Subaru Imprezas. I was always more of an Impreza fan and was, on finding employment on these pages, fortunate enough to drive a Sonic Blue P1 before they went out of production.

It wasn't quite the ultimate, wide-bodied 22B, but it was still a special piece of kit.

Seeing the rising price of things like the 22B got me thinking about the lack of such machinery these days. Where's the four-wheel drive equivalent of the i20 or the low and lean Fiesta or Polo?

I poked around the office a little bit and found an R-line Polo. With a 1.2-litre engine. And 100bhp.

Oh dear.

Obviously, there are warm Fiestas and DS 3s around, but nothing that would come close to a warbling Impreza, eager to be snick-snicked through the gears and thrown at B roads up and down the country. Or so I thought.

OK, it's not a perfect fit, but it was Sebastien Ogier who got me thinking about this one. We were talking about his recce car: a Golf R.

On his direction, I decided to give it a go.

Granted, it doesn't have the brutish looks of the 22B, but its blown two-litre motor does produce more power than the Subaru managed. That's a good start. A Haldex four-wheel-drive system offers fabulous traction and 'Race' mode even makes for a half decent soundtrack, even if it does come via a sound actuator.

My only gripe with the thing was the lack of a conventional handbrake. Its predecessors the R32 and 4Motion – like the Impreza – had been perfect for some gravelly donuts, but the happy stick was very much part of the process.

I actually loved the Golf R and was very sad to see the back of it. I'm sadder still that this is the only example modern rally classic for the road.

Volkswagen, put all of this under a Polo body, chuck some wings on it, a Sebastien Ogier sticker on the back and broadcast your WRC brilliance to the road.

Rally Argentina returns to Cordoba in '16

Competitive World Rally Championship action will return to Cordoba for the first time since 2009 on this year's Rally Argentina.

Seven years ago, the city's Estadio Cordoba football stadium, built for the 1978 World Cup, was used three times for a superspecial. Since then, the competitive action has been based out



Henning Solberg in Cordoba

of the event's host town of Villa Carlos Paz.

This year, the South American event, which runs from April 21-24, will include a two-mile city-side spectator stage, running through the streets rather than in the stadium.

Apart from that change, the route for the rally on which Kris Meeke broke his WRC duck last season remains largely unaltered. The Calamuchita Valley makes up Friday's mileage, with the roads north of Cordoba used on Saturday before heading out west to the Traslasierra mountains – including the El Condor test – on the final day.

Rally Liepaja delayed due to warm weather

Rally Liepaja organisers have defended their decision to postpone the opening round of the European Rally Championship.

The decision to shelve the Latvian event just a week out from the February 5 start came following unusually warm weather. Had the event gone ahead, the use of studded tyres would have wrecked the roads which are free from snow and ice.

There were calls for the organisers to allow crews to run gravel-specification rubber without the studs.

Clerk of the course Janis Krastins said: "Switching to gravel tyres was not possible, not only because of the FIA regulations, but because it would have been more dangerous for the participants. On such wet and soft roads, gravel



Breen won last year's event

tyres would have very little grip.

"When the road are like this, even the first few cars would destroy the roads so much that, in case of an accident, the medical and rescue team would have difficulty to get through the stage quickly."

The Latvian organisers are hoping to find a suitable date further into the season.

Meanwhile, the ERC season will now start with the championship's return to the Canary Islands on March 10-12.

Rally Sweden bosses secure new shakedown route

Rally Sweden organisers are relieved to have tied down a new location for shakedown after a number of local residents refused to allow the event to pass by their houses next week.

The pre-event shakedown test for round two of the WRC has been returned to Karlstad this season, after running further north in Hagfors in recent years. But the organisers' plans hit trouble when they found significant opposition to the stage on the outskirts of the city.

A new 2.72-mile shakedown test has been located, just over 10 miles east of Karlstad.

Rally Sweden boss Glen Olsson said: "We have had many positive calls suggesting new stages after the problems we had with our initial choice. We are

very pleased that this is now settled and we can focus on making a great event."

The coming week will be a crucial one for Rally Sweden, with reports of not enough snow and ice on some of the stages. With plenty of grass showing through, the Karlstad superspecial was looking more green than white when *MN* went to press.

A source in Sweden said, however, that temperatures are expected to plummet this week, freezing the watered roads hard in time for the start of the recce.

In addition to that concern, Sweden's place on the calendar is coming under pressure from well-funded events in Canada and Japan. A full report on the future of the WRC's winter rally appears in next week's *MN*.

Photo: John O'Neill, Sperrins Photography



Kris Meeke won the 2015 Northern Ireland Motorsport Award for the third time last weekend. Meeke accepted the prize from ANICC president Robert Harkness (left) and chairman Henry Campbell.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: RallysportMedia, Writtle Photographic, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

SPENCER SPORT IN BRC NATIONAL BID

Home squad plans two Mirages for Mid Wales



Pryce competed on the Cambrian Rally in 2015

By Jack Benyon

Osian Pryce and Jamie Jukes will campaign Spencer Sport Mitsubishi Mirages in the British Rally Championship this year.

Pryce, who confirmed his intentions to compete in the WRC-based Drive DMACK Trophy last week in *Motorsport News*, is confirmed for the Mid Wales Stages in the R5-spec car, with other outings also a possibility. It's likely team owner Jukes will also enter a number of other events including the upcoming Red Kite Stages.

Pryce has tested the Mirage extensively, including competing on

the Cambrian Rally in October, and will continue to test the car as the southwest Wales outfit looks to prove the Mpart Sweden-built machine is as quick as other R5 cars on the market.

"The aim is to show what the car is capable of," explained Pryce. "It's unproven at the minute but it's about time we changed that to proven."

"The car is on par with the Fiesta in my opinion. It's hard to say where the pros and cons are. From my point of view it was very easy to get in it and be on it straight away."

Pryce will be up against team-mate Tom Cave (see below) and DMACK's Elfyn Evans in Mid Wales, but he's

confident the car has what it takes.

"The way I look at it, we're driving an unproven car against people like Elfyn who are works drivers. I'm confident in the car, everything will need to go right on the day, as long as we do our best then the times will be there, I'm sure."

Because the car is running in the National Rally Cup, Welshman Pryce won't be able to recce and create his own pacenotes, which the BRC 1-entered Cave and Evans will benefit from.

"That's one thing going against us really, not going off my own notes. That's difficult when you're fighting with people like Tom and Elfyn, they can commit. If we can get near them,

we'll be happy as it's not exactly fair having not done the recce. We can only do the best we can."

Team owner Jukes is looking to put the Mirage in the spotlight – as the squad awaits global homologation which would allow it to compete in the BRC 1 category and within other classes for homologated cars in international rallying such as the ERC or WRC2.

BRC bosses recently announced that non-homologated cars are ineligible for BRC 1, but Jukes is hoping that the team can still gain by showing the pace of the car in the National Rally Cup.

"We're going to Mid Wales to try and prove a point," he explained. "We're

expecting Osian to run at the front. They are stages he has experience of."

Despite running in the National Cup, the Mirage will still be seeded on potential speed, which should see Pryce run near the front of the order depending on the decision of the rally organisers executing the seeding process.

"It's a performance-based seeding," added Jukes. "We'll be seeded where we should be, which will give us the comparison we're after."

"It's a fantastic opportunity for both of us. We've worked with Osian quite a bit now and he's definitely one of the team."

Cave joins BRC-bound Spencer Sport in an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5

Tom Cave and Spencer Sport will join forces for the 2016 BRC.

Cave announced his intentions to compete in the championship last week with James Morgan co-driving a Ford Fiesta R5 Evo.

Now *Motorsport News* has learned that Cave will be run by the Charlie Jukes-managed outfit in the Fiesta, an upgraded version of the car Cave has campaigned on Rally GB on two occasions.

Cave gets Elfyn's Sweden R5

Cave believes scoring the Fiesta Evo – along with Spencer Sport's backing – is a championship-contending package for BRC 1.

"We can definitely go out and be competitive this year," said Cave. "Mid Wales is going to be difficult as Elfyn knows the stages very well."

"I won't make Elfyn's life easy, that's for sure and he'll be under pressure and have a huge target on his back."

Cave will compete on the Red Kite Stages

later this month as a pre-event test before the Mid Wales Stages on March 5/6.

"I've found that over the years I drive best when I'm under pressure," added Cave. "Hopefully we can get a good pre-event test and then we can get the season off on the right track and we'll give it a good go."

Team principal Jukes added: "We've worked with Tom for some time and he's been involved with some of our recent testing. The plan was to run him all year in the Mitsubishi, but when that didn't come off we put together a different deal. We're happy."

Yates faces Cave and Bogie on Red Kite event

MSA English champion Rhys Yates has added the Red Kite Stages to his pre-season schedule ahead of an attack on the British Rally Championship in 2016.

The Chesterfield driver will join the likes of Tom Cave, David Bogie and Tomas Davies on the entry list for the Llandovery event, and is hoping the drivers entered give him an opportunity to compare times in just his second season of stage rallying.

"It's good news some of this year's BRC drivers are doing the Red Kite, they give us a benchmark before the season starts," explained

Yates, who will be co-driven by Tom Woodburn.

"It will be good to see where I'm at. I'm apprehensive for where I'll be in the order because we're inexperienced in comparison."

After running for most of 2015 on Pirelli tyres, Simpson-backed Yates has signed with Michelin for 2016. He will also upgrade to the new Evo engine pack but the BTRDA B10 champion won't get it until after the third round.

Yates won a host of awards in his first season of rallying, taking the B10 class title in an R2 Fiesta before stepping up to his ex-Kajetan



Yates: Wants more seat time

Kajetanowicz car for the Cambrian, Malton and Rockingham rallies at the end of 2015. Now the 23-year-old is returning to where his rallying career started to begin the next chapter of his career.

"The Red Kite was my first ever event in the R2 last year so we've decided to do it for more seat time," he added.

ROVANPERA'S SON TAKING RALLYING BY STORM

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**'West took victory
in his 306 Maxi'
Brands Hatch Stages, p24**

Photos: Martin Walsh



DRIVER ENTRY LIST

Corrib Oil Galway International Rally

NO.	DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CAR	CLASS
1	Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy	Subaru Impreza	WRC
2	Declan Boyle/Brian Boyle	Ford Fiesta	WRC
3	Derek McGarrity/Diarmuid Falvey	Ford Fiesta	WRC
4	Roy White/James O'Brien	Ford Fiesta	WRC
5	Tim McNulty/Paul Kiely	Mini	WRC
6	Dean Raftery/Mark Kane	Subaru Impreza S9	WRC
7	Declan Gallagher/Ryan Moore	Subaru Impreza S8	WRC
8	Keith Cronin/Mikey Galvin	Citroen DS 3	R5
9	Josh Moffett/Jason McKenna	Ford Fiesta	R5
10	Alastair Fisher/Gordon Noble	Ford Fiesta	R5



Jennings is after some luck in Galway

JENNINGS AIMS FOR THIRD TIME LUCKY

Subaru Impreza ace Garry Jennings is sure that he can put two years of mistakes behind him to triumph in Galway this week on the Irish Tarmac Championship curtain raiser.

Jennings came closest to finishing on the top step of the podium in 2014 when he moved to within two hundredths of a second of eventual winner Declan Boyle, but an incident on the Brady's Yard stage, when he aquaplaned into a field before returning to the stage, meant he had to settle for second.

More disappointment followed 12 months later when Jennings when he clipped a

rock on the opening day and damaged the steering. With no way of fixing it he surrendered the runner-up spot.

"We have been extremely unlucky in Galway these past two seasons," explained the Kesh businessman.

"Hopefully it will be a case of third time lucky for me because it would mean so much to win in Galway. It would be great if I could add it to my list of rally victories - I'll certainly be trying hard to do it.

"People say that I tend to go better in the wet than I do in the dry, and yes the roads were damp when I was challenging

for the win in Galway before, but it didn't pan out the way I had hoped."

The process of rebuilding Jennings' Subaru after it went up in flames on August's Ulster Rally is nearing completion, meanwhile, with the engine arriving back from Belgium over the weekend.

Despite not featuring competitively for the best part of six months, the 2013 Tarmac champion insists he has the speed and the car he needs to fight at the business end of the field in Galway.

"I feel more comfortable driving the car now than I have

at any other time," explained Jennings. "I won in Donegal and then at Lurgan Park last year and came close to achieving three straight wins on the Ulster Rally before the fire started in the engine bay.

"I wouldn't say that I have one of the fastest cars this season but I certainly believe I have one of the most reliable cars in this year's championship.

"I know that in order to win I have to beat some very quick World Rally Car drivers as well as people like Keith Cronin and Alastair Fisher in the R5 cars."

A total of 14 R5 and S2000 cars have been entered.

Raftery back in WR Car for Galway

For the second year in succession, 2014 Billy Coleman Young Driver Of The Year Award winner Dean Raftery will compete in a WRC car on his home rally.

Raftery has secured the use of an ex-Petter Solberg Impreza for the event, which he finished sixth on last year in his first WR Car run in a Mini. "It's never easy to jump into any rally car and try and fight for overall honours, plus I haven't driven four-wheel drive since this time last year," said Raftery. "Hunting



Raftery will swap last year's Mini (above) for Subaru

down the more modern frontrunners is the main aim on the event though. I like a challenge and it will be interesting to see if I can get on their pace and see how close I can get."

Raftery suffered from a difficult year in 2015.

After his Galway WRC car debut, he finished seventh on the Moonraker Forestry Rally in his Citroen DS 3 R3T. He then had three successive retirements on WRC Rally Portugal, the Cambrian Rally and Wales Rally GB.

TEG Subaru to debut on the North West Stages

Arron Newby will give the new TEG-built Subaru Impreza B13 its competitive debut on the North West Stages in February.

The car is a stripped out Impreza bodysell built to B13-specifications, and broke cover at Rallyday at Castle Combe late last year. Now Newby and father Stuart have decided the time is right to debut the car in competition.

"The North West Stages is a good multi-venue rally that's close to home," explained Newby. "All the stages are short and like power stages so the WRC cars tend to shine on the event. We thought it would be a good test to benchmark the power of the car as there are eight WRC cars and several S2000s already entered."

The car features a mixture of parts made by TEG, along with necessary WRC parts and a trick electronic paddleshift gearbox, believed to be the first of its kind in a rally car.

The event gets underway on Friday evening with local hopes that the Blackpool-based event may boast a home win come Saturday evenings finish.

Top seeds Tony Bardy and Neil Colman will be chased by home favourites Simon Bowen/Richard Robinson and event sponsor John Stone and co-driver Carl Williamson. Stone will use the Ford Fiesta Millington S2500 that he debuted on the recent Jack Frost Stages.



Car has only broken cover at RallyDay

Cumiskey upgrades to Fiesta R5 for Irish Tarmac Championship

Irishman Brendan Cumiskey has said he looked at a number of options - including Skoda Motorsport's Fabia R5 - before opting for M-Sport's Ford Fiesta R5 for this season's Irish Tarmac Rally Championship.

Cumiskey, who finished third overall in last year's Irish Tarmac standings driving a Subaru Impreza NR4, plans to test his new car ahead of the Galway International Rally, which gets underway on Friday evening.

The Dundalk-based driver originally planned to use last weekend's Donegal Mini Stages as a shakedown for the two-day event only for



Cumiskey drove Gp N in '15

Motorsport Ireland to rule that such machines were ineligible to take part.

"We bought the Subaru from JRM in 2014 with a three-year plan to win Class N4 in the championship, but then the rules changed to make R5 the top class in the series so we had to rethink our plans," he said. "I've sampled World Rally

Cars before and they are fantastic to drive but to maintain them properly is expensive over the course of a championship. R5s are closer to the maintenance cost of an Impreza NR4.

"We looked at the Fabia R5 and also the Fiesta R5 and in the end the deal came down to the back-up service and support that was offered to us by M-Sport."

Cumiskey says the aim in Galway is to gradually improve his pace and finish in a points-scoring spot: "We'll test before Galway as it's a tough rally to learn a new car on, but off course we want to do well."

NATIONAL RALLYING EDITOR

JACK BENYON

"Spencer Sport made a shrewd move with R5"



S Spencer Sport hasn't had it easy with its new Mitsubishi Mirage (which is an R5 but we can't really call it that until it's homologated).

But now I believe that the team is back on track with its announcements this week that it will combine Tom Cave and Osian Pryce on selected rounds of the BRC this year.

Cave will complete the whole year in a Fiesta R5 Evo, while Pryce will campaign the Mirage in the national category of the BRC (see rally news page 14).

While it was a setback not to be allowed to start the Mitsubishi in the BRC 1 class for homologated R5 cars, the team has made a really shrewd move to get Pryce in the car.

Why?

Benchmarks.

If you read my Elfyn Evans column a few weeks back you'll know I love a good benchmark. Testing a driver's pace and the speed of a car against others is difficult in rallying, but Spencer Sport has done the perfect job to showcase whether the Mirage is a real rival to the Ford Fiesta, Peugeot 208 T16 and Skoda Fabia.

Although the car is only entered on the national rally, the crews still do the same stages. Therefore Charlie Jukes - Spencer Sport team principal - can pick up the timing from each stage and directly compare the times between Pryce and Cave.

This wouldn't work unless there was a very handy driver in the Mirage, and Pryce proved in the JWRC last year that he has the pace, if the car will last. The same goes for Cave who has finished runner-up in the Drive DMACK Trophy for two seasons running.

So, much like Malcolm Wilson putting a top driver in the Ford Fiesta R5 Evo for Monte to go up against the likes of impressive Finn Esapekka Lappi and Monte specialist Julien Maurin, Spencer Sport will put its Mirage against the Fiesta Evo with two very good drivers.

One of the main points of the Spencer Sport operation is to sell cars, so much like the effect Elfyn had on the sales of R5 Evos over the Monte weekend (Wilson had many calls asking for the upgrades thanks to the Welshman's pace) Spencer Sport can do something similar.

If Pryce can mix it with the the top R5 cars on select rallies, Spencer Sport's phones could become very busy, very quickly.

Especially when you consider the car is cheaper than a new Fiesta or Fabia.

Speaking of Fabias, I'd like to direct you back to page 18 if you haven't read it already. Kalle Rovanpera is a 15-year-old currently driving a Skoda S2000! Yes, his father is WRC driver Harri, but that's no excuse for being as stupidly talented as this young man.

I spend hours on end watching onboard, and Kalle's from his latest Latvian escapades is a particular highlight. Max Verstappen of rallying? I think so.



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RALLY NEWS

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Ahlin will dovetail WRC2 and BRC

AHLIN JOINS CA1 FOR BRC ASSAULT IN 2016

By Jack Benyon

WRC2 driver Fredrik Ahlin will join CA1 Sport for an attack on the seven-round British Rally Championship in 2016.

The Swede is tackling his home round of the world championship next week in a Ford Fiesta R5 Evo and will enter the BRC in a similar car run by Colin McRae's former lead engineer Martin Wilkinson's Cumbria-based team.

CA1 will also run Ahlin on selected WRC2 events, including Rally Sweden.

"I haven't done any rounds of the British championship before," explained Ahlin, 24. "But Martin

[Wilkinson] has been telling me a lot about the events and I am really looking forward to it. I think there will be a lot of R5 cars starting the championship, and a lot of good competition."

Like many other BRC entrants, Ahlin has hailed the arrival of M-Sport works driver Elfyn Evans as an opportunity to compare his pace against an overall WRC podium finisher.

"It's great that Elfyn Evans is coming back to do the BRC, because for sure that will be a very good benchmark for us and allow us to compare ourselves against a very good WRC driver."

Ahlin is hoping to build on his second visit to the UK last year for Wales Rally

GB, where a sensor failure forced him to return to competition on the second day under Rally 2 rules.

"On Rally GB we had some technical problems on the first day and had to superally, but after that we were setting some good times and fighting in WRC2 with the likes of Craig Breen, so hopefully we can take that momentum to the Mid Wales Stages and start the BRC season off well.

"It's going to be an exciting year contesting the BRC and selected WRC2 events. I want to enjoy it, and of course I want to score some top results. We have the car and team to do it."

Wilkinson believes that Ahlin will

compete at the front of the BRC 1 field when the season starts on the Mid Wales Stages on March 5/6.

"There's no doubting Fredrik's pace," said Wilkinson. "He has proven he can run at the sharp end on WRC2 rounds, which are extremely competitive, and hopefully he can transfer that raw speed into solid points and podium finishes during this year's BRC. It's important to start quick out of the blocks on these mostly single day events and coming directly from Rally Sweden should help. We plan to do some testing prior to Mid Wales to help him re-adjust to gravel driving using the Pirelli tyres."

Michelin offers incentives to BRC crews

World Rally Championship tyre supplier Michelin will offer drivers the opportunity to win tyres for use in the British championship this year.

The French outfit will offer eight tyres on the subsequent round to the highest placed Michelin crew to finish in BRC 1 – for R5 and S2000 cars. Second will earn six tyres; third, four tyres and fourth will receive two tyres.

The firm already provides support at the grassroots level of British rallying with a similar deal in place in the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship. Michelin motorsport manager for the UK and Ireland, Tim Hoare, believes that the open tyre formula is a key draw.

"We are excited to be back involved with the British Rally Championship and are looking for our product to produce strong results," he said. "Our tyres are proven at the highest level but we haven't competed on the BRC for many years. The series looks to have attracted a lot of strong competition and having an open tyre formula means there can be a battle on many levels."

BRC championship manager Iain Campbell added: "To get such support from Michelin is strong motivation for BRC competitors. This is a high value prize and on a product that has such proven results on the WRC."



Bustard upgrades to turbo

Bustard to Irish Tarmac and BRC in Fiesta R2T

M-Sport's highly acclaimed Fiesta R2T will make its debut on Irish soil in the hands of Adam Bustard.

The teenager from Castledearg in County Tyrone intends to use the ex-Max Vatanen machine in this season's MSA Northern Ireland and DMACK Junior British Rally championships with Aaron Johnston co-driving.

A deal to campaign the one-litre turbocharged car was finalised at last month's Autosport International in Birmingham where Bustard met M-Sport representatives Maciej Woda and Andrew Wheatley.

"I attended a test day with the car the day after Rally Spain," said Bustard, who narrowly missed out on a factory drive with the Vauxhall Motorsport Junior Rally Team for the 2016 BRC.

"Just days before I went for the test with Vauxhall, M-Sport offered me an extremely competitive deal. Then, following some talks at the Autosport show, we managed to agree on a package to compete in both competitions."

Having tested the car using DMACK tyres, and tracked its progress on the world stages, the 2013 Junior 1000 Rally Challenge Ireland champion believes it can take him to wins and podium finishes.

"My expectations are high," he said. "We can definitely fight at the front of the R2 field in the car."

Tiger Risk Rally Team brings Slaughter and McCormack to BRC

Former world and European championship driver Marty McCormack and seasoned Historic campaigner James Slaughter will enter the British championship this year under the Tiger Risk Rally Team.

McCormack – who will drive his usual Skoda S2000 – had considered a switch of cars but believes a year in the Skoda will stand him in good stead for 2016.

"There's a lot of seasoned drivers in good cars this year and it was debated towards the end of last year should I change to an R5," explained McCormack.

"But after working with the car last year, it will be better building on that experience.

"When I arrive in Mid Wales

I'll know what I'm up against and what I'm driving. There will be a disadvantage, especially in power, but I feel my experience and confidence in my own car will overcome the power deficit.

"I'm sponsor-driven so it's important that I impress and get out there, and a third year with Tiger Risk's support will hopefully allow me to do that."

Slaughter was a multiple class winner in historic last year in an Ford Escort, and will step up to a Fiesta R5 run by the MSL team.

"Historics is great but I've spent a lot of time there now," he said. "I'll always want to drive Escorts, but the R5 cars are as close to the top end of the rallying spectrum as you can get in terms of the

engineering, and now they are available to rally on the BRC.

"To me it's about the best cars, the technology and being able to drive them. It was almost a no brainer when I was deciding what to do. I've spent a lot of time helping Marty in his career but it will be nice to concentrate personally while being Martin's team-mate."

Slaughter debuted the Fiesta at the Brands Hatch Stages on Sunday as part of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship (see Rally Reports page 24) but retired with gearbox issues. ● Entries for the Alan Healy Memorial Stages are now open. The event on April 10 follows Anglesey (March 20) as part of the MN Circuit Championship.



Slaughter debuted Fiesta R5 in MN Championship

KALLE ROVANPERA

Photos: Alfonsas Rakauskas

The teenager taking rallying by storm. By **David Evans**

ROVANPERA

RALLYING'S YOUNGEST SENSATION



2012: Rovánpera impressed in Citroën C2-R2 Max



Rovánpera dominated Rally Sarma last month

CV

Kalle Rovánpera

Born: October 1, 2000

February 2001: Aged four months watches Harri win his first and only WRC round

January 2008: Starts driving a Toyota Starlet on a private frozen lake

June 2013: First formal competition in Latvia

2014: Starts four rounds of Latvian championship, one class win in Citroën C2-R2 Max

2015: Three class wins from six starts in Latvia

2016: Wins first two rounds of Latvian championship in Skoda Fabia S2000

Seven years ago, the World Rally Championship was stopped in its tracks by a Toyota. A Toyota driven by an eight-year-old.

Get it? One more than seven: eight. Still in primary school. Still playing conkers. Still finding ways to avoid eating his greens and cleaning his teeth.

In 2009, Kalle Rovánpera stole the show for a while. Everybody in the service park was talking about what Harri's boy was doing. Once, that was, a sufficiently large cushion had been found for him to sit on.

Then the Kalle story seemed to go away. Everything went quite. Kalle kept on pedaling, but without the YouTube fanfare.

Now, he's back. And he's back faster and more fearless than ever.

In his time away, the Starlet's been dropped in favour of a Citroën C2. And now that's been dropped in favour of a Skoda Fabia S2000.

A natural progression for any budding 15-year-old...

Heading back into YouTube, the progression is obvious. More than obvious. There's an onboard from the second round of this year's Latvian championship that takes the breath away. Off the startline, the Fabia's banged up the gearbox, straight into sixth and pretty much left there.

There's the odd fifth, here and there and a very occasional trip to fourth, but otherwise, it's top and it's absolutely nailed.

And here's the scary bit, there's no hint of a moment. Everything is completely controlled.

And he's 15.

"He has a really good brain," says his father Harri. "His brain is working very, very fast. All the time he is ahead in thinking what he is doing. Maybe this is why there are not many crashes for him. He is fast, but he is not all the time bending many things on the car."

Not long after he was 12, he was across the Baltic Sea and into Latvia – the proving ground for the world's fastest teenage wannabe Harri Rovánperas.

The last two years have been spent in the C2-R2Max, with plenty of class wins and some top-10s overall in Latvia. But this season, it was time for former Rally Sweden winner

"I think he can make it to the top, he has the speed"

Harri Rovánpera

Harri to dig deep into those Peugeot-lined pockets from 15 years ago.

"He was ready for the change," says Rovánpera Sr; "ready for the bigger car."

And he was ready for the first Latvian outing in the middle of last month. He won Rally Aluksne by more than a minute. A week later was the real challenge Rallijs Sarma – a two-dayer with much longer stages and more serious competition.

"The powersteering broke on the second stage," says his father; "but he still won. He dropped one minute with the powersteering and won by 20 seconds. His time in the last stage was really good – he was more than a second per kilometre faster than anybody in the last 18-kilometre stage. That was good."

Watching Rovánpera Jr at the wheel, his natural ability, control and feel for the car is very clear. What's also clear is the voice of Risto Pietiläinen – he's co-driving his second generation of Rovánpera.

"Kalle is really working on his pacenotes now," says his father. "He knows this is important and this is one of the main things he is practicing now."

You have visions of the 15-year-old skipping school to drive in anything he can find on a frozen lake.

That's not the case.

"He drives just before the rally," says Harri, "he makes a small

shakedown, if he's happy with the car it goes on the trailer ready for the rally. He has other things, he's interested in. Rallying is not his whole life, you know. That's important as well, we still have a lot to work on for the school."

This week should have been the biggest test yet for world rallying's latest teenage sensation. He was planning an entry on Rally Liepaja, the biggest event in the Latvian calendar – and the opening round of this year's European Rally Championship. Unfortunately, unseasonably warm weather forced the postponement of the event.

"It would have been good to see where Kalle was," says Rovánpera. "It would be interesting to know. For now, we have to stay in Latvia and keep driving there. We could go to Finland and compete, but it's 1600cc cars and front-wheel drive in the class for the youngsters – I think this is not Kalle's level any more."

What is that level? Harri won a single round of the world championship, but remained at the top of the sport for more than a decade. What can his boy do?

"It's maybe a little bit early to talk about that," he says, "but I think he can make the top. I think he has the speed for that. His potential is very good. You know, he went to Latvia this year and came up against the boys from Estonia, Lithuania and, of

course, Latvia and he beat them. "You know when he came out of that last stage on the last rally, I was saying to him: 'Hey Kalle, calma, calma... why did you have to go so fast?'" But he said: 'I didn't see the reason to lift the throttle. I want to win.'"

Big question is, how much influence has Harri had in the car? "I hate going in the car," he says, "hate it. I am like all of the drivers, I never like to be in the co-driver's seat. Of course, when he first started driving, I was able to give him some ideas and we talked a lot about what the car was doing, but then he just got in and drove. He has very good feeling for the car now, everything is very natural for Kalle."

"I did go in the car for the test before the last rally. He said to me: 'OK, now you come for the run.' I told him no, I didn't want to. But he insisted. 'Come on, get in the car.' OK, OK, so I go in the car and we make the test stage and everything is really fast. Then I say: 'Now we go back to service, we can go slowly.'"

"He told me, yes, no problem. Then throttle is down, flat-out again. He likes to scare me."

Kalle, unfortunately, wasn't around for this interview. No, no, he wasn't testing or rebuilding an engine. Or in the gym. Double maths scuppered that chat.

Kalle Rovánpera, go google him. ■



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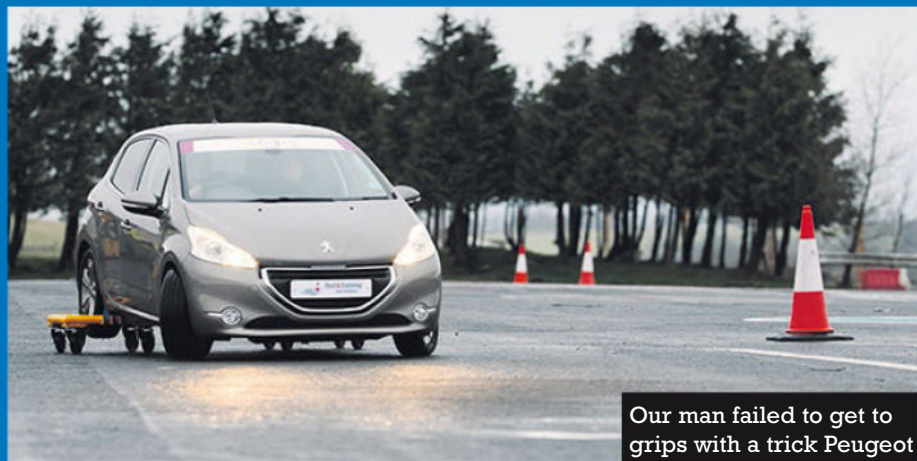
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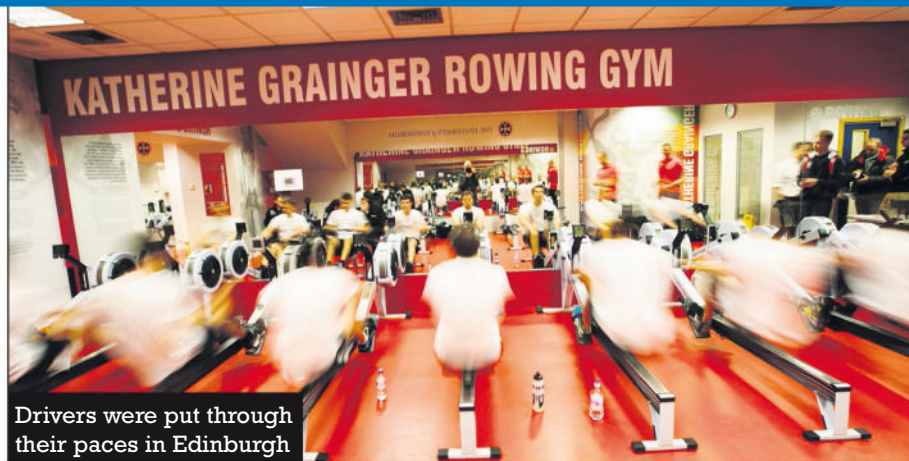
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MSA TRAINING

Photos: Malcolm Griffiths



Our man failed to get to grips with a trick Peugeot



Drivers were put through their paces in Edinburgh

SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF STARS

When the going gets tough, the MSA's best drivers get the best training. By **David Evans**



The Team UK drivers went to learn at Knockhill



Robert Reid is in charge of driver training

I remember learning about centrifugal force at school. But I never thought I'd see it demonstrated quite so graphically without a test tube. *Motorsport News'* photographer Malcolm Griffiths was pinned against the inside of the left-rear window of a Peugeot spinning wildly out of control.

I was at the wheel. Oops. It wasn't really my fault. Somebody had lifted the rear wheels off the ground and shoved some sort of shopping trolley arrangement underneath. Going around a corner at anything beyond walking speed inevitably ended up in further investigation in classical and quantum mechanics: me facing forwards, then backwards lots of times and in quick succession.

Norbert Filippits is a very patient man. He's seen enough. He gets in the passenger side and provides perfect advice. No more spinning, much more speed.

"What you are doing here," says Filippits, "is exploring the friction circle and experiencing the differences between lateral and longitudinal grip."

I knew that. Let me introduce Filippits a little more formally. He's from Austria and he wears glasses. He also happens to be one of the best drivers I've ever had the privilege of sitting next to. But you won't have heard of him in the same way the wider world hasn't heard of David Leadbetter. Leadbetter makes holes in one happen. Norbert takes the world's

best drivers and makes them better. This week's all about making good great, creating elite out of excellence. Team UK is the cream of the MSA Academy and Britain's governing body has delved into the coffers to put some of the best coaches and coaching facilities at the disposal of our most promising rally and racing drivers.

Elite Sports Performance (ESP) puts the infrastructure in place for the Academy and provides all aspects of training including in-depth work on all aspects of human performance, physiology, nutrition, hydration and some fascinating psychological analysis.

ESP is run by 2001 World Rally champion co-driver Robert Reid. It was the Scot and former Formula 1 driver and Le Mans winner Alex Wurz who got together to provide the FIA with its Young Driver Excellence Academy, graduates including Andreas Mikkelsen, Stoffel Vandoorne and Alex Rossi.

For the first time, Wurz's company has arrived on these shores to impart some of its knowledge on Britain's shining stars.

For the first time, the theory's being put into practice. Not just yet, though. Before Filippits hands out the keys to ESP's fleet of V6 Lexus lined up at Knockhill, there's some beasting to be done.

And the University of Edinburgh's the place to do it. How can you fail to be inspired, working in the Katherine Grainger Rowing Gym? MSA Academy manager Greg Symes is keen to push this side of things. "We're creating an elite

environment for Team UK," he says. "These are the guys at the top of the programme – the ones with the best shot at Formula 1 and the World Rally Championship. The MSA's investing a lot in these drivers."

It certainly is. Coaching fees alone run into tens of thousands, but that's not all focused on the dozen or so at the top of the tree. There's a drip-down effect from Team UK down into the Academy Squad (which includes a pool of 30 drivers from which future Team UK drivers are pulled) and the performance master classes which provide an introduction to the work of the Academy to drivers as young as 14.

All of this is a big leap from the MSA Rally Elite, originally formed in 2005 and followed two years later by Racing Elite.

"We've come a long way," admits Reid. "What we now have is a much wider approach to training and development, going from grassroots right up to the top of the sport with guys like Elfyn [Evans, M-Sport World Rally Team driver] and Alex [Lynn, Williams F1 development driver]."

"We are exploring the friction circle"

Norbert Filippits



One of ESP's key developments in recent years is the introduction of Insights Discovery, a psychological profiling programme which uses principles first introduced by Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung.

I was deeply suspicious of how this could possibly get Evans closer to Sebastien Ogier or help a GP2 driver shave a tenth off a lap time. Nevertheless, I went through the detailed questionnaire online and submitted my responses.

Reid's partner in ESP, Brian Cameron assures me there are no right or wrong answers. Yeah, I've heard that before...

"Have you been honest?" says Cameron, eyes narrowing.

Of course. And I really have. I'm as interested as anybody to find out what Jung would have made of me. Turns out I'm a purple reformer. I'm intolerant, abrasive, anti-social and lacking in diplomacy. Sounds about right. Equally, I'm an intellectual performer who maintains and demands high standards while remaining task-focused.

Shall I repeat that last bit? I like the sound of that. Cameron hands me a 38-page guide to myself via Insights Discovery. Obviously I'm far too impatient to read, so he takes me through the highlights. And shows me that, actually, this isn't all about me. It's about how I interact with others. Insights Discovery colour codes people. Hence me being purple.

GP3 racer Matt Parry's red. "I'm demanding," says Parry. "My engineer's blue. We both did the profile and it really helped our working relationship. For example, he likes a good track walk. I'm happy

to do that, but he wanted so much detail from it. Now I understand why, his results showed him to be very data-driven and really analytical. I get that now. I get him and that's helped us to get even more out of each other."

ESP's developing a programme for the commercial world outside of motorsport and the potential benefits to commerce in both the private and public sector are blindingly obvious.

But for now, it's back to the track. Castor cones done, Filippits lines up a set of cones and a braking test. Some of the drivers are a little surprised by such triviality.

Not for long. Filippits translates everything they've done in the classroom and brings it to life in an every day car and an almost every day situation. Of course there are some big drifts, not least from Junior WRC star Osian Pryce and his muddy colleague Chris Ingram.

Ben Barnicoat gets it. "The weight transfer work we did in the slalom was really good," he says. "If I'm going into a corner this year and struggling with the change of direction, I'll think back to what Norbert has taught us here. We're not about to find a second a lap here, but the Academy gives us so much. From simple stuff like making sure there's a resistance band in our bag in case there's no gym at the hotel to going up climbing walls to demonstrate a freer way of thinking and moving. The driving side is the icing on the cake."

The MSA's commitment to driving future talent forwards has never been stronger and, thanks to ESP, it's delivering on every level possible. ■

ROB HUFF'S HONDA MOVE

British ace is after a second world title, and believes Honda can help. By **Rob Ladbrook**

It's been a while since Rob Huff had this feeling. Almost four years in fact. That feeling of things being exactly as they should be. Having all the chance in the world to fulfil expectations – that feeling of being at home.

Huff hasn't had that since 2012, when he lined up on the FIA World Touring Car Championship grid for the opening round in an RML-prepared factory Chevrolet Cruze. He was certain then that he could be the world champion, and he did it. But since then those expectations have had to be tempered. Until now.

Following Chevrolet's withdrawal from the WTCC after Huff's title-winning year the Cambridge-born man has been bounded around. From a privateer SEAT Leon run by Munnich Motorsport, to a developing factory Lada Granta and then the fledgling Vesta model. None truly had the potential, or the backing, to deliver the second title Huff craves so badly.

Now though, Huff reckons he has that feeling again. This year the 36-year-old moves to Honda factory outfit JAS Motorsport to handle a Civic WTCC, and it's a chance he's been waiting for:

"I haven't been this excited about motorsport since I won the WTCC title back in 2012," says Huff. "I feel like I'm going back to the type of team I had in the Chevrolet glory days. Absolutely no disrespect to Lada as they looked after me brilliantly for the last two years, but JAS has that history and that pedigree.

"I haven't had that same level of support from a team and a manufacturer since Chevrolet left, and I know I'll get that now and that's a hugely exciting prospect. I put JAS in the same league as RML in terms of their capabilities. This deal really lights my fire to succeed again."

Huff's move to Honda looks simple on paper, but has come about through a combination of hard work a near-perfect timing. Huff sealed a deal to join JAS to contest the TCR series race that supported last year's Macau Grand Prix. It was a slot usually occupied by the WTCC but with Qatar joining the series the world championship stepped aside.

"I was gutted when the WTCC left out Macau as it's my favourite track," says Huff. "I originally made contact with JAS when Honda first entered the WTCC in 2012, but at the time I was committed to other manufacturers and other projects, but I was on the team's radar.

"Knowing TCR was running at Macau I asked if I could drive one of its cars and we struck a deal. Then the WTCC finale at Qatar clashed so the deal fell apart. But a calendar shuffle put the WTCC race a few days after Macau, so I immediately went up to JAS's truck and banged on the door to see if we could get the deal back on. We did and I raced with the team at Macau in the TCR Civic, but I never at that point thought it would go further."

One month later Honda announced

that it was parting company with 2009 WTCC champion Gabriele Tarquini. Once that news was out, Huff spotted an opportunity. "The motorsport rumour mills will say this deal was done way before I even sat in the TCR car for Macau, but it honestly wasn't," he explains. "As soon as I heard Gabriele was leaving I got on the phone because I saw an opportunity. I've always prided myself on never stepping on people's toes in this sport and stealing a job from another driver. But once I knew there was a genuine open chance I knew it was one I wanted."

The call was placed and the deal was struck. Huff was in, alongside Tiago Monteiro and third driver Norbert Michelisz. It's a new start of sorts for Huff, and he says the feeling he got from his first test in the WTCC Civic confirmed the move was the right one.

"I tested the car for the first time at Jerez recently and it was night and day different to what I had before," he explains. "When you drove a Lada down the pit lane to join the track there was always something unusual going on, something you got used to or adapted to. But when you drive the Civic it gives you 100 per cent confidence straight away, it is so solid. You get the feeling it is a very well designed, well thought-out and well engineered car.

"My time at Lada was great, but quite mixed, and I think it comes down to the focus of the company. The head of Lada has other business interests outside of motorsport, whereas a team like JAS lives and breathes motorsport only, it is the main business and their main ethos, and that reflects in the car and the way the team works.

"From racing against the Civic last year I know how good it is. It's no secret that it's hard to overtake in the WTCC with the modern cars. We have 400bhp and a lot of aerodynamics now, so it's tough, but if you were chasing a Civic you could see the advantages it has. It has excellent traction and the low-rev driveability is brilliant. It is also very stable and just has that little bit extra in every area that the Lada didn't quite have."

Huff has had two difficult seasons with the Russian factory Lada Sport Rosneft team, finishing 10th in the points both years – his lowest WTCC finishes since 2006. Despite the struggles there were highlights. Huff took Lada's first WTCC podium in the 2014 Granta by finishing second in Argentina, before snatching two race wins – in Beijing and Macau respectively. The arrival of the new Vesta WTCC last year promised much, but couldn't match the might of the Citroen C-Elysees that dominated the championship (see sidebar).

Citroen is now leaving the series after one final season this year, with the French firm focusing on its World Rally Championship programme and a rejuvenated attack with a new C3 WRC from 2017.

Huff knows that with Citroen gone, there is an opportunity for a new manufacturer to take its turn in the



Huff tested the JAS-run Civic at Jerez recently

sun. He is convinced Honda's time will come.

"The move to Honda is part of a longer-term plan," Huff explains. "Citroen leaving the WTCC isn't a terrible thing. It was great that it came in because we needed that third manufacturer for the good of the championship and Citroen has done an amazing job – the car, the team and the budget they put around it has been nothing short of phenomenal. But, ultimately, they built the car too fast.

"People could say that about us with the RML Chevrolets too, but we managed it and only ever just won, we never ran away with it every race. For new manufacturers coming in it's hard to look past Citroen destroying everybody, as they have smashed everyone to bits with that car. But with Citroen leaving and Volvo coming in [with a pair of Polestar-run S60s] I

think the WTCC will be back to its best from 2017. It will be as strong as it ever has been.

"Citroen is still running five cars this year [two works and three customer], so the first season with Honda will be tough, but I see a gilded opportunity for a P3 this year and firmly believe Honda will have it. The ultimate goal is to spend this year working with the team, developing the car and then attack the series head-on and win in 2017.

"Everybody has their time. Chevrolet had it, but before Chevrolet it was BMW and SEAT, and Citroen is having its time now. There's no reason 2017 can't be the start of Honda's time.

"I'm not satisfied with just one world title – I'd love at least three more! That might be a bit ambitious, but I know I'm in the right place to give me the best chance to fight for the world championship again." ■

HUFFY'S WTCC HIGHLIGHTS

2005: Huff joins the RML-run Chevrolet factory team to campaign a Lacetti for his World Touring Car Championship debut having graduated from the British Touring Car Championship. He takes a best finish of sixth at the Mexican round and finishes 21st in the points.

2006: Huff joins the RML-run Chevrolet factory team to campaign a Lacetti for his World Touring Car Championship debut having graduated from the British Touring Car Championship. He takes a best finish of sixth at the Mexican round and finishes 21st in the points.



Honda's Michelisz (left) and Huff



Huff raced Lada Vesta last year



Debut came back in 2005

PARTNERSHIP

Photos: Honda, LAT



Star Briton Rob Huff says Honda deal has him fired up to fight in WTCC



The Lada Granta scored two race wins in its life

Huff's Lada adventure

Despite the disappointing results across his two seasons with the Lada factory team, Huff has been quick to thank the squad for its efforts.

The British ace secured both Lada's first ever WTCC podium finish and also its first race wins with the Granta TC1 during his maiden campaign with the Russian team in 2014. The arrival of the new Vesta WTCC for 2015 promised a new start, but couldn't deliver the same sort of results. However, Huff says the Vesta was more consistent and with a lot of potential.

"My time with Lada was particularly enjoyable and the team was great," says Huff. "With the Granta we were very opportunistic and had some great moments because of that. It wasn't the quickest car around, but we used the situations well to get results."

"It was always about aiming for that P9-10 slot in qualifying because that would get you the front row for the second race. We got a few chances that way and when they came along we took them."

"Scoring the first podium in Argentina was special, but the first win in Beijing was emotional. That track was so tight and twisty that

overtaking was virtually impossible so I managed to start at the front and stay there.

"When it came to last year, if you look at the overall points we scored a lot more with the Vesta TC1, but not the marquee results. With the Granta we'd get one great finish and then be out of the points a lot. The Vesta was more consistently in the points and better to drive, but if anything perhaps it was made a little too fast to take advantage of the opportunities in the same way."

"It was quicker than the Granta, which meant qualifying fifth or sixth, meaning you started both races with the much quicker Citroens either ahead or immediately behind. That made the weekends tougher."

Huff also had his troubles with the Vesta. He was fortunate to escape injury in a huge accident during testing at the Hungaroring when his suspension failed at 110mph. The car was then blighted with further teething issues.

"Things like that [suspension failure] don't fill you with confidence and they stay in the back of your mind," adds Huff. "Last year was a difficult season, but I still loved my time with the Lada team."

The breakthrough victory in flight comes during race two in the Czech Republic when Huff took his Lacetti home ahead of Andy Priaulx at Brno. It was Chevrolet's second-ever win in the World Touring Car Championship.

2008: With BMW in decline, the championship boiled down to a fight between SEAT and Chevrolet. Despite losing ground in the title chase with two retirements in the first round, Huff battles back to finish third in the points with four podiums and two race wins. Yvan Muller takes the title for SEAT.

2011: Oddly Huff's most successful season in terms of race wins came in the year he didn't win the championship. Huff took a total of eight victories in 2011 as Chevrolet dominated the series. Muller matched Huff's winning record and stole the title by just three points.

2012: This was it, this was the biggest year of Huff's career. Determined not to let the title escape like it had the previous season, Huff scored five race wins and greatly improved his consistency, only failing to finish on the podium in one round and he sealed the silverware.

2013: Following Chevrolet's withdrawal, Huff salvages a seat with the Munnich Motorsport team to race its privateer SEAT Leon. The year does yield two race wins, but the car ultimately can't match the pace of the RML's ex-works Chevrolet Cruzes. Muller takes the title with double Huff's points tally in fourth place.

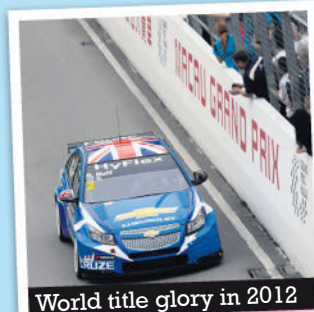
2014: Huff's relationship with Lada begins and the Briton finds his way back into a factory seat, albeit not a front-running one. Huff does score the Russian marque's first podium finish and race wins on his way to finish in 10th position in the points.



Breakthrough win in 2006



Muller (l) and Huff in 2011



World title glory in 2012

TF SPORT'S BIG YEAR

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

TF'S

BIGGEST CHALLENGE



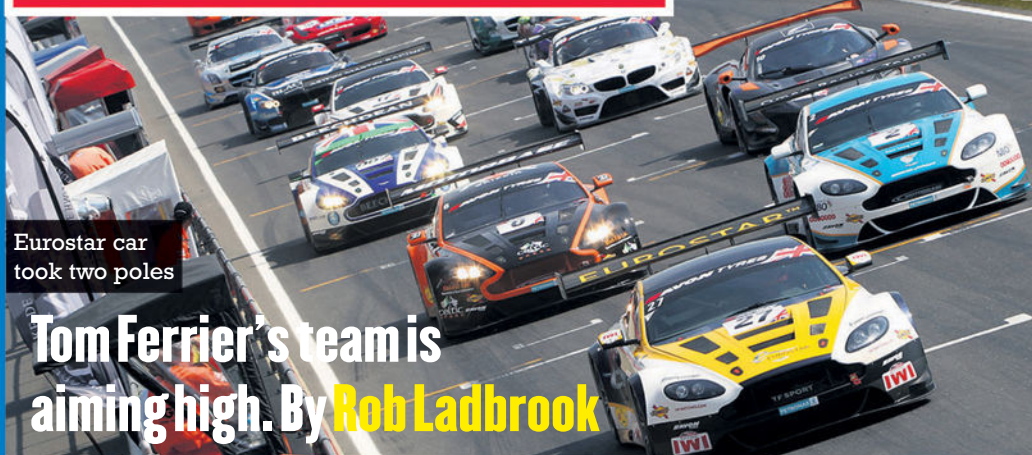
Pit wall is an exciting place



TF Sport ran two Aston Martin Vantage GT3s in Britain last year



Ferrier started off running the Scuderia Vittoria Ferrari



Eurostar car took two poles

Tom Ferrier's team is aiming high. By Rob Ladbrook

It's no secret that the pressure is on for TF Sport this year. The 2015 season was like a coming of age for Tom Ferrier's team. TF has been a bit of a sleeping giant in recent British GT seasons, but truly awakened toward the end of last year.

Two consecutive pole positions and a breakthrough race victory courtesy of Matt Bell and Derek Johnston in the season finale at Donington Park meant the team's twin Aston Martin Vantage GT3s ended the year as the machines to beat.

How does TF go one better for this year? Simple: it hires both the current champion pro driver and a former one to occupy its two cars.

Jonathan Adam's arrival alongside Johnston in the first Vantage GT3 signals clear intent from TF. He's one of the hottest GT3 properties around and, as an AMR works driver, cements the growing relationship between the team and the Aston Martin Racing factory, something that will be key to TF fighting for this year's championship.

In the second car is 2008 British champion Jon Barnes, partnering Mark Farmer. Together the team boasts arguably its strongest driver pairings to date. Not bad for a squad that morphed out of a rather short-lived GT enterprise.

TF Sport has an interesting story about its foundations. Ferrier was a successful GT racer himself, having progressed out of touring cars, but he

was keen to tackle the business side of the sport. In late 2010 Ferrier got together with former Renault Clio Cup champion Danny Buxton and team owner Piers Masarati to form the Scuderia Vittoria concern. It was the start of Ferrier's transition from driver to team owner.

"It was strange at first," says Ferrier. "The chance to do something different as part of Scuderia Vittoria with two great friends was really exciting. Suddenly we had this Ferrari 458 GT3 and a great driver pairing in Charles Bateman and Michael Lyons for British GT. So we were right in at the deep end but with the right people behind it.

"We had a great season. We won two races and finished third in the championship in 2011, but it soon became clear the three of us wanted to focus on different areas."

Scuderia Vittoria continued in British GT for the 2012 season, before its GT arm was disbanded and the assets divided between the three founders. Buxton continued the team in the Clio Cup team until mid-2015, when SV pulled out of the series.

Ferrier got the team's original

premises in Salfords, Surrey in the divide, and was determined to continue in GT racing. That's when he met businessman and keen amateur racer Paul Bailey. A deal was struck for Ferrier to run Bailey's Ferrari 430 GT2 in Britcar for 2013 – still under the SV name – but the plan hit a very late snag.

"We were testing the Wednesday before the first race at Donington Park when I had a run in the 430 and the engine blew up!" says Ferrier. "We needed a new car and fast, so Paul called Aston Martin as they were relatively local and bought a new Vantage GT3. We had it by the weekend and that started our relationship with AMR.

"It was a step-change going from running Ferraris to Astons as the tooling was different, but mostly it was the change in relations – who you order the parts from, who to speak to for technical advice. We've built that relationship over the last few years. We went on to finish second overall in the championship in 2013 with Paul and Andy Schulz in the car."

Armed with a new marque of car and a new opportunity, Ferrier rebranded the team as TF Sport and entered Bailey and Schulz into British GT3 in 2014 under the Horsepower Racing banner – Bailey's own company name. TF did run a customer Vantage GT4 for Andrew Jarman and Devon Modell too. It proved a learning season, with Bailey/Schulz scoring just seven points, but Modell and Jarman just missed the GT4 title, finishing second overall.

Regardless of the end result, Ferrier was buoyed with what he saw and took the plunge to establish the team further for 2015. He leased two Vantage GT3s from Bailey and attacked British GT head-on.

Derek Johnston and Matt Bell finished fifth in the points with that all-important maiden win for TF, while the sister car of Andrew Jarman and Jody Fannin scored two late-season pole positions, and cemented a TF one-two in the Donington finale.

"The team has been a snowball," says Ferrier. "Since going out on my own and buying a truck to go with the old SV premises, things have taken off. We had some success in Britcar, which got us known, but what we achieved in British GT last season was really beyond expectations.

"It was a different challenge going from racing myself to managing my own team. You look at race weekends in a different way. It's far easier being a driver as you just turn up, race, then go home. But it's far more fulfilling running a team I find. You have to worry about the logistics of getting cars where they need to be and in the state of preparation they need to be, about getting the right staff at tracks and doing what they should, and I also enjoy the business side of the sport.

"At first I did miss the racing, but this new challenge is so great that I don't yearn to get in a car anymore. The pit wall is a hugely exciting place because you know how much work went in to just get that car onto the grid, with your guys working all the

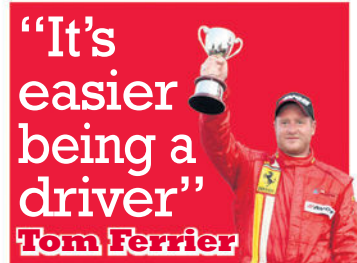
hours God gave and giving their all. It drives you on and it gets emotional when you get a good result."

TF is still one of the smaller teams on the GT3 grid too. Ferrier only employs two full-time staff – the same number as when the team first started, with chief engineer Chris Gregory and number one mechanic Ben Spearing running the workshop. Ferrier has a select group of contract staff and engineers to ensure the cars run smoothly on race weekends. The team totals 14 staff typically.

"GT3 cars aren't massively complex to run, especially not the Vantages as AMR builds them to essentially be turn-key race cars," explains Ferrier. "But what the team has to do is get the best out of the package. It's about helping drivers feel comfortable. We worked so hard on the set-up across the last year, to find things like that little bit more stability under braking, or that suspension setting that stops the car breaking away under power mid-corner. Once you find that balance to give drivers confidence the results will come. That's what we saw toward the end of last year and we need to take that to the next level this season.

"Having somebody like Jonny [Adam] with us brings a huge level of experience and opens the door for us to work closer with AMR. And we get that bit of insider knowledge now that makes all the difference.

"This is our biggest year yet, and there is a pressure that comes with running two champions. But I'm convinced we're equipped to deal with that." ■



Reigning British GT champion Jonathan Adam ready to make a bit of history with his new team

Jonny Adam is relishing the chance to defend his British GT title this season, and could become the first driver ever to successfully claim back-to-back GT3 crowns with different teams.

Adam has left the shelter of the Beecdean AMR team, and co-driver Andrew Howard, after a five-year partnership which culminated in GT3 titles in both 2013 and 2015 for the team. Now Adam faces a new challenge with

TF Sport, and he's raring to go.

"I'm looking forward to this year perhaps more than any other because it's a new challenge but in a familiar environment," says the Scotsman. "I haven't tested with TF yet, but I know the level the team is at from racing against them and it's exciting to bring my bank of knowledge to the team and we can try new things together to try and grow and improve.

"Derek [Johnston, co-driver] is also at a great level so I know we'll be in the fight for the championship. He now understands how British GT works. You don't have to win every race and fight for every last point, it's about stringing the results together to put yourself in a good position in the points come the end of the year. You have to play the long game as nobody remembers how many races you

won in a season, they just remember if you won the championship.

"This year will be really tough, especially with the new generation of GT3 cars coming in – many of which have been built around the Pirelli tyres we'll use this year. But I've driven the Vantage GT3 for five years now and hopefully TF, Derek and I will all come together quickly to be right there from the start."



Adam is raring to go in 2016

BRITS IN GP3

Photos: LAT

Rising star chooses GP3 for next stage of his career. By Stephen Lickorish

HUGHES STEPS UP



Hughes raced in FR 2.0 last year

For any young driver climbing the single-seater career ladder, choosing the correct next step is often a difficult decision.

Jake Hughes is one driver who faced that decision over the winter. He tested cars from several categories including GP3, Formula V83.5 and Formula 3 to get a feel for his options. But when it came down to choosing one he took it right back to basics.

"I only really considered GP3 and FV83.5," says Hughes. "Someone asked me which championship I would rather be champion in – as that's the aim, I'm not here to just play a part. The simple answer is I wanted to be champion in GP3. It has got the connection to F1 and the strength of the drivers this year would probably bring more kudos."

So that's the series the 21-year-old will be racing in this season. He has just joined DAMS, as the multi-championship winning GP2 and Formula Renault 3.5 outfit enters the category for the first time.

Hughes considered a number of other teams with previous experience of GP3, including Arden and Koiranen GP in the post-season Abu Dhabi test, but opted for DAMS.

"DAMS' record speaks for itself," says Hughes. "I tested for several teams in Abu Dhabi, which had their pluses, but the plus of DAMS is they have so many clever people there who

have experience of winning. It's going to be difficult as it's going to be the strongest grid GP3 has ever had. I like a challenge so it would be great to come out on top."

One of the drivers Hughes will be up against this season is his good friend and Formula Renault nemesis Jack Aitken (*see sidebar*). Hughes narrowly missed out on both the Eurocup and ALPS titles to Aitken last year when the pair were teammates at Koiranen and is looking to get revenge in 2016.

"Jack and I are really good mates," says Hughes. "On top of that we massively respect each other as racing drivers. Even when one of us was quicker last year it was by no more than a tenth, it's that close."

Hughes ended up second in the ALPS points, just five behind Aitken, while he finished sixth in the Eurocup after a difficult end to both seasons having starred in the early stages.

"The main disappointment was the ALPS title as I lost it in the very last race," he says. "We had a really great year and had lots of wins, podiums and poles. But we had some problems with the car at the end of the year, which might've cost me at least one of the championships."

"Anything could've happened so I'm not going to say I would've definitely won them without the problems, but I would've challenged. We had a big break in the summer and then it was really busy in September so we didn't have the chance to sort the problem."

Despite the frustration of missing

out on both titles, Hughes is still confident for the year ahead: "It was disappointing that the finishing positions didn't show what we did during the year but it doesn't give me any doubts for this year. I know I have the pace as I was quick in everything I tested this winter. I had good team-mates too with good teams."

"Every single year I've had a good car I've been capable of winning the championship. I have no doubt I'll be challenging this year too."

Hughes has proved he can win championships in the past, as demonstrated in 2013 when he stormed to the inaugural BRDC Formula 4 title. He won by 45 points, beating drivers such as Seb Morris and Charlie Robertson.

That led to a move into Europe in the Formula Renault NEC series, but he had an "up and down" year as he got to grips with the car, while also making a brief foray into GT racing as a BMW junior driver.

Now Hughes is moving into the next stage of his career, and is excited about racing alongside F1.

"It's mega to be racing on the same bill as F1," he says. "Until now the biggest race weekend I've been part of was the DTM round at Brands Hatch in 2013 [when BRDC F4 formed part of its undercard]. At F1 races you get 80,000 to 200,000 fans and I know not everyone stays to watch the GP3 but it will be great."

He'll now be hoping for a successful year to prove his latest move up the single-seater ladder is the correct one. ■



Briton took three wins to finish second in Formula Renault ALPS



Aitken (l) and Hughes will race again in GP3 (above)



Aitken will drive for Arden

Formula Renault rival Aitken joins Hughes in GP3 as British rising stars invade F1 support category

Jake Hughes isn't the only rising British star to decide to switch to GP3 this year. His Formula Renault rival Jack Aitken is joining too, and even took to Twitter when it came to deciding on his future.

Aitken polled his followers, asking whether he should opt for GP3 or FV83.5 – and it was GP3 that proved more popular.

"It was just a bit of fun, there were

a lot of other factors in making the final decision," says Aitken. "But it was interesting to see that GP3 came out on top anyway."

"It's on the F1 programme and I was really surprised by the amount of reaction I had on social media when the press release went up. I think GP3's following is a lot bigger than many people think."

Aitken says the quality of the

drivers announced for GP3 so far was a key factor in him choosing the series.

"It's important to race against high quality drivers so that you keep improving," he says. "There's also a new car coming in, which is a bit of a leveller and gives a rookie a better chance of winning."

"There are a lot of Formula Renault drivers looking for a bit

more of a step up than F3, and GP3 has become a really good option with Renault pulling out of 3.5."

Aitken and Hughes aren't the only Brits already confirmed as GP3 drivers this year. Matt Parry – who finished eighth in 2015 – will again drive for Koiranen, while Jake Dennis will be one of Aitken's team-mates after making the switch from European F3.

RALLY REPORTS



Photos: M and H Photography

WEST TRIUMPHS IN THE WET AT BRANDS HATCH

MOTORSPORT NEWS **CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP**
IN ASSOCIATION WITH **MSVR**



Field was tidy in difficult conditions for podium spot



West was spectacular in his Peugeot 306 Maxi

GJM Brands Hatch Stages

By Jack Benyon

Organiser: Chelmsford Motor Club
When: January 31 **Where:** Brands Hatch, Kent
Championship: Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship; AEMC; ASEM; ACSMC **Starters:** 99
Stages: 8

An outstanding performance on a wet and oily track by Chris West gave the iconic Peugeot 306 Maxi a popular win on the GJM Brands Hatch Stages, as Ashley Field continued his strong push towards the inaugural Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship.

A recurring theme in the championship this year has been tyre choice, and nothing made that more difficult than an outbreak of rain early on Sunday morning. Those on wets soon had an added benefit though, as oil laid down on the track – the viscous fluid could visibly be seen on almost every corner of the Kent venue by the end of stage two – made the conditions treacherous.

But before the conditions could play a part, technical gremlins intervened for one of the frontrunners. Number one seed and previous event winner Jeremy Straker had an electrical fault which meant his Darrrian was late to the start, incurring a 30s penalty. His day was turned into an extended test at the end of stage two thanks to a loose water pipe.

It was West and Field who laid down the benchmark on the

first stage in Straker's absence, with the front-wheel-drive Peugeot and rear-wheel-drive Darrrian cancelling out the tricky circuit with times two seconds quicker than Ford Focus WRC driver Nigel Mummery in an ex-Markko Martin car. Incredibly, the single-venue event boasted two ex-Martin Focuses, as 2014 BTRDA champion Steve Perez was out in his Corsica- and Catalunya-winning car. However, Perez was struggling early on with what he believed to be a set of expired tyres, leaving him down in 11th on the first test. Joined by son Seb, Perez was promoted to the first car on the road after Straker was curtailed.

The second test proved the wettest of the day, and the crews struggled through the famous sweeping bends like Graham Hill and in the simulated hairpins set out for the event.

Despite so many powerful four-wheel drives taking part, Anthony Robinson blew everyone away to set the fastest time on stage two – in a Renault Clio. The similar Cup car of Steve Quigley, which is a regular in the championship, was third with Johnnie Ellis's Subaru sandwiched between.

As the third test was due to get underway, there was a sharp sound in the service park which could only be a damaged gearbox, putting one of the most intriguing entries out. The day

before the rally got underway historic rally ace James Slaughter had unveiled his Ford Fiesta R5 in a striking Tiger livery for the British Rally Championship, with the Sunday event scheduled as a test. It didn't quite go to plan on the first two stages and the gearbox proved the end of a dismal day. European championship regular Marty McCormack was in the co-driver's seat for just the second time in his career.

Normality resumed on stages three and four following the giant-killing escapades of the mighty Clios as West again went quickest to extend his lead margin to eight seconds over Field, who was struggling with understeer and getting the Millington-powered Darrrian to lay some of its might onto the soaking Tarmac.

With a second placed time on stage four, Field's closest MN Circuit Championship contender James Sharrock was still in the running, 17s down on West in his Ford Escort Mk 2 – also running a Millington powerplant.

Stage four ended the second loop, which may have confused regular visitors to Brands Hatch as it was run anti-clockwise around the former British GP circuit.

With the track drying after the lunchbreak, the focus switched to the lead battle and whether Field's Darrrian – which has

dominated events in the dry in the past – could reel in West.

But the Maxi and its crew were on song. A time three seconds better than Field on SS5 gave them 11s of breathing room, and the two tied on the next run through to maintain the same gap.

After that, it all fell apart for Field, who stalled at the start of SS7. He recovered to finish 24s down on West – and, vitally, held off championship rival Sharrock in third overall.

The front-running order wasn't due to change as the top cars completed SS8, but the stage was cancelled halfway through when Jade Paveley put her Subaru up on its side after clipping the Armco at the circuit's pit entry. The crew – with Sarah Alys Edwards co-driving – has been one of the highlights of the championship's first season, usually cutting their seeding in half in their Impreza. They had been running 25th after being seeded 60th.

West was obviously delighted to hold off Field – who still hasn't won an outright round of the championship despite being the quickest car on more than one occasion. He will be looking to the next round at Anglesey in March to right that wrong. Sharrock ended a brilliant day as first Escort home in third, with a recovering Steve Perez fourth and Steve Quigley a very impressive fifth.

CLASS ROUND-UP

With Class A pacesetter and Vauxhall Corsa driver Joe Cunningham electing to use the Brands round as his dropped score, it was left for the Nova of Christopher and Anthony Newton to take up the class-leading honours. They led home the underpowered Micra of Matt and Suze Edean by over three minutes.

Class B should have been dominated by the well-liked duo of Paul Sheard and Steve Hallmark, but the Michelin Cup winners from the previous round had a sensor fail, which cruelly ruled them out after two difficult events at Croft and Rockingham. Instead, Ben and Mike Dawson took up the mantle in their Ford Escort, ahead of the Honda Civic of Tony Michael and Paul Barrett.

Class C went to overall winner Chris West, while Class D went to Field. As events and the championship can run different

class names, the event went with Class E (or rather D2 in the MN Circuit Championship). That was headed by the Perez father-and-son team.

Result

1 Chris West/Steve McNulty (Peugeot 306 Maxi) 40m12s; 2 Ashley Field/Ryan Vickers (Darrian T90 GTR+) +35s; 3 James Sharrock/Stuart Faulds (Ford Escort Mk2) +50s; 4 Steve Perez/Seb Perez (Ford Focus WRC) +1m06s; 5 Steve Quigley/Tom Hutchings (Renault Clio T72 Cup) +1m34s; 6 Paul Diamond/Andy Hollingham (Escort Mk2) +1m42s; 7 Stuart Cogger/Ade Summers (Escort Mk2) +1m56s; 8 Stephen Tilburn/Jack Benjamin Tilburn (Escort RS2500) +2m29s; 9 Ian Hucklebridge/Gary Johnson (Escort) +2m29s; 10 Anthony Robinson/Phil Clarke (Renault Clio) +2m38s; 11 John Legg/Dave Parsons (Escort RS); 12 Alex Cannon/Ray Keith (Subaru Impreza); 13 Lee Eathly/Louise Eathly (Mitsubishi Lancer E7); 14 Steve Beck/Paul Brown (Escort); 15 Stuart Gilks/Michael Boyns (Talbot Sunbeam); 16 Tim Mewett/Alan Carfrae (Escort Mk 2); 17 Russell Davies/Andy Tomlinson (Vauxhall Astra F2); 18 Roland Brown/Terry Luckings (Escort Mk1); 19 Mark Cooper/Mike Hughes (Lancer EB); 20 Christopher Newton/Anthony Newton (Vauxhall Nova). Class winners Christopher Newton/Anthony Newton (Vauxhall Nova); Ben Dawson/Mike Dawson (Escort Mk 2); West/McNulty; Field/Vickers; Perez/Perez.



In Cunningham's absence the Newtons took Class A

RALLY REPORTS



Photos: Kevin Glendenning

MINI DONEGAL VICTORY FOR PRINGLE



Pringle took the win in treacherous conditions

Donegal Mini Stages

By Brian Patterson

Organiser: Donegal Motor Club When: January 30 Where: Letterkenny County, Donegal Stages: 6 Starters: 100.

Cavan man Jonathan Pringle kicked his 2016 rally campaign off in the best manner by taking his Millington-engined Ford Escort Mk2 to victory on the challenging Donegal Mini Stages.

Co-driven by Alan Keena, Pringle's margin of victory was 16.6s after six stages.

The format of the non-championship event was two decent length quality asphalt stages, each done three times, with service at the Clanree Hotel in Letterkenny between each loop. The weather was difficult with sleet and snow covering the roads.

The planned opening stage didn't run, partly as a precaution because of the road conditions, but also because of a small glitch with the radio communications. This meant that, at

first service, the crews had only completed one stage. Damien Tourish/Domnhall McAleaneay in their two-litre Ford Escort Mk2 led from Ryan Loughran/James McCarville, also in an Escort. Tourish said that it was slippery in places, but that he had no real trouble and perhaps the two-litre, as opposed to the 2.5-litre Escorts, was an advantage in the tricky conditions.

Certainly some of the top drivers in the bigger-engined cars had early dramas. Gary McPhillips – second on the road – got caught out on a narrow slippery section between junctions 11 and 12 when a back wheel caught a ditch. The car slewed around and got stuck, a rear-wheel puncture not helping the situation. Five cars got caught behind the blockage, including frontrunners such as Wesley Patterson, Brian Brogan and Pringle. They were all given notional times for the stage.

For stage three, most of the top drivers chose an open pattern wet tyre to combat the slushy conditions.

Pringle said after the opening stage that he was pleased with his pace and felt comfortable, until he got stopped behind the McPhillips accident. He certainly reinforced that pace with a stunning run through stage three. Subaru Impreza driver Frank Wray responded on stage four with a quickest time, but only by a fraction. Wray had spun on an earlier stage.

When the cars came into second service, Pringle led Wray by 5.8s, with Loughran still very much in the hunt and only a further 2.7s back. Donegal man Joe McGonigle, in his Skoda Fabia S2000, couldn't be discounted either, just another 6.7s behind. McGonigle admitted that with next weekend's Galway International in mind, he was trying to look after his car. Aidan Wray in his Mitsubishi Lancer led Group N, from the Lancer of Pat Kirk.

On the penultimate stage, Wray retired his Subaru with a broken wheel handing second to Loughran – but, more importantly, giving Pringle a clear run



Frank Cunningham wowed spectators

to victory. He set the fastest time on the stage, before McGonigle took the fastest time on the last stage in an eventful end to the day. Despite his caution, McGonigle had damaged the bumper and bonnet of his Fabia against a bale while overshooting a junction on the penultimate test.

It proved costly for the Skoda man as he ended the day just 0.4s down on Loughran to round out the podium finishers.

Reiging Irish Tarmac and National champion Donagh Kelly was a class winner in his Pinto-engined Ford Escort. He took class 12 and 18th overall with son Eamon in the co-driver's seat.

Results

1 Jonathan Pringle/Alan Keena (Ford Escort Mk2) 38m50.8s;
2 Ryan Loughran/James McCarville (Ford Escort Mk2) +16.6s;
3 Joe McGonigle/Ciaran Geaney (Skoda Fabia S2000); 4 Brian Brogan/Damian McGonigle (Ford Escort); 5 Damian Gallagher/Brendan McElhinney (Ford Escort); 6 Camillus Bradley/Crawford Henderson (Ford Escort); 7 Wesley Patterson/Johnny Baird (Ford Escort); 8 Aidan Wray/Kieran McGrath (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); 9 John Bonner/Leon Jordan (Ford Escort); 10 Paul Purtil/Leon Scott (Ford Escort)

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Ian 'Dude' Roberts/Gwawr Hughes made a perfect start to their bid to claim a hat-trick of Welsh championship titles by taking outright victory on the **Rali Mike Darowen Bro Ddyfi**, the first round of this year's series.

It was a tough event, just 24 of the 53 starters made it to the Finish. The winners dropped almost 16 minutes but were still two minutes ahead of the runners up, Stefan 'DR' Davies/Michael Gilbey. An 11 miles, 22-minute section in the traditional Bro Ddyfi area around Aberhosen caused particular difficulties; the fastest crews picked up three minutes of penalties, while others dropped 10 times that.

Robert Pugh/Justin Davies and Mark 'GT' Roberts/Dylan Jenkins went out with broken shafts, while top seeds Dale Furniss/Nick Bloxham withdrew after damaging their VW Golf.

A broken gearbox caused Steven John Williams/Carl 'Slate' Jones out on the second section, while engine problems stopped Meilyr Evans/Andrew Edwards.

Ian Mills

Rali Mike Darowen Bro Ddyfi

Organiser: Dovey Valley Motor Club Date: January 30/31 Where: Mid-Wales Championships: WAMC, ANWCC & AWMMC Route: 125 miles Starters: 53.

Results

1 Ian 'Dude' Roberts/Gwawr Hughes (VW Golf GTI) 15m52s; 2 Stefan 'DR' Davies/Michael Gilbey (Ford Escort) +2m00s; 3 Carwyn Pugh/Lion 'Tractor' Williams (Vauxhall Astra); 4 Steven Thomas/Gareth Thomas (Peugeot 205); 5 Telor Pugh/Dave Thomas (Proton Compact); 6 Justin Jones/Dafydd Evans (Escort); 7 George Williams/Richard Crozier (Escort); 8 Jamie Jones/Jonathan Kennedy (Subaru Impreza); 9 Steve King/Dilwyn John (BMW Compact); 10 Ieuan Owen Thomas/Declan Mason (Citroen Saxo). Class Winners: Semi-Experts: Thomas/Mason; Novices: Deion Atkinson/Aron Jones (Honda Civic).

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INTERVIEW: TOM HARRIS

Photos: Colin Casserley

How the BriSCA F1 champion is turning heads on the other side of the pond. By **Matt James**

MAKING A BIG IMPACT STATESIDE



Harris has adapted well to USA midget car racing

There are a number of drivers who have gone to America to seek fame and fortune. It is a tough trail to blaze, because racing in the USA is very cultural. Those from overseas are seen as brave warriors who are usually destined for a fall. BriSCA F1 World Final winner and two-time European F1 champion Tom Harris looks like he is going to buck that trend. The 27-year-old has decided to branch out and try and make a name for himself in the USA.

And, following his initial outings Stateside, he has already turned heads. He has already competed twice in the Chili Bowl event, which the Americans describe as the 'Super Bowl of midget car racing' in the States.

On his second appearance at the indoor Tulsa Arena, which fits over 40,000 spectators, Harris showed his prowess. He took third place in his heat and finished seventh in the B Final. That kind of form is usually seen by experienced hands in the

sport and he now has a glimpse of racing US-style. Harris has bought a non-winged sprint car, which is based in the States, and is eager to get more outings as the year progresses. "It was an incredible experience, and I certainly have a taste for it," explains Harris, who lifted the European F1 title last season. "The atmosphere was simply amazing."

Harris, who constructs and runs BriSCA F1 machines for customers in the UK, has had a long-held ambition to make his name in the States, but was persuaded by a friend to go and test a car on a dirt oval in Texas in 2014. "I wasn't sure what to expect," he says. "But I went and did the test, and the reaction of the crew running the car was one of amazement. I think they were a bit shocked. Usually, when they test rookies, they are expecting all kinds of problems and mistakes. By the end of my run, they were putting new tyres on the car and asking me to go for it. I think I completed 100 laps in all."

Through a relationship with well-known US crew chief Smiley Sitton, word soon spread in America about this new star, and Harris made

his way to the Chili Bowl in 2015 for his midget racing debut. He was thwarted by mechanical gremlins but his immediate speed won him a new raft of fans.

"It was interesting," says Banbury-based Harris. "When I first went out there, I kept myself to myself really. I kept my head down, but once I started showing my speed, people came up and introduced themselves to me. Rather than just being a curious guy from Europe, they were taking me seriously, which was a compliment."

Harris has always harboured ambitions of becoming a professional in the States in Sprint Car racing, a discipline which has spawned hundreds of circuit racing stars including the likes of Mario Andretti and Tony Stewart.

Sprint cars have huge wings and north of 900 horsepower. Midget cars are a feeder formula to that, and have methanol-powered 400bhp motors without the huge amount of aero.

Even so they are vastly different to the BriSCA F1 cars that Harris is used to racing. The races are on shale on quarter-mile ovals, rather than the three-eighths of a mile tracks that

are mostly used in the United Kingdom.

There are other tricks to the racing too. Harris explains: "There are some significant changes to the racing. Firstly, it is non-contact. There is a bit of rubbing but the top guys get away with it."

"In the UK, we lap in 16s to 17s, but in the US, it is about 14s. The cars are less powerful, but they are light and fast."

"Also, because the tracks in the US are so wide, there are a variety of lines. You are always searching for the grip. In Britain, the ovals have just one line but over there, the line changes from lap to lap, so you are constantly seeking out where the grip is. I would say that the midgets are harder to drive than the BriSCA F1 machines and the skill set is quite different. You can use the basics of what you learn in an F1 machine, but that is about it."

"Racing on the ovals in the US, it is all about the momentum. In the UK, you can use the brakes and the bumper quite a lot. Over in the States that is the last thing you do. You need to concentrate on keeping the minimum speed up."

Harris has plotted a number of

races across the pond this year. He will take part in several events, including races in Florida, Pennsylvania and the Indiana Speed Week, which incorporates seven nights and eight days of sport.

Events like the Pennsylvania week draw week-long fans who follow the sport around and treat the festival as a holiday. The sport in the US draws a television audience and the successful drivers can quickly become household names.

"It is expensive to start a career in the States, so that means I have to pick and choose the events that I am able to take part in," says Harris.

"I have a strong business in the United Kingdom building and operating F1 cars, and I will have to stick with that. That means that I will still be racing in BriSCA F1 this season, although I might not compete in a full season."

"This is not a case of me turning my back on racing in the UK. But I will take the chances to race in America as often as I can."

And, given the form he has already shown, it could be the start of a colourful new chapter for the British short oval dominator. ■



Harris has the coveted gold roof



Harris is a multiple winner



Midget racing is non-contact

SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Hal Ridge and mkpics.net

ROUND-UP

Alan Ede won the recent **Spry Trophy Sporting Trial**

organised by Launceston and North Cornwall Motor club in extremely wet conditions.

The club had sourced a new venue near Crackington Heaven, Bude. Ede dominated all day with his usual fully committed style to take his maiden outright win. Fellow Kincraft driver James Tancock struggled with a poorly-performing high revving engine and a flat battery but managed to finish second, although he was disappointed.

The podium was completed by Alan Murton in his self-built car. He appeared to run out of gas at the end of the day with Jon Moores in fourth. Mark Seward had borrowed Jerome Fack's BTRDA Silver Star-winning car he built but retired at lunch with two flat tyres.

For the second time in two months, the Toyota Starlet of Donal Healy and Denis O'Donovan beat the usually all-conquering Subaru Imprezas to take top place in the **Skibbereen 100 Isles Navigation Trial** based in Innishannon.

At the finish of the 85-mile route, they had a single mark in hand over Alan and George Shinnors, with third place going to defending National champions Pakie Duffy and Evin Hughes to increase their points lead.

Novice class winners Brian O'Mahony/Amy Galloway had a very good run to fourth place overall, with Timmy Hayes and Finghin O'Donovan taking the Beginners' class.

The **2016 BTRDA Autosolo Championship** kicked off with a close battle at Demon Tweeks' premises in Wrexham. After the first six tests, father-and-son Nick and Dan Darkin tied for the lead in the shared Vauxhall Nova. Over-exuberant driving by Nick on the wet surface wiped out the finish of test nine, handing the initiative to his son who went on to win by 4.1 seconds. Third and fourth were class winners Xavier Brooke in a Lotus Elise and Jamie Yapp (Vauxhall Nova SR).

Results

Spry Trophy Sporting Trial
Organiser Launceston and North Cornwall Motor Club **Where** Bude **When** January 24
1 Alan Ede (Kincraft) 81 marks; 2 James Tancock (Kincraft) 94 marks; 3 Alan Murton (BAM); 4 Jon Moores (MSR); 5 Mike Wevill (Crosbie).

Skibbereen 1000 Isle Navigation Trial
Organiser Skibbereen and District Car Club **Where** Innishannon, County Cork **When** January 30/31
1 Donal Healy/Denis O'Donovan (Toyota Starlet) 6 marks; 2 Alan Shinnors/George Shinnors (Subaru Impreza) +1m; 3 Pakie Duffy/Evin Hughes (Impreza); 4 Brian O'Mahony/Amy Galloway (Impreza); 5 Owen Murphy/Daire Hayes (Subaru Forester); 6 Trevor O'Callaghan/Patrick O'Leary (Impreza); 7 Peter Farrell/Shane Farrell (Impreza); 8 Andrew Beamish/Lisa O'Dowd (Impreza); 9 Andrew Whelton/Cyril Maguire (Toyota Avensis); 10 George Swanton/David Swanton (Vauxhall Vectra). Semi-experts: 1 Peter Farrell/Shane Farrell; 2 Andrew Whelton/Cyril Maguire; 3 George Swanton/David Swanton. Novices: 1 Brian O'Mahony/Amy Galloway. Beginners: Timmy Hayes/Finghin O'Donovan.

New Year Autosolo

Organiser Knutsford and District Motor Club **Where** Wrexham **When** January 31
1 Dan Darkin (Vauxhall Nova) 507.2 marks; 2 Nick Darkin (Nova) 511.3 mark; 3 Xavier Brooke (Lotus Elise); 4 Jamie Yapp (Vauxhall Nova SR); 5 Andy Williams (Nissan Micra); 6 Stephen Mather (Renault Clio) 552.8. Classes: A Yapp, B Dan Darkin; D Brooke; E Phil Clegg (Haynes Kit Car).

IRISH RALLYCROSS IN ENTRY TURMOIL

More numbers needed for Mondello Park to host 2016 rounds



By Hal Ridge

Rallycross in Ireland is facing an uncertain future as a lack of entries has put several meetings in doubt.

Irish Rallycross Championship organisers have been informed by Mondello Park, the main rallycross venue in Ireland, that if there aren't 50 racers entered for the first round of the championship a week before the March 6 event, the opening round and further rallycross events due to be held at the venue in the autumn will be cancelled.

The Irish series has struggled to attract more than 50 entries

in recent seasons, despite a more diverse calendar due to the introduction of a new circuit at Tynagh in Galway.

Motorsport Ireland rallycross committee chairman John Dowling said: "For the future of rallycross at Mondello, the circuit needs to be confident that rallycross will consistently generate in excess of 50 entries and there is a good chance of not getting that number by the closing date for the first round.

"If we don't get the entry, Mondello will almost certainly cancel the event and will not gamble on the other 2016 dates either, as they can promote alternative, more lucrative events.

"If the first round doesn't go ahead and unless we could demonstrate a dramatic revival in numbers at our Tynagh event in the summer, it is unlikely that we could persuade Mondello to take the gamble in 2017. If you have a car, you don't need a ball of money to enjoy rallycross. It is undoubtedly the best bang for your buck in motorsport and I would encourage anyone interested to come out and join us. We'll make you welcome."

Double European Rallycross champion Derek Tohill is planning to enter the opening round of the series, and will support his home championship alongside a

Euro RX campaign this year.

"We see Irish RX as an opportunity for me to get more seat time in the car in preparation for European Rallycross, with the additional bonus of bringing an exciting car to IRX. The European campaign has to be our priority, but we will race in Ireland as often as we can," said Tohill.

"The message is clear; get your entries in early and there won't be an issue. The ball is in our court. Let's hope all drivers understand the importance of Mondello's call, there is a lot of renewed interest and lots of behind-the-scenes hard work by the committee. We just need to get the message out there."

Irish drivers join up with BTRDA

While the Irish Rallycross Championship's continued use of Mondello Park looks uncertain, the series has introduced an additional double-header weekend into its 2016 calendar.

The IRX series will join the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship at Pembrey in South Wales on July 2/3. Several Irish drivers have competed in the BTRDA series over the last two years, most regularly at the venue near Llanelli.

BTRDA championship committee member John Rook said: "We are extremely pleased to be able to announce the tie up with Irish Rallycross at rounds four and five at Pembrey Circuit.

"This partnership makes sense. The regulations are very similar and, for two seasons, the Irish drivers have supported the BTRDA Championship.

"This is extremely exciting and something we have been working on for quite a while. Early signs indicate around 30 to 40 Irish drivers could travel to Pembrey which would be a great boost."

Wimbledon campaigners talk with MPs

Campaigners behind the petition to save Wimbledon Stadium have met with members of the All Party Parliamentary Motor Group at Westminster last week in the latest bid to stop the arena being bulldozed.

More than 12,000 members of the public have signed a petition to complain about plans for a new 11,000 all-seater football stadium on the site of the current racing venue.

Local fan Peter Gray had met the local MP Stephen Hammond in December. Last week, he met with Richard Burden MP and Julian Knight

MP, both members of the motor group.

"Both were extremely helpful in guiding us forward to where they felt we should be concentrating our efforts, particularly through Sport England," said Gray.

Sport England is a public body that encourages participation in all sports, but Gray said that despite his efforts to contact the group, he had not had any response.

"The problem with that is that Sport England, like so many organisations, they are simply not returning our calls or emails," said Gray. "It is incredibly disappointing as



Wimbledon is facing the axe but campaigners are fighting

it feels like our sport is insignificant to these people, but we'll keep on approaching them and hopefully we can get through to them."

Representatives of the Save Wimbledon Stadium group have also met with London's deputy mayor Sir Edward

Lister. "He came down with his team to meet us, and we were afforded the chance to outline our position. We seized the chance to garner information about the process from the people at the heart of it," said campaigner Michael Burnage.



Linnemann: going to Lydden

Linnemann opts to use British championship for WRX warm-up

European championship Super1600 front-runner Ulrik Linnemann will race in the second round of the MSA British Rallycross Championship at Lydden Hill at the end of March.

The Dane will be driving his Peugeot 208 in preparation for Lydden's World Rallycross Championship event in late May, where Super1600 will also compete.

Linnemann won three events in the Euro RX category in 2015, and is targeting the title this year. The Dane has used the British championship round in previous years to prepare for the European event held at the Kent circuit.

"The main plan is to have some testing in Denmark, then to go to Lydden Hill," said Linnemann. "It will be good for me, and we are running a second driver this year

too, so it will be good for him to learn the circuit. I think competing in races is much better than a test day. We will have our engine builders with us; we have some good developments with the engine, which is quite nice. Lydden is a good track and we will come to try out different lines and approaches, because there is not so much pressure at this event."

Cash pot up for grabs in rallycross

The new main sponsor of the MSA British Rallycross Championship has introduced a prize fund for the Junior Rallycross Championship this season.

Under the title of parent company Enersys, Odyssey Battery has committed to paying for all of the Junior Rallycross entry fees for the first round of the championship at Croft next month, and for the top three finishers at each event for the following events through the year.

Chris Pretty from Odyssey Battery, who announced the prize at the recent 2015 championship awards ceremony, said: "We need to encourage more people to come into this sport, and my belief is we should do that with the Junior category."



Juniors will get cash boost



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KARTING

'Drivers to get cash bonuses'
CIK-FIA rewards, below



Photos: kartpix.net

IN BRIEF

Start money
Drivers who finish in the top 15 in one of the four CIK-FIA European championships this year will receive cash bonuses. Provided that the driver also competes in a CIK-FIA World Championship or International Super Cup they will receive the money from WSK Promotion. There will be 1000 euro rewards for OK and OK-Junior drivers and 750 euros for KZ and KZ2. WSK Promotion has been able to offer these extra cash prizes thanks to high financial contributions received from various CIK-FIA tenders for the 2016 season.

Charity karting
Almost half of the 35 spaces for this 2016's Karting for Heroes event at Buckmore Park have already been filled. This year will be the seventh running of the three-hour event and teams of three to six drivers can enter the race which takes place on May 7. Anyone aged 16 or over can take part and so far the event has raised over £28,000 for the Help for Heroes charity. It features a 'Bid for Pole' competition where drivers can buy their way to the front of the grid, which contributes a significant amount to the total raised.

TVKC record
The Trent Valley Kart Club broke its record for the most entrants for a January event as 314 drivers took part in the second round of its Winter Series meeting at PF International in Lincolnshire last weekend. The previous record was 230 drivers, which was set back in 2010. "That's a great start to the year," said TVKC chairman Nigel Edwards. "I'm excited about the year ahead." The next round is this weekend, ahead of the Winter Series finale in March.

STRICTER TRACK LIMIT RULES FOR KARTING

MSA's car racing rules to be adopted

By Stephen Lickorish

The same track limit rules that apply in circuit racing will now be used in karting, after a change in the MSA's regulations.

Previously drivers were unable to completely leave the track twice without being excluded from the race, but now drivers will be penalised if they put any wheel over the edge of the white lines on more than two occasions.

The car racing regulation Q14.4.2 now applies: "Drivers must use the track at all times and may not leave the track without a justifiable reason. For the avoidance of doubt: the white lines defining the track edges are considered to be part of the track and a driver will be judged to have left the track if any wheel of the car either goes beyond the outer edge of any kerb or goes beyond the white line where there is no kerb."

In a statement, the MSA said of the rule change: "From 2016 track limits regulations in karting have been cross-referenced against those in circuit racing, in order to clarify the track confines in karting and ensure consistency across both disciplines. This was approved by Motor Sports Council in September."

Chairman of the Trent Valley Kart Club Nigel Edwards said this reinforces what was already in place. "It's not really any different to what we've had before," added Edwards, who is also chairman of the MSA's Kart Committee. "Karting people tend to be very blase about track limits so this is a reinforcement of the regulations. It's not acceptable to gain an advantage from running off the track but it should be interpreted with common sense from the officials. This is all about consistency."

Leading team boss Ricky Flynn said that a rule change was needed. "I'm all in favour of it, as long as it's policed correctly," he said. "You can gain a massive advantage from cutting corners so it's the right call for lots of reasons, but it's like the offside rule in football and needs to be policed fairly. It's a big ask for the officials, especially at smaller tracks with no cameras."



Drivers can't put any wheels off track

Hannah becomes part of Arden's academy

British-born karter Logan Hannah has been selected to join Arden's Young Racing Driver Academy.

The 14-year-old, who is based in Dubai, is currently competing in the Rotax Max Challenge in the United Arab Emirates and is only in her second full season of karting.

In 2013 she qualified to represent the UAE in the SWS World Junior Cup Karting Finals at Le Mans.

As a member of the YRDA, Hannah will receive on- and off-track support, including a bespoke driver development programme that features physical training and simulator sessions. She will also get the chance to test in one of Arden's single-seaters.

"We are delighted that Logan has joined the YRDA," said Arden's Jamie Horner. "Already in her short career she has displayed the key attributes that we look for in up and coming drivers. We are looking forward to working with her and being a part of her journey."

British Superkart's 2016 calendar unveiled



Superkarts have 14 races

CALENDAR

2016 MSA British Superkart Championship

DATE	TRACK
March 26/27	Silverstone Grand Prix
May 7/8	Snetterton 300
June 4/5	Donington Park Grand Prix
July 16/17	Donington Park National
August 29	Castle Combe
October 15/16	Pembrey

The calendar for this year's MSA British Superkart Championship has been released.

The 14-round season begins on the Easter weekend at the end of March at Silverstone, where the karters will be able to use the full grand prix track as part of a Britcar meeting. The karts will also join Britcar events at Snetterton and Donington Park, as well as appearing alongside the new B-TEC Development Series touring car class later this year.

For the June Donington round the series will race alongside the CIK-FIA European Superkart Championship. The best 11 events will count towards the championship.



Six Formula Kart Stars drivers will head to Las Vegas
Top FKS drivers get Supernational entry

Six drivers from Formula Kart Stars will take part in the SKUSA Supernationals in Las Vegas later this year.

The top three finishers in the FKS Cadet and Super Cadet classes will receive free entry, along with flights and accommodation, for the event in November.

Last year FKS drivers Max Dodds and Joseph Taylor competed in the

Supernationals. "Formula Kart Stars has a long history of driver exchanges in the USA, and it is really exciting to revive this in 2016 through the Vegas SuperNats," said Formula Kart Stars managing director Sebastian King.

"I am very confident that one of the six FKS drivers will be bringing back the silverware again at the end of this season."

DMAX endurance series launched

A new arrive-and-drive endurance karting series has been launched for this year.

The Daytona Power Maxed Endurance Team Challenge will run alongside other DMAX categories during 2016 but will feature a two-and-a-half hour race at each of the four rounds. The best three results count for the championship and teams made up of two to four drivers can take part. There will be two different weight classes and there are 30 spaces on the grid.

Power Maxed head Adam Weaver said: "Daytona Motorsport is one of the leading nationwide kart venue operators and the DMAX Championship is without doubt the most competitive hire-kart championship in the UK. It was an easy marketing decision to partner up with Daytona."

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Maldonado's miserable news

As the Venezuelan is shown the door, contracts are in question

While it is fantastic news that the talents of Kevin Magnussen will be seen in Formula One again after he has landed a deal with Renault, it has come at a price. This time, the man who will be left looking for work is Pastor Maldonado.

The Venezuelan has built quite a reputation over his five seasons in the top flight, and not all of it was positive. But, let's not forget, he is a race winner and was capable of some strong performances. However, that counts for nothing when the money stops talking.

Maldonado did bring a pot of cash from his home country, and it was a fund that the Lotus team – always battling against financial struggles – was happy to accept. But now it seems that the team's new owners Renault have hit financial speed bumps over the deal. Hence the decision to employ Magnussen.

It is hard not to feel sorry for Maldonado, but it is yet another example of the contracts that are drawn up in Formula One not being worth the paper they are written on.

Think back to the tug-of-love over the Sauber drive at the start of the 2015 season, when Marcus Ericsson and Giedo van der Garde both thought they had a valid contract to drive for the Swiss team. Plenty of legal wranglings followed and ultimately, van der Garde settled with the team but he still lost out on his race drive and a chance to further his career.

Everyone knows that F1 is a sport that craves funding and doesn't operate without it, but it is a shame that some decent principles and morals sometimes take second place to that.

Matt James, Deputy Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



LETTERS

Channel 4's F1 line-up

I have just seen the 10 races that Channel 4 will be broadcasting live during the 2016 F1 season.

Talk about the boring and the bland. There is no Monaco and no Canada, which means there is no live F1 on non-subscription TV in May.

On four occasions there is a one-month gap between F1 races live on Channel 4. Rupert Murdoch must be laughing all the way to another one million subscribers.
**Garry Simpson
New Milton**

Lydden's turmoil

I agree with Matt James' excellent comments about noise abatement orders, sadly now affecting Lydden Hill and many other circuits before it.

My local circuit is Castle Combe, which has had similar issues in the past, thus restricting the level of competition we had enjoyed there years ago, although the circuit still delivers excellent entertainment and a busy race programme throughout the season, so hopefully Lydden Hill will not lose heart and hang in there.

I signed an online petition that was circulating last year to try and stop this nonsense of noise orders around racing circuits. And as you will all probably know this went nowhere but we can't let the serial complainers win or we will be left with no circuits at all before much longer. Perhaps the councils would like to see these circuits turned into 1600-home housing estates, that



Motorsport News, January 27

would be better for the environment wouldn't it? Being based in Gloucestershire, we have a couple of reasonably large sporting stadiums, namely Forest Green Rovers (football) and Kingsholm (Gloucester Rugby), all great for the economy of course. I have friends that live next to Forest Green and their lives are made a misery at match day weekends, inconsiderate parking, noise, litter anti-social behaviour to name but a few, to such an extent they now go out on Saturdays and will not return till late when the fixture is over. But they knew this when they bought their house so they put up with it, they don't complain to the council every five minutes.

I work in Gloucester and can hear the roar of 15,000 fans cheering on their rugby teams, I don't have a problem with that, notwithstanding that football and rugby takes place most weekends but I don't see councils issuing noise/nuisance orders on them.

It's time our motorsports and media stood up to this before the lunatics really do take over the asylum.
**Rob Attwood
Via email**

YOUR PICS



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Photographs must be of a good quality and please send no more than three images

ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Paul Trueman enjoyed going to the Autosport Show and snapped these Williams cars



Paul Trueman's Hot Rod photograph



Gary Hill went to Brands for the rally



Another from Hill, from a recent test



Caterham spills, also by Gary Hill



MSA champions were crowned on Saturday

LISTINGS

RALLYING SATURDAY

■ Blackpool, Lancashire
Legend Fires North West Stages

Starts 0900hrs
Admission free
Web nwstages.co.uk

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ Galway, Ireland
Corrib Oil Galway International Rally

Starts 0945hrs
Admission free
Web galwayinternationalrally.com

SUNDAY

■ Pembrey, South Wales
Rali Cwm Gwendraeth
Starts 0930hrs
Admission TBA
Web gwendraethvalleymotorclub.co.uk

GET MN ON THE GO

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BOOK REVIEW

Porsche Turbo Randy Leffingwell RRP: £45.00

The 911 Turbo is perhaps the most famous and greatest iteration of Porsche's legendary flagship model, but have you ever wondered how it came to be in the first place?

If you have, then Porsche Turbo by Randy Leffingwell [ISBN 978-0-7603-4758-4] is the book for you. It charts the Stuttgart marque's entire process of turbocharging both its road – and definitely more interestingly – its race car engines.

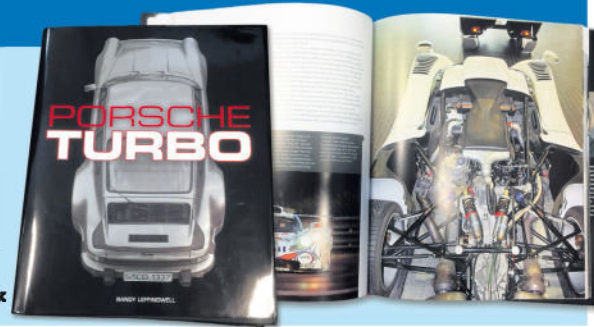
All of the great competition

machines are represented, with the story of the monstrous 917 Can-Am kicking things off nicely before the book wades through the 935, 956 and right up to the current 917 Le Mans 24 Hours winner with its revolutionary two-litre turbo hybrid powertrain. Porsche's foray into Formula 1

is also covered in detail.

Each section has detailed cutaways and technical imagery. If you're a novice to forced induction the book does take time to explain the principles, but this is still definitely one for the technical-minded motorsport fan.

Rob Ladbroke



TV GUIDE



Catch all the Rally Sweden action from 2015

After an epic **World Rally Championship** opener in Monte Carlo, it's another rally-dominated TV guide as most of the circuit racing world is yet to arise from its slumber.

Kicking us off, there's another chance to watch Monte Carlo highlights if you've been under a rock for a week and a half, with Kris Meeke challenging Sebastien Ogier for the victory (Thursday, 1415-1515hrs, Motors TV).

Sticking with the WRC, there's a chance to catch last year's Rally Sweden before the latest event takes place next week. It was a cracker that went down to the last stage, with three drivers in contention for the win (Saturday, 1750-1855hrs, Motors TV).

While the postponement of the **European Rally Championship**-counting Rally Liepaja means there's no snow-based viewing from Latvia on offer this week, there is some action from our very own **MN Circuit Rally Championship** courtesy of last month's Jack Frost Stages at Crof where Le Mans winner Guy Smith triumphed.

For circuit racing fans, the **24 Hours of Daytona** ran last weekend, and one of America's major GT races failed to disappoint as the **IMSA SportsCar Championship** got underway in Florida. There's plenty of works-backed cars and a handful of Brits to keep an eye on, including Ford's Andy Priaulx. (Sunday, 1210-1415hrs, Motors TV).

LIVE GUIDE

Formula E: Buenos Aires ePrix

■ Race: Saturday 1800-2030 ITV4



Formula E is in Argentina

NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 10

THE BLUE OVAL RETURNS



THE STORY BEHIND THE RUMBLING FORD'S SPORTSCAR RETURN

LET BATTLE COMMENCE

WE PREVIEW THE BTRDA SEASON



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THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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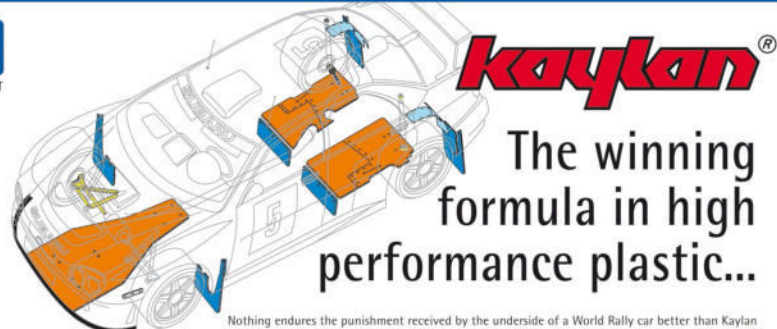
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2.0 Ton Nascar Quick Jack	£141.25	£169.50
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3.0 ton, lojn profile 'Pro' garage jack	£186.40	£223.68
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Wilwood brakes kit, 265x10, Powerlite caliper	£427.13	£512.56
Wilwood brakes kit, 247x20, Midlite caliper	£525.14	£630.17
Balance bar pedal box, cable clutch	£189.50	£227.40
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8x15	£94.00	£112.80

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Minilite style wheels from	£64.00	£76.80
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Escort RS front springs, 145-220lbs	pair	£33.80	£40.56
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Gaz, adjustable (3-way) front shocks	each	£299.50	£359.40
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Heavy duty 4-link kit	each	£185.00	£222.00
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Mk2 spring shackles	car set	£23.50	£28.20
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Mk2 Front Wing	£72.10	£86.52
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Escort Mk2 rear screen rubber	£29.08	£34.90
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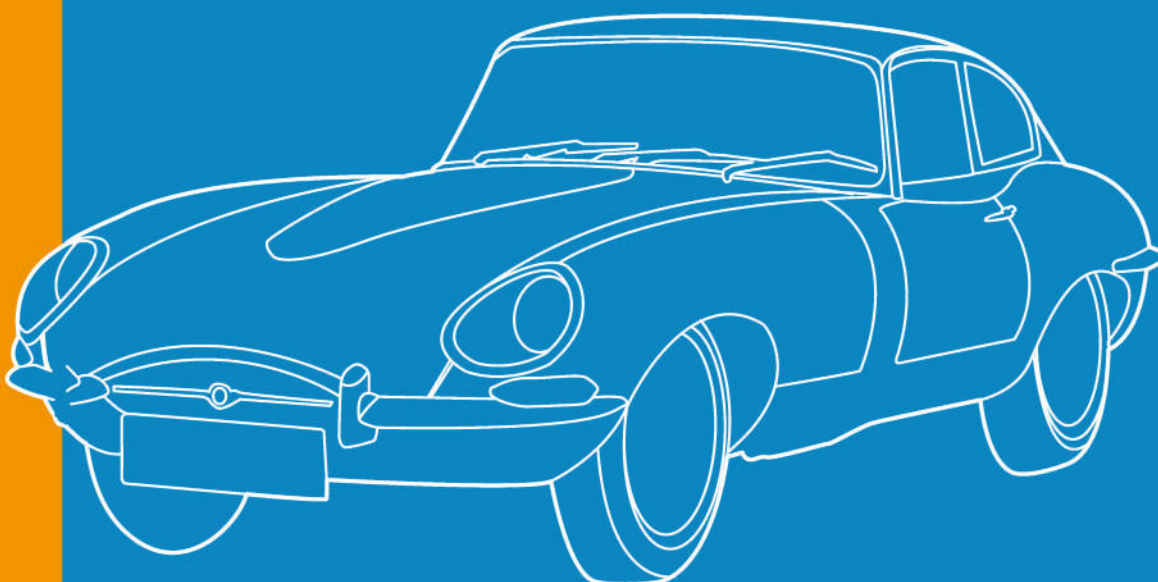
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