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# MOTORSPORT NEWS

NOVEMBER 2 2016 ■ EVERY WEDNESDAY £3.50

## McCOMBIE



TOPS NATIONAL FIELD

FULL REPORT P9

# OGIER WINS THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

## French ace wins fourth Wales Rally GB

PLUS

- ALL THE ACTION FROM THE WELSH FORESTS
- LAPPI ENDS EVANS'S WRC2 TITLE HOPES
- PRAISE FOR REVAMPED GB FORMAT



## VW'S FUTURE IN THE WRC HANGS IN THE BALANCE P3



## LEWIS ON TOP AS TEMPERS OVERHEAT IN MEXICO HAMILTON KEEPS UP HIS WINNING STREAK P26

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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Ogier shows his class in Wales**  
P4

**TWEAKS SHINE ON 'NEW' RALLY GB**  
P12

**"THE EMOTION WAS RUNNING HIGH"**  
P16

**OLYMPIC HEROES TEAM UP FOR RADICAL OUTING**  
P20

**HAMILTON STAYS IN THE GAME**  
P26

Wales Rally GB report	4	MN Circuit Rally C'ship preview	32
Wales Rally GB supports	8	Sporting Scene	33
Wales Rally GB National	9	Letters/Comment/What's On	34
Rally News	12	Classifieds	36
Racing News	16	Wanted: Rich benefactor. Must like Le Mans and diesel. Apply: Team Joest.	
Mexican Grand Prix report	26		
Racing reports	29		
<b>SUBSCRIBE TO MOTORSPORT NEWS</b>	<b>30</b>		
Historic race and rally news	31		



**FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P35**

**German giant backs out of Le Mans and**

**JARVIS TO WEC SEAT**



Jarvis is keen to remain at the front of the WEC

**By Rob Ladbrook**

**British ace Oliver Jarvis will seek to remain in the FIA World Endurance Championship next season, even if it means severing his ties with Audi Sport.**

Jarvis has been part of Audi's full-time WEC roster for the last two seasons, and this year sits third in the championship alongside Audi R18 e-tron quattro teammates Lucas di Grassi and Loic Duval.

There are two races left – at Shanghai, China and then the season finale in Bahrain later this month – and they will form Audi Sport's final foreseeable LMP1 outings after the German firm announced last week that it would wind up its sportscar programme at the end of this season.

Jarvis, 32, said that the announcement came as a shock to the system, and has left him assessing his options to remain on the grid for 2017. Jarvis's current factory driver deal with Audi Sport expires at the end of this season.

"Personally, this has come at the very worst time," said Jarvis. "This year it feels like things have clicked for myself, Lucas and Loic and the entire number eight car crew. We had a string of bad luck last year, but this season we got that breakthrough win at Spa [round two] and we've been challenging in each round since. It's such a shame that we won't get that third year together when I feel we really could have gone for the Le Mans win and tried to dominate the championship.

"The news was a real shock, and we were told formally about two hours before the press release went out. But we knew something wasn't right. The biggest shock was the immediacy of it ending this year, as all of the rumours suggested we had another season and the



Audi's first Le Mans 24 Hours victory was in 2000



Audi will instead focus on Formula E deal with Abt

# HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: LAT, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

## World Endurance

# FIGHT FOR AS AUDI QUILTS



Duval, Jarvis, di Grassi: in title fight

team were already well down the line with development of next year's car. Now that's all for nothing."

Jarvis is now left seeking a race seat for next season. With Audi downscaling much of its motorsport activities for 2017, he has slim pickings should he be able to remain with the Ingolstadt marque. Jarvis has been part of Audi's works motorsport programme since he joined the DTM in 2008.

"The next step will be about sitting down and seeing what's available and what suits me best, but my options are massively narrowed at Audi in terms of what they can offer," said Jarvis.

"For me, I have fought for so long to get to the top of the WEC, and I love the championship. It's home to the best drivers and cars out there, so naturally I want to stay racing here and at Le Mans. There may be a possibility of a GT programme with Audi somewhere, but my focus is on staying in the WEC. I've had nine amazing years at Audi, and I've felt privileged to be part of the family for every one. But if I have to look elsewhere to continue my career then I will.

"The World Endurance Championship will survive without Audi. Sure, it's a massive blow when a brand that big bows out, but there's still two big manufacturers there [Porsche and Toyota] and new ones like BMW coming into the GT class in 2018. Hopefully one door can shut and another can open for me as I feel I've proven myself at this level. Manufacturers come and go, and it's a matter of putting yourself in the right places to stay on the radar, and that's what I have to do again now."

### Formula E focus

Audi's withdrawal has been prompted by its parent company, the Volkswagen-Audi Group, bracing itself for sizeable

financial penalties in the wake of the road car emissions scandal.

A second contributing factor is the decline in sales of turbo-diesel engines across Europe, with some countries also coming under political pressure to ban the powertrains entirely by the year 2030.

Together with the downscaling of motorsport budgets, Audi has seen a chance to refocus its racing activities around electric cars. The firm is due to launch a range of electric road cars from 2018.

As such Audi will focus on its Formula E partnership with the Team Abt Schaeffler squad, which would require less investment and resource, freeing some of the Audi technical department to move on to road car development.

Audi chairman Rupert Stadler said: "We're going to contest the race for the future on electric power. As our production cars are becoming increasingly electric, our motorsport cars, as Audi's technology spearheads, have to be even more so."

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, who has led Audi Sport Team Joest for the last 18 years, added: "After 18 years in prototype racing that were exceptionally successful, it's obviously extremely hard to leave. Audi Sport Team Joest shaped the WEC during this period like no other team. I would like to express my thanks to our squad, Reinhold Joest and his team, to the drivers, partners and sponsors for this extremely successful cooperation. It's been a great time."

Audi remains committed to DTM, although each marque in the series has agreed to run six cars rather than eight next year. There has been no decision on its support of Mattias Ekstrom's World Rallycross Championship-winning EKS team. However, Audi

### AUDI'S LMP1 ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Le Mans 24 Hours**  
13 wins (2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014)
- **FIA World Endurance Championship**  
Two titles (2012, 2013)
- **Sebring 12 Hours**  
11 wins (2000-2007, 2009, 2012, 2013)
- **Petit Le Mans**  
Nine wins (2000-2008)
- **American Le Mans Series**  
Nine titles (2000-2008)
- **European Le Mans Series**  
Two titles (2001 - LMS, 2008 - ELMS)

has not ruled out expanding its World Rallycross Championship programme beyond just the single team. Much of that would hinge on the development of electrified RX cars in the future though.

### Toyota committed

Toyota Gazoo Racing has also issued a statement confirming that it remains committed to its LMP1 programme, despite Audi's withdrawal and its own impending World Rally Championship attack.

The Toyota team, which accelerated development on a new turbocharged 2.4-litre engine for the WEC this year, said: "We are preparing for 2017 when we will return with the target of winning Le Mans and the world championship. We will miss Audi, which has been a strong and sportsmanlike competitor and has helped to establish the WEC as one of the fastest-growing, most innovative championships in motorsport."

Porsche had confirmed its LMP1 programme was guaranteed until 2018, with company bosses suggesting the firm was thinking even longer term.



Volkswagen could reverse out of World rallying

## VW TO PULL THE PLUG ON WRC?

Volkswagen will quit the World Rally Championship at the end of this season, according to sources close to the German firm.

The decision was expected to be taken at a board meeting on Tuesday. While some sources insist the decision is made, others are talking about the potential for one more season and one more title defence with the Polo R WRC.

Volkswagen was confirmed as manufacturer champion for a fourth-straight season after Sebastien Ogier's victory on last week's Wales Rally GB.

Audi's departure from the World Endurance Championship caused immediate speculation about Volkswagen's continued presence in rallying in the aftermath of last year's diesel emissions crisis.

Volkswagen team principal Sven Smeets declined to comment on speculation, but told *MN*: "The news of Audi, of course I haven't been involved. I also got the news like everybody else - I don't know what is happening in Audi. But then the rumours [about Volkswagen] started straight away in Germany. This is one, not really motorsport person, who asked the question, but put in his story that Wolfsburg is in question. I don't want to talk about these rumours or this speculation."

Volkswagen's current commitment to the WRC stretches to the end of 2019. Asked if he stood by that commitment, Smeets said: "I told you before that, when you work for the big company they have to look into the future. Our group is going into electric technologies and we have to explore the future. It's very normal, I'm sure Citroen is still doing the same. The homologation for the 2020 World Rally Cars, for example, is not something we can start the year before - we worked on the 2017 car for two years already."

There's no doubt VW's continued participation in a global motorsport programme has been called into question since dieselgate and the potential multi-billion-pound fall-out.

Sources close to the team admit a decision to quit the series came close 12 months ago, but was deferred when then team principal Jost Capito found a way to slash the budget by cutting back on what had been an extravagant hospitality activation.

Some point to the millions already spent on developing the all-new 2017 Polo RWRC as a potential reason for VW to remain in the world championship. But one senior source said: "The budget for the WRC is a drop in the ocean in terms of the numbers involved in dieselgate. It's not about the budget, it's about public perception and it's about people in the street seeing Volkswagen participating in something which looks expensive. That's possibly not what's needed right now."

Gauging opinion across the service park, the most likely outcome for the Hannover-based team is that the squad will remain in the World Rally Championship for one further season, terminating its commitment to rallying at the end of 2017 after what would be five years at the top of the sport.

David Evans

# RALLY GB REPORT

World champion controlled his pace to claim Wales Rally GB win. By **David Evans**

**L**ast year a subdued and visibly emotional Sebastien Ogier left the winner's bottle of champagne untouched. Shocking events in Paris a day earlier quelled the mood for celebration. The Frenchman promised British fans he'd be back with a smile next time around.

Last Sunday afternoon, he couldn't and wouldn't stop smiling. He and co-driver Julien Ingrassia drained the champagne off the back of another superb performance.

Ogier's summer of discontent must seem a very long time ago now. In the last five weeks he's taken his first win in Corsica, his fourth title in Spain and now his first win of the year on gravel. Some would say Ogier's returned to his purple patch. I propose he's never left. One too-deep-ditch-hook in Finland aside, he's been pretty peerless all year.

## Four and four again

Ogier's not really a man for numbers. He got the number four; that one came last time out in Spain. But the fact that he's never won a rally four times on the bounce? He wasn't sure.

"I don't know," he said ahead of the event. "If you tell me this, I believe you. I don't really know the numbers..."

Rally GB or RAC Rally hat-tricks are nothing new. They've been happening since Erik Carlsson in the Sixties and Timo Makinen in the Seventies. But four in a row? Not quite so common. Petter Solberg's the only one.

Joining Hollywood would be nice, but Ogier was driven by a more fundamental desire last week. He was driven by frustration, the frustration at not winning so far this season on gravel. Rally Australia's shift to become the final round of the season in a little over a fortnight means the New South Wales roads will be drier and less favourable than ever to the man at the front of the field.

"I think this could be my last chance to win on gravel this season. And I want to do this, it's my favourite surface," said Ogier.

Said with a steel in the eye, the sentence resonated with the menace of a fighter pilot confirming missile lock. At the end of the first stage, Ogier looked less sure. He'd slipped and slithered his way through the opening 19 miles of competition in Myherin.

"I don't know," he said. "I couldn't find the confidence. The visibility was bad, we had the fog and the wipers kept stopping. Every minute or so, they were sticking."

Fastest.

Feet found, he didn't miss a beat. His Volkswagen, however, wasn't quite so compliant. A noisy driveshaft at the rear of the Polo remained in the back of Ogier's mind for the afternoon, but only came to the forefront in the final few competitive metres of Friday, when the car started diving to the left under braking.

"I think we were quite lucky," said Ogier.

Nonsense. Ogier's car held together longer than his team-mates – we'll come to them – because he drives it softer, straighter, cooler, calmer.

Much as the first run through Myherin might have unnerved him, the second shot cemented his confidence.

# OGIER MAKES A



Ogier built up a big cushion on the opening day in Wales

The fog was worse second time around. A real pea-souper, the sort found on the moorland-style road on top of Myherin, is a great leveler; it can turn an ace into an average driver and strip a world champion back to a mere mortal. Not this one.

"I really committed in the fog," said Ogier. "I was much happier on the second time. I knew the notes worked, so I really drove to them and trusted them. It's not nice in these conditions, but I was very happy with that time. The confidence was really there."

The Frenchman's pace was relentless and, frustratingly for his rivals, apparently free from the biggest of risks once he was away and in the clear.

Sensing there would be talk of his favourable position on the road, Ogier defused it immediately, by fronting up to it.

He said: "I know I have the advantage where I am. I know I'm in the best position and I have to make the most of it. I have to use this advantage because on Sunday we're all in the same place [on the road]."

That he did, going into the final day with 33 seconds in hand, Ogier was able to slacken the commitment slightly, but he insisted Ott Tanak's exceptional pace meant the final day was no Sunday drive.

## DMACK's dry dream

When Tanak arrived in Ruthin for service after a couple of runs at shakedown, the dream was coming true. He stepped out of the all-white DMACK Ford Fiesta RS WRC and smiled. Then grinned.

Something was missing. "No mud..." said the Estonian.

The car was spotless, the dream real.

BBC Breakfast's ever-cheerful weather watcher Scottish Carol was in on it as well – talking of highs of 19 degrees in places just a stone's throw from Clocaenog. Yes, there might have been the odd cloud on the horizon, but it wasn't expected to deliver anything. And sunshine? There'd be enough.

Departing Chester's Holiday Inn well before dawn on Friday morning, it was genuinely warm.

Friday was a big day, but with new boots waiting in Newtown at lunchtime, the most important thing on day one was the weather staying dry for the weekend.

Saturday was key.

Eight dry stages and a shade over 60 competitive miles would be, so the theory went, just beyond Michelin's soft cover (it's possible tyre-saver extraordinaire Ogier might have had something to say about that...).

DMACK's soft would have been even worse. But the hard compound, well that was a different matter. The shift in production base from China to the UK has given DMACK the ability to test and tune tyres far quicker and the hard variant of the DMG+2 GS61 was primed and ready for Saturday. Marginally harder than Michelin's soft, this one had been cooked specifically for these conditions.

The reintroduction of Pantperthog was a further shot in the arm for DMACK's plans – the slate-based five-miler just north of Machynlleth was about as abrasive as the roads come in this part of the world.

Across the board, everybody was talking Tanak whitewash in mid-Wales.

Kris Meeke, Ruthin town centre car park Thursday morning: "Ott's the dark horse, he's the one to watch on those tyres..."

Such sentiment was echoed everywhere... right up until the point where the weather went south and the rain started.

All was not lost. The softer soft would still offer some advantage in damp conditions. Tanak charged hard. Fastest in Hafren and Dyfnant first time, he clung to Ogier's coat-tails, just 7.7s behind the Frenchman. Four stages in, the best of the rest

were already more than half a minute off the front.

A problem with the left-rear of the Fiesta was cause for concern in Newtown, but Tanak promised he was more than capable of dealing with a bit of squirming and darting around under braking. What he couldn't cope with was a puncture and when he clipped a kerb-like rock a couple of miles from the end of Dyfnant, the right-front tyre flattened immediately.

In all honesty, Tanak had struggled to contain Ogier's pace on Friday's polished clean, even more slippery rerun stages. Arriving at the start of SS8, he was 22.3s behind. Coming out the other end, the gap was 37.3s.

At just over half a minute, the gap was just out of reach?

"I think you're being kind," smiled Tanak, "I think it's more than a little bit out of reach. We can't do this with just driving."

That wouldn't stop him trying. Quickest on four of the day's seven forest stages, Tanak won the day by 3.5s.

Sunday merely rubbed salt into the wounds as Tanak wound the DMACK car up to win all six stages in a sublime display of driving talent. It also served as a timely reminder of just what an M-Sport-made Fiesta's

*'Deserves credit for getting back behind the wheel'*

Lefebvre's Wales Rally GB run rated, p7

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



# SPLASH



Ogier used his head as well as his right foot to collect a fourth Rally GB victory

capable of. Tanak won the final day by an incredible 23.6s.

Victory in the weekend battle meant little to the men who'd had their eyes on winning the war just a couple of days earlier.

Nothing's as good as a win, but for man, machine and tyre, this came as close as possible.

## Home rule?

For 27 years, Johnny Foreigner didn't get a look in. From Colonel Loughborough's Lanchester in 1932 all the way through the Gerry Burgess in a Ford Zephyr in 1959, the RAC Rally was a Brit shoo-in. Then the Scandos arrived and spoiled everything. We waited 13 years for Roger Clark's 1972 win – a success he repeated four years later. After 1976, a generation watched and waited. Eighteen events on and Colin McRae turned a rally lead into a rally win in 1994.

I grew up in the middle of those barren 18 years. They felt like a lifetime. We're getting dangerously close to that number again: when we're back in Deeside in 12 months, it'll be 17 years since Richard Burns' 2000 win.

No pressure then Kris Meeke. The Dungannon driver couldn't

*continued on page 6*



DMACK's Ott Tanak kept the pressure on the leader throughout



Podium helped Neuville consolidate second in the points table

## STAGE TIMES

- SS1 Myherin 1 (19.77 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 18m07.0s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +7.6s
- SS2 Sweet Lamb 1 (2.63 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 2m49.0s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +12.1s
- SS3 Hafren 1 (21.83 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 20m45.4s  
Leader Ogier Second Tanak +9.9s
- SS4 Dyfnant 1 (11.13 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 10m18.9s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +7.7s
- SS5 Myherin 2 (19.77 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 18m01.4s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +15.1s
- SS6 Sweet Lamb 2 (2.63 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 2m53.7s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +17.4s
- SS7 Hafren 2 (21.83 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 20m58.6s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +23.3s
- SS8 Dyfnant 2 (11.13 miles)**  
Fastest Neuville 10m32.1s  
Leader Ogier Second Tanak +37.3s
- SS9 Pantperthog 1 (5.99 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m47.1s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +35.8s
- SS10 Dyfi 1 (13.12 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 12m01.2s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +38.2s
- SS11 Gartheiniog 1 (7.05 miles)**  
Fastest Neuville 7m00.9s  
Leader Ogier Second Tanak +36.3s
- SS12 Pantperthog 2 (5.99 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m50.5s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +33.4s
- SS13 Dyfi 2 (13.12 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 12m12.9s  
Leader Ogier Second Tanak +30.6s
- SS14 Gartheiniog 2 (7.05 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 7m07.4s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +24.8s
- SS15 Aberhirnant (8.64 miles)**  
Fastest Ogier 7m29.3s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +31.8s
- SS16 Cholmondeley Castle (1.12 miles)**  
Fastest Mikkelsen 1m08.6s  
Leader Ogier Second Tanak +33.8s
- SS17 Clocaenog 1 (4.78 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 4m19.0s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +33.2s
- SS18 Brenig 1 (4.93 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m23.1s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +29.7s
- SS19 Alwen 1 (6.47 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m42.1s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +25.9s
- SS20 Clocaenog 2 (4.78 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 4m18.4s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +23.0s
- SS21 Alwen 2 (6.47 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m39.7s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +16.4s
- SS22 Brenig 2 (4.93 miles)**  
Fastest Tanak 5m19.0s Leader  
Ogier Second Tanak +10.2s

## COLIN CLARK

**"Rally GB is now a joy"**



**P**eople have always asked me what my favourite rally on the calendar is and I've always had real trouble in answering this question. The easier question was always: 'What's your least favourite rally?' And that was, until three years ago very easy to answer: Wales Rally GB.

If I had been told that I had to miss one event a year, it would have been a no-brainer. I'd have been far happier sunning myself on a far-away beach with a copy of Colin McRae's biography than battling the overbearing, pompous, self-serving bureaucratic parochials who seemed hell-bent on ruining my every trip to Wales.

It's fair to say, it was the only event where I ever felt distinctly unwelcome.

But what a transformation. The reinvigorated Wales Rally GB now stands right up there with my favourites. It's not just the move up north that has rejuvenated what was a fading classic. More than that, it's the team behind the event.

Ben Taylor, boss of the event, is a rare character. He's a pocket dynamo, running around and taking responsibility for every aspect of what he rightly feels is his event. He wants to know what's going on and he wants everyone involved in the rally to know he's there, and accessible. I even saw him driving the shuttle bus across Breng Dam on Sunday's powerstage. A boss who mucks in and gets his hands and battered CAT boots dirty is a boss to be respected.

But perhaps more important even than the boss is the incredible team he has under him. I can honestly say there isn't a department within the Wales Rally GB organising team that operates below par. From the stages teams, to the media office and everyone in between, they all work their socks off to deliver a level of professionalism that is a credit to them all.

But I really have to single out two people: Iain Campbell, the new clerk of the course being the first. Iain's a quiet, dependable Scotsman who, in the decade or so I've known him, has proved himself to be entirely unflappable. He handles crisis and criticism with a cool, level head and is the perfect man to take the rally forward in coming years. The second? Route master extraordinaire Andrew Kellitt, who continues to over deliver in an increasingly demanding environment. These two gents are the backbone of a rally that is clearly going places.

However...all this hard work is continually in danger of being completely undone by a handful of people ("people" is being kind to them). What sort of moron lights a flare in a forest stage just before a car comes hurtling down the track? It's madness on a mind-blowing scale. We need to rid our sport of this and weed out these idiots before something happens that means our sport is changed forever.

We have a fabulous event that is without doubt heading in the right direction. But all that hard work will count for nothing unless we get on top of these lunatics.

# RALLY GB REPORT

## IAIN CAMPBELL

**“Being Wales Rally GB clerk is a real honour”**

**E**ver since Fred Gallagher stepped down as clerk of the course of Wales Rally GB at the end of last year's event, I had been worrying about my elevation to fill the enormously big shoes he'd left under the table in rally control.

Fred had been doing the job for 20 years and the prospect of trying to follow him was fairly daunting.

Throughout this season, I've watched and learned as this incredible team went through the gears and built up towards the start of last week's event. By the time I moved into Deeside at the start of the week, the nerves had gone. I'd been enormously reassured at seeing just how good these folk are at doing what they do.

I then realised, however, that the final decisions on things now lay with me, which made me all the more determined not to let anybody down.

As it happened, the event ran faultlessly. For a first time as clerk, last week's rally was a pretty good one – nothing like the weather-affected nightmare last year turned out to be. I offered up a silent prayer of thanks to the weather gods on Sunday night.

Collectively, what we do in rally control is what we've always done in rally control: we set the convoy moving at shakedown on Thursday morning and we just try to keep it rolling along until Sunday afternoon. And we did that with an absolute minimum of fuss and drama.

There were a couple of spectator and marshal-related illnesses along the way, but those were dealt with quickly and competently – as were the massed ranks of spectators on the second run of Clocaenog.

Friday was probably the busiest day, which concluded with us going into a city centre event in Chester later than planned. But again, we worked through our plans and everything was perfect.

The second run of Alwen also caused a few tense moments. As we watched the first run through the Sunday test, which started at 0928hrs, it became clear we might be in danger of lapping ourselves with the second run which started at 1114hrs. As it was, the zero car for SS21 went into the stage pretty much directly behind the sweeper for SS19!

But we made it. People have asked me what it's like to be clerk of the course of a WRC round and that question makes me smile. I can't believe people are asking me that question! Thanks to my dad, I've been rally mad all my life and the thought of me, Iain Campbell, being the clerk of the course of a world championship still catches me by surprise.

And that was probably the reason I found myself sitting down on my own in rally control with a stupid big grin on my face late on Sunday night. But the reality is, there's a fair bit more paperwork than I'd imagined.

But if that's the price of the best job in the world, then I am happy.

*Continued from page 5*

have been more up front about his chances ahead of the rally. “Unlikely” was how he described them. Rarely has unlikely sounded more like “absolutely no chance.”

There were more than a few who were concerned at what they saw as something of a defeatist attitude from Meeke. When, for example, had you heard Colin or Richard talking about having no chance when they came home in equal machinery? It didn't happen. They made this event their own and they ruled it for six consecutive seasons.

It's as easy to look back fondly and remember the ballsy Brits walking on water; just as it's easy to talk about the running order thing getting into Meeke's head and forcing him to concede before the thing's even begun.

But there's more to this one than meets the eye. Let's not forget, the dampers on the DS3 WRC can be traced back to 2007. Granted, there's been an evolution, but nothing like the revolution needed to keep pace with what Volkswagen has delivered. You only had to stand at the side of a slow or medium speed corner in Wales to see where some of the time was going. The Polo pitched and bucked under braking and acceleration, constantly feeling for the mechanical grip with the kind of subtlety that has always eluded Citroen and its DS3. By contrast, Meeke's motor was sitting on top, solid, unflinching.

This worked perfectly in Finland, where a direct and precise car is needed to fire the thing from one high-speed curve and crest to another, but in Wales traction was at an absolute premium and the DS3 WRC was exposed badly for the comparative dinosaur that it is.

If it were needed, further evidence came in from the scorched Michelins beneath Meeke and co-driver Paul Nagle. “We struggle for traction,” said Meeke, “so we're getting wheelspin in fourth gear in some stages. That wears the tyres and when the tyres are worn we get even more wheelspin.”

Meeke's challenge for third was stymied by tyre trouble of a more prosaic nature on Saturday: a couple of slow punctures on successive stages left him with no spares and even less reason to take risks on the second loop.



Meeke struggled to find decent grip levels

As much as anything, the weather scuppered Meeke's chances. If it had stayed dry, the DS3 would have found more grip and Ogier's advantage at the front of the field would have been negated.

“Friday and Saturday were exactly the conditions we didn't want,” said Meeke. “We did everything we could, but I wasn't prepared to risk absolutely everything for another second or two. What would have been the point? There would have been a corner waiting... We've had the perfect scenario for running first on the road, no doubt about that. In all honesty, Sebastien's earned his chance to run first after going through what he's gone through this year. I just hope he enjoyed it...”

Meeke hadn't much enjoyed his time in Wales, but he wasn't interested in dwelling on the immediate past.

“Next year,” he said, “it's up to me. I want to come here in a position to be challenging for the championship and if I'm challenging for the championship then I'm going to be in a similar position to him [Ogier, it's a natural assumption the Frenchman will be fighting for a fifth] on the road. That'll mean I'm in much better shape to be fighting to win this rally.”

Deeside and Dungannon, put that Welsh champagne on ice. Come back to us in a year.

Meeke's team-mates Craig Breen and Scott Martin started the event in pursuit of a podium, only to suffer the same fate when the rain fell on Friday.

Breen's pace through Myherin was impressive: fourth fastest and 3.6s up on Meeke. He took another half a second in Sweet Lamb, but that was as good as it would get for the Irish-English DS3 crew. They rolled second time through Myherin.

“The start was good,” said Breen. “The first stage felt horrible, but maybe that was the key. I wasn't chasing the time, the time came to me. I chased it in the next couple and maybe overdrove a bit and lost some time. Second time through Myherin, we hit a bank and rolled. I'm so disappointed, I was so looking forward to this event.”

### VW's troubles

Winning a fourth successive world manufacturers championship is never going to be a bad result to take home from a rally, but Volkswagen team principal Sven Smeets admitted Friday had given the Germans something of a scare.

All three Polos were hit by a front driveshaft problem. Andreas Mikkelsen was troubled from the start, but Jari-Matti Latvala and Ogier's issues arrived later in the day.

Hannover held its breath. If Ogier hadn't made it out of Friday in one piece, that first gravel win of the year could have been in serious jeopardy given that the number one Polo's not expected to feature in the final-round fight.

Latvala finished a forgettable seventh, Mikkelsen a tortured 12th, both deserved better.

The Norwegian's problems also cost him valuable ground in the fight for second in the championship. Hyundai's Thierry Neuville moved 15 points clear with the final podium spot. Neuville and team-mate Hayden Paddon fought tooth and nail throughout the event, but the Belgian always looked to have the edge. Certainly, both had the legs on Dani Sordo, who ended an event he never particularly enjoys in sixth place behind Meeke and just ahead of Latvala. M-Sport factory drivers Mads Ostberg and Eric Camilli sandwiched a ninth-placed Stephane Lefebvre, the Citroen star making a very welcome return to the stages following his shocking Rally Germany crash in August.

Talking of welcome returns, Ogier made good on the promise he'd offered British fans 12 months earlier. He came back, won the rally, wore the smile and soaked an enthusiastic and utterly appreciative audience with champagne.

Last Sunday, everything went to plan.



Breen admitted to pushing too hard, which led to a roll



Jari-Matti Latvala finished seventh after driveshaft woes

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

# DRIVER ANALYSIS

BY DAVID EVANS



## SEBASTIEN OGIER

VOLKSWAGEN MOTORSPORT

Made the best use of the conditions, drove sympathetically on Friday afternoon and superbly for the weekend. The Frenchman never looked truly extended on his way to a fourth straight Rally GB win.



9/10

## JARI-MATTI LATVALA

VOLKSWAGEN MOTORSPORT

The five's not completely his fault this time. He's paying the price for a ropey Volkswagen supplier driveshaft. But in all honesty, the Finn wasn't really at the races before he had his problem. He certainly wasn't afterwards.



5/10

## ANDREAS MIKKELSEN

VOLKSWAGEN MOTORSPORT II

Probably deserves more than five for his typically entertaining turn of phrase through the week – asked to describe his car's behaviour with the transmission fault, he reported: "It's living its own life."



5/10

## OTT TANAK

DMACK WORLD RALLY TEAM

Drove brilliantly even when he knew his biggest window of weather-related opportunity had gone on Saturday. More speed and another second place. That maiden win's coming and coming quickly for the Estonians.



10/10

## THIERRY NEUVILLE

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT

Came to Wales to see off the challenge of Mikkelsen, but ended up seeing off his own team-mate Paddon. Rued his rubbish first stage which cost him confidence and the chance to engage in an Ogier fight.



8/10

## HAYDEN PADDON

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT N

The Kiwi was nowhere on this event last year – actually, he was somewhere: he was all at sea. Not this time. There's no quicker learner in the WRC than Hayden and he applied that here. Different driver to last season.



7/10

## ERIC CAMILLI

M-SPORT WORLD RALLY TEAM

It was this event last year that landed him the factory M-Sport deal. Twelve months on, should we expect more speed from him? Frankly, yes. He's had time in the car, plenty of testing. Not good enough.



3/10

## MADS OSTBERG

M-SPORT WORLD RALLY TEAM

Couldn't find the rhythm or the speed on stages he really enjoys. Co-driver Ola Floene was ill after being bitten by a snake on Saturday morning, but recovered after medical attention.



4/10



Dani Sordo was safe and steady

### ABU DHABI CITROEN

#### CRAIG BREEN

4/10

Four for his fourth fastest time on the first stage, which was just genius. He was pretty good for the rest of Friday morning, but the afternoon was spoiled by a Myherin roll which ruled him out for the weekend.

### ABU DHABI CITROEN

#### KRIS MEEKE

7/10

The Northern Irishman couldn't get close to the top from where he was on the road and what was connecting him to the road. Two punctures ruined Saturday. Did what he could, but there was no more.

### HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT

#### DANI SORDO

5/10

By contrast to Paddon, Dani Sordo offered more of the same when he came to Wales... he was steady as usual. It's a shame, after his solid speed on the Spanish dirt, I had hoped that would transfer to Deeside. It didn't.

### ABU DHABI CITROEN

#### STEPHANE LEFEBVRE

10/10

Deserves the full 10 for getting back on the horse last weekend. He and Gabin Moreau went through it a couple of months ago in Germany and seeing Stephane back in Wales was a very welcome sight.

## RESULTS

FIA World Rally Championship, round 12 of 13, Wales Rally GB, November 12-15

POS	DRIVER/ CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Volkswagen Polo R WRC	3h14m30.2s
2	Ott Tanak (EST)/Raigo Molder (EST)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+10.2s
3	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 WRC	+1m35.4s
4	Hayden Paddon (NZL)/John Kennard (NZL)	Hyundai i20 WRC	+1m54.9s
5	Kris Meeke (GBR)/Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen DS 3 WRC	+2m35.2s
6	Dani Sordo (ESP)/Marc Marti (ESP)	Hyundai i20 WRC	+4m02.6s
7	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Volkswagen Polo R WRC	+4m28.3s
8	Mads Ostberg (NOR)/Ola Floene (NOR)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+4m38.3s
9	Stephane Lefebvre (FRA)/Gilles de Turckheim (FRA)	Citroen DS 3 WRC	+7m12.2s
10	Eric Camilli (FRA)/Benjamin Veillas (FRA)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+8m19.3s
12	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Anders Jager (NOR)	Volkswagen Polo R WRC	+9m44.0s
15	Lorenzo Bertelli (ITA)/Simone Scattolin (ITA)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+10m50.6s
17	Quentin Gilbert (FRA)/Renaud Jamoul (BEL)	Citroen DS 3 WRC	+11m56.5s
38	Valeriy Gorban (UKR)/Volodymyr Korsya (UKR)	Mini John Cooper Works WRC	+53m26.3s
R	Kevin Abbring (GER)/Seb Marshall (GBR)	Hyundai i20 R5	SS22/crash
R	Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA)/Michael Orr (GBR)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	SS20/gearbox
R	Osian Pryce (GBR)/Dale Furniss (GBR)	Ford Fiesta R5	SS20/holed radiator
R	Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Citroen DS 3 WRC	SS5/accident



There is a rally fan there somewhere...we think...

### CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Sebastien Ogier	247
2	Thierry Neuville	143
3	Andreas Mikkelsen	129
4	Hayden Paddon	126
5	Dani Sordo	119
6	Jari-Matti Latvala	110
7	Mads Ostberg	94
8	Ott Tanak	82
9	Kris Meeke	64
10	Craig Breen	36

Getting a decent view of the Rally GB action

### MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	Volkswagen Motorsport	355
2	Hyundai Motorsport	285
3	M-Sport WRT	154
4	Volkswagen Motorsport II	138
5	Hyundai Motorsport N	136
6	DMACK World Rally Team	92

# RALLY GB REPORT

## WRC SUPPORTS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com and Jakob Ebrey

# LAPPI'S

## WALES DEBUT PROVES CAREER IS BACK ON TRACK

There's more than meets the eye to Lappi's results in 2016. By **Jack Benyon**



Hot property: Lappi



Lappi flew after his early tree accident

**I**n 2015, Esapekka Lappi was one of the hottest properties in rallying. After serving his apprenticeship in the European championship, winning the title in 2014, he helped launch Skoda's new R5 in Portugal last year and talks of a fourth VW Polo R WRC for the Finn were rife.

But, whatever the reason for that deal falling through, Lappi's career had seemed to be in freefall ever since. On his opening WRC2 event of the season in Sweden, he made a mistake and he was in a bank. The results don't show much in Sardinia or Poland either. But the 25-year-old Finn reckons after Sweden, his form has been as good than at any other point in his career.

"This season has been OK," explained Lappi. "We have been leading every rally we have been to. OK, in Sweden I was in the snowbank and that was my fault, but in Sardinia it was a technical failure, and Poland it was bad luck with the puncture, otherwise it's been good. I definitely feel like the pace has been there to win every rally."

The obvious turnaround was Finland, where he blitzed the competitive WRC field on home ground. And with a Toyota seat in the WRC all-but sealed for next season, it looks like Lappi is back and better than ever. Nowhere was that more obvious than in Wales last weekend.

### Lappi takeover

"Everything is under control," said Lappi after a tough opening day. It was the perfect way to sum up Lappi's path to victory in Wales, incredibly, his first time on the event. That is, apart from the first stage, where his rally nearly ended.

He set out in what was probably the most competitive WRC2 field ever assembled, full of drivers linked with works drives in 2017 and beyond. But he had a disagreement with a tree. "Iran wide in a slow-speed corner and we hit a tree," he explained. "But it's OK, the corner was slow speed."

The damage? A half-eaten Skoda Fabia and a 15.7s deficit to his closest WRC2 championship rival, Teemu Suninen. The fellow Finn, who won this event in the category last year in a Fabia S2000, was committed in the fog and reaped the rewards.

But it wasn't long before Lappi struck back, he was 3s quicker in SS2 and 13s up in Hafren. He was emanating the kind of quiet confidence of a driver completely in control.

By Saturday, it was increasingly apparent Lappi had bolted like the proverbial horse, the way at which he brushed off losing half of his

Fabia to the Myherin tree was chilling. Now, heading for Australia, a win or second on the WRC's final round will give the Finn a WRC2 championship. Suninen will take the title if Lappi fails to meet that criteria.

### Best of the rest

Someone not completely in control was Swede Pontus Tidemand. No heroics from Lappi's teammate in the fog and a fairly conservative approach on day one meant he'd dropped a fair amount of time to the leaders by the regroup in Newtown.

The rest of the day belonged to Lappi. Tidemand took the final stage of the day but the four previously belonged to the Finn, who was under no pressure from Suninen. He'd spun three times in the afternoon alone and was struggling to replicate the flow he achieved in his driving last year. A strange and ominous knocking noise in the transmission in the Chester regroup left plenty to ponder for the next day. After all, his championship was on the line.

But Suninen had more worries. On Friday evening he pointed to the works Skodas of Jan Kopecky and Tidemand and the fact that they would be chasing him down.

Tidemand was on it. By the end of Saturday, the gap was down to 12.3s. Suninen was a sitting duck, and with an incredible powerstage time, Tidemand took second on the last stage with a time quicker than multiple WRCs including Kris Meeke.

Suninen had to settle for third, with Kopecky fourth and the outgoing Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy champion Marius Aasen in fifth.

### Hyundai R5 hell

It was a bad weekend for the UK debut of the Hyundai i20 R5. Kevin Abbring and Seb Marshall slipped off the road after a puncture on Friday morning, before transmission problems on Saturday morning ended the day. The car won all but one of the stages on Sunday, but Abbring slipped off the road on the powerstage and broke the suspension.

### WRC3/JWRC

Slovakian Martin Koci won the Junior World Rally Championship class after finishing runner-up in 2014, his last time on the event. He beat this year's champion Simone Tempestini and sealed second in the championship in the process.

Tempestini wrapped up the WRC3 title in Wales having already sealed the JWRC title in Corsica. The Italian lost his front brakes on Saturday and had to concede the event victory to Koci, but beat Michel Fabre to WRC3 honours after a gruelling season.



Lappi overcame issues

### Pryce and Greensmith prove a point with pace

Not for the first time, Britain proved incredibly harsh to its home drivers, as a host of Brits suffered bad luck in Wales.

Merely weeks after winning the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy championship, Osian Pryce started Wales Rally GB in a Ford Fiesta R5 for the third time. The Welshman is at home in the forests. Quite literally. Dyfi and Gartheiniog run just by his house.

But the event was rotten from start to finish. A software reset on the R5 – which belongs to Mads Ostberg's Adapta outfit and was run by MH Motorsport – caused some issues leading to pop-off valve trouble.

That was partially sorted, but the 'diff wasn't to his liking. The car was oversteering under braking.

After finally getting the car to a point where he was relatively happy, a stone through the radiator put him out of the event on Sunday after Gartheiniog. Given the car was never perfectly to his liking, his split times – which included an epic 7s taken from Lappi in Dyfi's first 3.9



Pryce had been on for sixth in WRC2

miles – proved the youngster's pace.

Another DDFT graduate appearing in WRC2 was Gus Greensmith, but the Bury driver hadn't competed in an R5 previously. The misty Myherin opener was a cruel launch into the deep-end of the WRC, but the 21-year-old's pace improved through the day. However, he was hamstrung by co-driver Katrin Becker's condition; she was vomiting and unable to read pacenotes effectively, forcing Greensmith to call the event a day mid-way through Saturday.

He returned under Rally2 on Sunday with a more in-tune Becker, to set reasonable times and finish 34th.

### Ingram and Duggan suffer nightmare weekends

Much hype was made of the Team Network Q Vauxhall Adam R2 entry into Wales Rally GB, but the event couldn't have gone any worse for its drivers Chris Ingram and Rob Duggan.

Ingram, this year's European two-wheel-drive rally champion, had an accident on the way to shakedown, colliding with a car on the road section in what was the worst possible start to the event.

SS1 looked better for Ingram as he caught and passed a four-wheel-drive R5 car in the test, but on the startline of SS2 he sheared a driveshaft and his day was over. A Saturday return beckoned.

With all Ingram's troubles, it looked like Robert Duggan would be the closest competitor to class leader Pepe Lopez. On SS5 Duggan had the lead as Lopez dropped time, but by SS7 the Killarney man was out.



Ingram struggled with Vauxhall Adam

A small error resulted in a big crash as the little Adam suffered.

Ingram on the other hand returned and scraped through Saturday with the car not to his liking having not had a chance to do any proper set-up work on shakedown or the single stage he had completed on Friday.

He traded fastest times with Lopez on the final day, but will be left pondering what could have been.



# RALLY GB NATIONAL REPORT

Bruce McCombie and Michael Coutts play their cards right to see off home contenders. **By Jack Benyon**

**A**fter the drama of last year when leaders Jock Armstrong, and national rally's most famous driver, Jimmy McRae, both went out on the final stage, this year's Wales Rally GB National didn't have the same sting in the tail. In fact, it was a straightforward affair. It actually turned out to be one of rallying's oldest battles. Scotland versus Wales. Bruce McCombie against Luke Francis.

The Scot, with Michael Coutts on the notes, was the victor, overcoming fellow Mitsubishi Lancer E9 driver Luke Francis despite suffering turbo issues throughout the event. He held on to take victory, four years since his last attempt at the event.

Francis put on an admirable display, driving a McWhirter-prepared car for the first time as his own Lancer E9 wasn't ready for the event.

The first day was punctuated by retirements. The first to go were last year's winners Mike Faulkner and Peter Foy. The Mitsubishi Lancer E9 duo rolled on the Myherin opener after a missed pacenote. Not only did they roll but they also blocked the road for Francis, who lost a chunk of time trying to navigate the stricken duo after checking they were OK. But that wasn't the BTRDA Gold Star runner up's only issue.

"It was dramatic this morning, we lost the brakes on the first stage," he explained. "The brake bias was pushed all the way to the front and it boiled the brakes. The fog was horrendous and Faulkner crashed in front of us. He was in the middle of the road and we had to go in a ditch to go around him and that took a while. We took it steady and made sure we got back to Deeside. We should get the time back [off the organisers for slowing during Faulkner's crash], I'm hoping too."

Unfortunately, that time return didn't come, and he was left trailing by the end of the first day by almost half a minute.

Also troubled on the first stage was Mark Worley. He brought a Melvyn Evans-prepared Subaru Impreza S12B WRC to the event but made the decision to pull out after the tricky fog-laden opener, not willing to risk himself in the conditions.

So what of the leader? Fastest on the first stage was Tom Preston, one of a host of British championship drivers appearing in Wales for the event. In his Skoda Fabia R5, he followed that up with another quickest time on Sweet Lamb but on Hafren he was out. A slow roll left the car on its roof and the crew heading

## BRUCE'S BONUS



McCombie held his nerve over the last stages

back to the Deeside service park.

That left Bruce McCombie to take the lead. After a trying morning, he set out to prove the pace of the Scottish championship – which he regularly competes in – against BTRDA frontrunner Francis.

Despite a few issues, the Scot certainly impressed. But his Friday was punctuated by problems, too.

"It's just overheating with the [turbo] lag," he said. "In shorter stages it was fine, we turned it off for those. I had it on for the long ones but we turned it off halfway through or whenever it started to overheat."

McCombie was clearly enjoying the quicker sections, where the roads reminded him of rallying back home. Like Scotland, many of the stages in Wales are fast and flowing.

Despite conceding to Preston early, McCombie was on it and, despite the issues, went fastest through Hafren and Dyfnant. That was no mean feat, having not done the event since an outing in a Group B Motorsport-prepared Subaru Impreza four years ago.

As McCombie and his fellow drivers put the tarpaulin over their cars for the night on Friday, there were lights on in one camp. The chipper Preston and Carl Williamson were back at service, and had their team CA1 Sport working on the car.

Team boss Martin Wilkinson, who's dealt with a few rolls after looking after Colin McRae's M-Sport Ford Focus in period, finished the car with his mechanics at 0230hrs on Saturday morning. At just after 1100hrs, the hard work was rewarded with Preston setting the quickest time on the first stage of the day, which for the nationals was the Cholmondeley Castle Stage, the rally's welcome return to England.

In contrast to Preston's ideal start to the morning, Francis's was tougher. He found out he wouldn't be getting back any time for the Faulkner incident on Friday. That meant he started the day 28s in arrears.

And so the fightback began. Or it should have. Francis had fluffed the tyre choice. He admitted himself it

was a gamble. "It's been OK but we took the wrong tyres," Francis confirmed at the end of Saturday's action. "We went on the world rally car tyres to try and avoid a puncture as they're stronger. But we could have done with going on the [Pirelli] Y tyres, with the wider pattern, bigger block. But we didn't get any punctures so that's good. We're still second so can't really complain."

One man who certainly couldn't complain was McCombie. After a dynamite time in Aberhrrnant to end the day, any of Francis's efforts to erase the gap were redeemed. The gap was back out to 32s with only 16.18 miles of stages to go on Sunday.

So, what were the drivers' approaches to the final instalment?

Francis: "I've got this far, there's two minutes to Roger [Duckworth, third place]. I might just go for a steady one. I'll decide on the startline! I don't want to miss Llandudno after three days."

McCombie countered: "We have to drive like we have been. The gap isn't big enough. A spin, a puncture and

we'll lose the lead. It's difficult to manage and as soon as you try to, you make mistakes. We'll see what happens today."

Did anyone remember last year? This equivalent report was penned when long-time leader – also a Scot, Jock Armstrong – broke a wheel bearing on the last stage and gifted Faulkner the win. Would there be drama like it this year?

McCombie drew first blood and a couple of seconds out of Francis on Clocaenog, but could only manage fourth through Alwen and that meant a gap of 28.7s into the final stage, Brenig. A healthy margin, so long as a wheel bearing doesn't break...

It didn't, McCombie held on. Stylishly in fact, as he headed Francis by 8.9s, the biggest margin between the two all weekend, to take the victory. More trips to England and Wales could well be on the cards for the Scot (*see rally news*).

The event proved to be a fight between two of the best from Scotland and Wales, but a familiar



Mountain biker Atherton impressed on Wales Rally GB National

## Atherton and Williams impress with national rally top 15 finish overall

Rarely does a driver who finishes 15th in a rally impress so strongly. That sort of head-scratching performance is usually saved for Sebastien Ogier in rallying.

But this weekend, it happened. Downhill mountain bike champion Gee Atherton steered his Ford Fiesta R2 to that position after a weekend-long dice with, well, Jimmy McRae.

Yes, Jimmy celebrated his 73rd birthday on Friday. But he's still

a five-time British champion driving a beastly Vauxhall Magnum. Atherton's 1.6-litre R2 isn't even the quickest R2-spec Fiesta anymore since the introduction of the R2T.

One of the most difficult things when transitioning to rallying is listening to pacenotes, and never is that more important than in fog and in quick, slippery stages. It was a baptism of fire for the Brit but it was a splendid performance with Keaton

Williams on the notes. "I think this is what I needed: a lot of stages and a lot of miles," he said. "And you have to trust the notes because it's so fast. It forces you to listen and concentrate. Everyday I'm getting faster and faster."

After softening the car set-up to work better in the conditions, Atherton headed the B2 class to the end, aided by MG ZR S1600 driver Carl Tuer's demise on Sunday after an off.



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**A big thank you to GPM, Pirelli, all our sponsors and our service team that made our win at Wales Rally GB 2016 possible.**

***Bruce McCombie***

# RALLY GB NATIONAL REPORT

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Writtle Photographic



Francis couldn't quite match McCombie



Lancaster was powersliding to historic win in his Escort



Skill was impressive in challenging Lancaster



Wells topped a debut in the ST with a class win

name returned to take a podium. Roger Duckworth steered his Subaru Impreza S6 WRC – similar to the car Colin McRae drove in 2000, in period blue paint. Duckworth did his first Rally GB in a Group A Impreza in 1996, 20 years before this year's event. The podium was a reward he won't forget in a hurry.

After a host of problems last year, Iain Wilson scored an impressive fourth in only his second season of four-wheel-drive rallying, setting strong times while keeping the Impreza planted on the road. Scott McCombie, brother of rally winner Bruce, steered his similar car to round out the top five.

Despite being deposed from eighth on the last stage, Rudi Lancaster topped the historic in a strong display. The Ford Escort Mk2 driver made sure Britain's most iconic rally car was well represented with steer-from-the-rear entertainment, and the spectators loved him for it. Chris Skill took 10th behind

## RESULTS

### Wales Rally GB National, October 28-30

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Bruce McCombie/Michael Coultts	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	1h56m17.7s
2	Luke Francis/John Roberts	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+37.6s
3	Roger Duckworth/Alun Cook	Subaru Impreza S6 WRC	+1m52.9s
4	Iain Wilson/Keith Riddick	Subaru Impreza	+5m02.9s
5	Scott McCombie/Mark Fisher	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+5m40.2s
6	Wug Utting/Bob Stokoe	Subaru Impreza N12B	+5m46.7s
7	Fraser MacNicol/Aaron Johnston	Mitsubishi Lancer E6	+7m43.7s
8	Paul Walker/Vernon Brown	Subaru Impreza	+7m49.9s
9	Rudi Lancaster/Guy Weaver	Ford Escort RS1800	+8m08.9s
10	Chris Skill/Tom Jordan	Ford Escort Mk1	+10m31.8s

11 Matthew Jackson/Claire Williams (Impreza); 12 Robert Thomson/Steven Kerschhat (Lancer E8); 13 Mike Tomkinson/Shawn Whitehurst (Ford Escort RS1800); 14 Gary Smith/Bryan Thomas (Ford Escort); 15 Gee Atherton/Keaton Williams (Ford Fiesta R2); 16 Jimmy McRae/Pauline Gullick (Vauxhall Firenza Can-Am); 17 Thomas Preston/Carl Williamson (Skoda Fabia R5); 18 Mark Bentley/Ed Bentley (Escort); 19 Bob Vardy/Simon Rogers (Fiesta R2+); 20 Simon Hay/Calum Jaffray (Lancer E6)

**Class winners** Robert Evett/Michael Evett (MG ZR); Atherton/Williams; Richard Wells/Calvin Houldsworth (Ford Fiesta ST); McCombie/Coultts; Skill/Jordan; Lancaster/Weaver; Bob Beales/Mike Leflay (VW Dettinger GT); Tom Coughtrie/Calvin Cooledge (Escort RS1800).

Lancaster and second historic, first in H2. Other class winners included Rally GB rookie Richard Wells, in his first appearance in a new Ford Fiesta ST with co-driver Calvin Houldsworth. Rob Evett took 40th and Class B1 spoils in his MG ZR, while Bob Beales gave his

evergreen 1950s VW Oettinger a class win.

But top of the class spoils and top of the overall order was McCombie. After making the long trip down from Aberdeenshire, the trek was worth its weight in gold.

## McRae plays the numbers game 40 years on from Rally GB debut

Rallying is a numbers game: 222, 73, 40, 16. These ones have a very special connection. At car number 222, Jimmy McRae celebrated his 73rd birthday (on Friday) 40 years since making his Rally GB debut in a Vauxhall Magnum. He managed 16th overall in the National event.

The five-time British champion was back once again to take on a rally he's contested off and on since that event in 1976, and with Pauline Gullick on the notes, the

duo were as quick and had as much fun as usual.

Their rally was punctuated by a fuel problem, which was causing the car to be sluggish at slow speeds and it struggled to start once it had been switched off.

But as he has done on many occasions, he fought through. The reward and highlight of the weekend? The thousands of fans lined up in Chester town centre singing happy birthday, which he said brought a tear to his eye. "It

was lovely to go under the clock and to experience that again, it gave me some great memories," he said.

He was pushing "as hard as an old man can!" and believe it or not, the Scot still checks the times and is as competitive as ever. "The first stage was covered in mist, halfway through I thought 'what the hell am I doing here?' When we got to the end of the stage and saw the times, we were right with the people around us..." he said.

## GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

# JACK BENYON

"Chester is back and rallying is better for it"



Organisers put on a show in Chester city centre regroup

**F**1 has Monaco, Rallycross has Lydden Hill. Sportscars has Le Mans and NASCAR has Daytona. And, once again, world rallying has Chester.

OK, so I'm biased. I moved to Chester at the age of eight and didn't leave until I was 22, and some of my fondest memories are there.

But so are the World Rally Championships. British or not, Rally GB has produced some of the most emotional moments in the sport's history. This column won't be another ode to McRae in 1995, but events like that will never be forgotten.

There's just something about Chester. Something you can't quite put your finger on. But even the Scandinavian and South American crews were excited about heading under Britain's second most photographed clock. If that doesn't tell you what this means to rallying, I don't know what does.

And what a spectacle. Credit to Ben Taylor and the GB organising team for getting the rally onto the streets, and the organisers of the Chester Rally Week for what they put together. The crowds were two or three deep at the barriers and the cheers for Ari Vatanen were deafening. The fact that the cars were rolling past my mum's shop made it even more impressive on a personal level.

The town crier even lifted one of Chester's most legendary rules for the event. Since medieval times, a rule is in place which allows any Welshman inside the city walls of Chester after midnight to be shot with a bow and arrow. It was lifted, if only for the evening.

But this is where rallying can be so accessible. In many ways, it isn't, thanks for the need to traipse into a forest for three miles to get muddy, wet and cold. I'm the converted, it's worth it to me to see some of the best drivers in the world compete. But things like driving the cars through Chester is what rallying should be doing more often. Meet the stars, hear their stories, see their cars. All on your local high street. If 100 of the 1000 people lining the streets head out to Cholmondeley or the forest the next day, that has to be a win. And rallying needs as many wins as it can get.

On a separate note, it was great to see so many British Rally Championship crews impressing at International level. After returning in 2016 with R5s at the front, it did no disservice to the championship's reputation.



**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
mn.letters@haymarket.com

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: Gary Jones, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Chester was well received by fans

## NEW ELEMENTS BOOST RALLY GB, SAY EVENT BOSSES

### Format tweaks proved to be a hit with huge crowds

By David Evans

**Wales Rally GB chief Ben Taylor has admitted he was overwhelmed by the success of the new elements introduced to last week's Deeside-based World Rally Championship qualifier.**

Taylor pointed to the three revised areas of the event – a Chester time control on Friday night, Saturday's Cholmondeley stage and Sunday's powerstage – and said each of those three were more successful than he could have hoped for.



Taylor: New GB a success

"We weren't sure how Chester would work, to be honest," said Taylor. "A lot of people in Chester don't remember what happened there 20 years ago, a lot of them weren't even born. So we didn't know how many people would come. But they came and they came in droves. The place was packed and the atmosphere was simply incredible."

It was a ground-breaking mid-evening autograph session which really worked for fans in the first English WRC stage since 1999.

"In Cholmondeley we wanted to do something different," Taylor added. "It had never been done before, but we were running this stage on the way into Deeside and we had the time to try it. It worked better than anybody could ever have imagined. We catered for 5,000 fans at what was a brand new Rally GB venue and got at least double that."

"We had to find a way of connecting with people who

don't remember Colin McRae and Richard Burns and that's what we did. We brought the sport and the event to a vast number of people and we created an awful lot of rally fans. And that's what British rallying needs."

"OK, there are areas we need to work on: the catering facilities were hopelessly inadequate because we simply didn't expect those numbers, but we have something to work on for the future."

"And finishing the powerstage in front of the people was just brilliant. Again, the atmosphere was simply incredible – as it was in service on Deeside, where we had 20,000 people coming in to essentially watch the players lace up their boots!"

Taylor was quick to pay tribute to the Welsh government and its decision in allowing a Welsh-funded event to move outside of the national boundary.

"The government does deserve a huge amount of credit for this," he said. "They had the vision to see the potential benefits and they've really reaped the reward."

World champion Sebastien Ogier was a fan of the innovations, telling *MN*: "I had never seen Chester before and it was beautiful. We came at the end of a long day and it was quite late, but it was definitely a good plan to come and see so many people."

"It's the same with the new [Cholmondeley] Castle stage. There are only maybe three corners in this stage, but the castle is incredible and the people there were so amazing. I was happy for this."

There was some criticism of the route, with Citroen's Yves Matton feeling the Deeside service park was underused.

"The organisers have made this great tool which they are now not using at all," said Matton. "We

have been here for three days and nobody comes, only on Friday and Saturday night. Having said that, we understand the decision to take the rally closer to the people in Chester and we are happy for this."

Friday's 14-hour day and Saturday's 60-mile loop on one set of tyres also caused some concern, but route co-ordinator Andrew Kellitt told *MN*: "The geography of this event means we have a service park in the north and the bulk of the stages in the middle. We are under pressure to make sure 25 per cent of the total mileage is competitive and to go down to Hafren and come back to Deeside for midday service is not really possible."

Taylor added: "We can take the service park to Builth Wells, a place surrounded by stages. But we've tried that and the teams complained about the lack of fans and the lack of hotel rooms."

### Organisers in spectator search

Rally GB organisers are determined to track down individuals who were found spectating in dangerous areas on last weekend's round of the World Rally Championship.

Video footage highlighted a handful of people standing on the line of competing cars passing inches away at more than 100mph. Rally GB's safety officer Sue Sanders said she wanted to name and shame individuals who could be jeopardising an otherwise exceptional safety record for Britain's WRC round.

"Collectively, there's a desire within the organisers to pursue these people and highlight to them the dangers of what they were doing," Sanders said.

The second running of the Clocaenog stage was only saved by quick thinking from zero car driver and British Rally Championship driver Matt Edwards, who stopped the car and persuaded fans to move to a more sensible area.

"I've never heard of a zero car stopping in a stage to do this before," said Sanders. "But thank goodness Matt did. Fortunately, he knew some people in the crowd and could work with them. These people in Clocaenog had not come into the stage from an official entry point, so they hadn't gone past any of our signage or messages about safety and they were standing in a dangerous place."

"If it hadn't been for Matt's quick thinking, the stage would have been cancelled."

HEPPENSTALL ASKS FOR MSA'S HELP TO SAVE HISTORIC RALLYING

PAGE 31



The Strength of Experience

speedline



Tel: +44 (0) 1952 582 825

Fax: +44 (0) 1952 582 821

Corse

e-mail: [info@speedlinecorse.co.uk](mailto:info@speedlinecorse.co.uk) | website: [www.speedlinecorse.co.uk](http://www.speedlinecorse.co.uk)

*'Bogie's strong pace has given him optimism'*  
**Scottish ace impresses, p14**



Photos: Gary Jones, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

## Calendar set to be firmed up

This week's World Rally Championship Commission meeting will finally bring clarity to a running order debate which has rumbled on all season.

*Motorsport News* sources report there are four options under consideration at Wednesday's Paris meeting – one of which is to leave the championship leader at the front of the field for the first two days of each round.

In addition to running order, the second half of the calendar dates will be added, with Rally Poland expected to be running in the first week in July.

Rally Turkey is also set to be included for the first time since 2010. Sardinia has signed a three-year agreement to host Italy's round of the championship and Rally GB will remain as the penultimate round in the same date as this year next season.

WRC Promoter staff have also confirmed they will visit New Zealand after Rally Australia, raising further hopes of a World Championship return to the North Island in 2018.

Evans could go for DMACK seat



Evans/Barritt: recce

## EVANS HANDED DMACK LIFELINE

Elfyn Evans' return to the World Rally Championship's top flight is expected to be confirmed later this month, with the Welshman driving a DMACK-backed Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

Both DMACK and M-Sport are working to finalise funding for the deal, which is expected to put Evans and his former co-driver Dan Barritt back together again.

The pair completed the recce for last week's Wales Rally GB together.

Evans was unavailable for comment when *MN* contacted him, but Wilson admitted the plan was coming together to put him back in a factory-spec WR Car for the first time since the end of last season.

"That's what we're working on," Wilson said. "The target

is for Elfyn to do the full championship, but we've still got some way to go yet."

Evans won this year's British Rally Championship with the DMACK squad and boss of the Cumbrian-based tyre firm Dick Cormack has made clear his hopes of keeping the 27-year-old for WRC next season.

Evans will replace Ott Tanak in the DMACK team, with the Estonian apparently turning down an offer from Hyundai to return to the M-Sport World Rally Team, where he drove last season. The understanding is that Evans will be allowed to score points for the M-Sport team – which will have to enter him. His car will then run under a DMACK umbrella within M-Sport.

Tanak still wouldn't be drawn

on his future, but he and Eric Camilli will also be announced later this month.

One of the stumbling blocks to a potential DMACK deal for Evans was reportedly a regulation stipulating each manufacturer team could only nominate one tyre firm to work with. Sources in the FIA have confirmed this was the intention, but sporting rules for 2017 have yet to be finalised.

Evans' deal would conclude much of the driver market movement for next season. Toyota is expected to announce Esapekka Lappi and Teemu Suninen next month. M-Sport driver Mads Ostberg looks set to return to his Adapta Team, with the Norwegian set to run a '17 Ford Fiesta RS WRC as soon as one is available – hopefully in time for round two in Sweden.



Lefebvre was in top 10

## Matton pleased with Lefebvre return after Rally Germany accident

Stephane Lefebvre made a successful return to the World Rally Championship at last week's Wales Rally GB – just two months after his shocking Rally Germany crash.

Lefebvre and co-driver Gabin Moreau sustained numerous injuries in the accident at the Trier event and, while Moreau's return

won't come until next season, Lefebvre was delighted to be back in Wales.

"It wasn't the easiest event to come back to," said the Frenchman. "The conditions made it quite difficult, but I'm very happy to be in the car – now I look forward to testing the C3 WRC again."

Citroen team principal Yves Matton said he was

pleased with what he'd seen from Lefebvre.

"What I am very happy about is that he has no bad memory from the accident and there is no effect on his driving," said Matton. "In the next few weeks, he will jump in the C3 and he will be ready for the start of next year."

Lefebvre finished the event ninth overall.

## Citroen stars – and boss – for Condroz

Citroen drivers Craig Breen, Stephane Lefebvre and boss Yves Matton will all contest this weekend's Condroz Rally in Belgium.

Breen and Lefebvre will drive DS 3 R5s while their boss takes a C4 WRC version to the Huy-based event.

The changeable weather conditions – with ice frequently making the asphalt stages a significant challenge – offer Citroen's two junior drivers more experience of slippery asphalt ahead of January's Monte Carlo.

"I don't say this will be a Monte Carlo test," said Matton, "but it does offer some tricky conditions. It will be interesting for them."

Matton, who will be co-driven by nine-time world champion Daniel



Matton will tackle Condroz

Elena, admitted he was hoping for a repeat of his 2013 podium.

"That's the target," he said. "It's good because they don't allow the priority drivers to take the [two-litre] World Rally Cars, they're only for the gentlemen drivers!"

## VW hunts for solution to driveshaft trouble

Volkswagen faces a race against time to determine the driveshaft problem which almost cost it the manufacturers' title at last week's Wales Rally GB.

All three Polo R WRCs suffered a front driveshaft failure on the opening day of the Deeside event, but Sebastien Ogier's car making it through to the finish ensured the German team could celebrate a fourth-straight title.

The three factory Polos will be flown to Sydney on Friday this

week for the season finale in New South Wales later this month and team principal Sven Smeets says the pressure is on to find the cause before the plane leaves.

"We sent the driveshafts back to Hannover early to start this investigation," he said. "We have some ideas, but we don't know for sure and we need to know before we send the cars – we cannot risk having this happen again on the other side of the world."



Andreas Mikkelsen's Rally GB was thwarted by driveshaft problems

## GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

# DAVID EVANS

**"The day out was well worth the effort"**



**W**hat better way to test-drive Wales Rally GB's all-new, family friendly format than take the family to Cholmondeley.

That's how I sold a shockingly early start to my wife, mother (she was staying for the weekend) and daughter. My son? He didn't need selling on anything, since Craig Breen joined otters at the centre of his universe.

Cholmondeley was at the heart of the big adventure. Shunning the opportunity to shimmy down the side of the line, play the media pass card and sneak closer access and a shorter walk, we joined the queue bound for the second of two massive car parks.

It's fair to say the walk was a considerable distance further than I'd intended for research purposes, but we stuck with it. Finally, the castle came into view – somewhere on the distant horizon – and eventually we got our tickets scanned (not the children though – they get in for free) and walked in.

Having already been to the Cholmondeley's Pageant of Power, when it was so-called, I had a good idea of where the stage went and where we needed to be heading. Getting there was a very, very different prospect. There were people everywhere.

The crowds were way bigger than I'd ever imagined – or seen in a stage for longer than I could remember.

Arriving late, we'd missed much of the action, including 35 Group B cars and the appearance of Ari, Harri, Miki and Nicky (Ari Vatanen, Harri Toivonen, Miki Biasion and Nicky Grist) at the autograph-signing session, but the buzz about the place told its own tale. People had clearly had a ball, the lawn mower racing had gone down brilliantly and the only issue had been a danger of the fish and chip stand running out of potatoes.

A distinct lack of Subaru jackets and Mitsubishi baseball caps indicated this audience wasn't hardcore rally, while the number of Rangies and X5s we'd walked past in the car park hinted a strong representation from the local population. When the cars came, the focus shifted away from the stands offering to paint faces or blow up balloons onto the stage. Too late to find any road-side view, we stood in front of the big screen to watch, turning around to catch what little donut action could be spotted between a thrilled crowd.

The cars went down a treat, but when the crews arrived, the sense of anticipation about the place was tangible. My son got over his minor sulk at a Breen no-show and transferred his allegiance, at least in part, to Hayden Paddon. He loved it. More than loved it. He's counting the days until next year, when he wants to spend the whole day there.

My daughter? She was happy enough – but thought the whole thing could have been improved no end by some degree of input from Harry Potter.

But it was mum who delivered the ultimate accolade. "Rallying's not dead then..."

Thankfully mother, no.



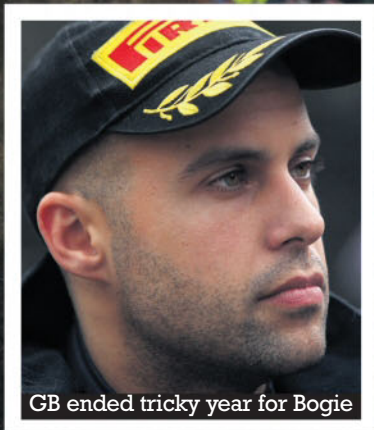
**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
 mn.letters@haymarket.com

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Writtle Photographic

## BOGIE: GB PACE TO SPUR BRC TITLE BID

Beating Lappi and Kopecky on stages has given Scot hope of BRC glory



GB ended tricky year for Bogie



Skoda switch is paying off for Dumfries driver

By Jack Benyon

**David Bogie believes the pace shown in WRC2 on last weekend's Wales Rally GB can make him a contender for the British Rally Championship when he returns next year.**

Bogie set times quicker than some of the hottest properties in rallying in the class, beating Toyota-bound Esapekka Lappi and the experienced Jan Kopecky

on stages on his way to ninth in the class, despite having to Rally2 on Saturday.

"Yeah, it's really positive looking at next year," he said. "I've been looking at the times there and there are several stages where we've taken time out of Lappi, Tidemand, Kopecky, they're all guys I look up to and to be on the same pace as them is something."

The 29-year-old retired on Friday after hitting a rock in the middle of the road and bending a steering arm. However,

such was his pace on Saturday and Sunday that the CA1 Sport driver could return to the top 10.

"I'm pleased, obviously the times, especially yesterday and today, have been impressive," said the Dumfries driver. "It's just a shame about Friday. Others managed to drive around the rock so it's just part of the job."

"We've not put a foot wrong yesterday and today and the times have been good. I think there's a lot of positives."

Bogie switched to the Skoda Fabia R5 from the Ford Fiesta R5 at the start of the year, and after multiple years on organiser's notes he now makes his own. He has had to step up to compete with WRC2 drivers Elfyn Evans and team-mate Fredrik Ahlin this year.

A crash on the Pirelli and radiator maladies in Scotland ended any hopes of a top three finish in the championship. He ended the campaign in seventh place.

### Anderson impresses among BRC GB teams

As well as Bogie, other BRC contenders were in action over the Wales Rally GB weekend.

Jamie Anderson and Ross Whittock suffered through Friday with calliper failure, and decided not to rejoin under Rally2 regulations. Anderson was pleased with their first appearance on GB, ending his first year outside the BTRDA.

"We had a hairy moment where we nearly couldn't stop for a corner in Hafren which was a close call," he said. "When that was sorted we had a good push on and we wanted to get as close as we could to Sander Parn's times. We beat him on a couple. But we're glad to get to the end."

Whittock took the Michael 'Beef' Park Trophy from the event, an award the MSA Academy driver was proud to receive. It is given to recognise the Junior co-driver who most demonstrates the qualities associated with Park.

Bogie's CA1 team-mate Fredrik Ahlin suffered turbo failure on Friday before crashing out on Saturday. He was the highest-placed Fiesta driver in fifth for most of Friday. He was also using English notes for the first time with Andrew Roughead onboard.

Rhys Yates was in action, but he lost 13 minutes stopping to change a puncture when the wheel stuck to the hub. He won the Richard Burns Trophy from the event as the top Junior driver.



National winner McCombie to SRC?

### McCombie eyes England and Wales after GB win

Freshly crowned Wales Rally GB National winner Bruce McCombie says more trips over the border from his native Aberdeenshire could be on the cards after last weekend's result.

Scottish championship regular McCombie could head over the border after beating regular BTRDA winner Luke Francis.

"We'd like to do the Scottish championship again," said McCombie. "We'd like to come to England or Wales more, but there's a lot of travelling. You come down to English and Welsh rallies and there's an extra day here and there. We'd like to have a battle with these [English and Welsh] guys though."

McCombie was one of a large Scottish contingent on Wales Rally GB, but one driver missing was this year's SRC champion Jock Armstrong. The Subaru Impreza driver had led last year's event up until his car sheared a bearing on the final stage. This year, he rolled his car in testing before the event and suffered bruised ribs.



Despite making his international debut on the event with a new co-driver in the slowest class of car, local driver Guy Butler impressed on Wales Rally GB in his Renault Twingo R1. Butler won his class as the only entrant, but finished all three days and finished 47th of 49 cars with John Ambler – who competes in the BTRDA in a Ford Fiesta ST – on the notes.

Photo: Jakob Ebrey



Davies drove the short Great Orme stage on Rally GB in 2015

### Dylan Davies to Pokerstars for asphalt debut

BTRDA driver and team boss Dylan Davies will switch gravel for asphalt for the first time on the Pokerstars Rally on the Isle of Man.

The Welshman missed out on Rally GB after finding a problem on his Subaru Impreza.

"We could have done the event but it might have done a lot of damage and I'd rather not blow the engine," said Davies, who ran two cars in the national rally on the event.

"I've never done any proper Tarmac.

My co-driver put an entry in for us so it should be a lot of fun. I'm not expecting anything, just to go out and have a bit of fun."

Daniel Harper can seal the Manx Rally Championship on the event in his unique BMW Mini Cooper S. He leads George Collister by 16 points going to the Isle of Man.

Also on the entry list is Isle of Man TT winner Michael Dunlop, who missed the Rally Isle of Man in September despite putting in an entry.

'Neil Howard kicks off  
circuit rally series'  
MN Circuit Rally preview, p32



Photos: Kevin Money, Jakob Ebrey

# FORMER BTCC ACE MAKES RALLY DEBUT



Paul Sheard has driven MX-5s in the series

British Touring Car race winner Paul O'Neill will make his competitive rally debut in the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship this weekend at the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park.

O'Neill is a friend of Paul Sheard, who competes in the championship, and providing it is ready, will drive Sheard's new Mk3 car with a Duratec engine and sequential gearbox. O'Neill often competes in circuit racing for Sheard in an

MX-5, and will return to his local circuit and the home of his BTCC win at Oulton Park on Saturday for the Bolton-Le-Moors Car Club event.

"It will be a bit different to what I'm used to, won't it," said O'Neill, who first went to watch a rally in the early 1990s. "The first thing I remember about rallying is Juha Kankkunen overtaking me in Wales. He was in a Celica GT-Four, best thing ever. I was sat in the back of a Peugeot 205 GTi, I must have

been 13. You come alive when you hear things with anti-lag. I remember seeing Colin McRae and the WRC guys."

More recently, the Widnes-born driver headed to Ireland when it formed part of the WRC with Rally Ireland.

"I also went to Rally Ireland. Me and Kane [Steven Kane, Bentley factory driver] went over to see his parents, that was an interesting weekend. I remember Dani Sordo and Sebastien Loeb in it and I

thought 'these guys are quick'. I'd not seen it for a long time and it reignited what I remembered about rallying."

O'Neill's only experience of rallying in the driver's seat was for a feature in MN. "Driving-wise, we went to Mark Higgins' rally school and he sat in with me. It was a Group N Impreza and it had launch [control]. I was just understeering like a touring car billy. We'll be doing something wrong if we manage to understeer this time!"



Jackson suffered illness on Friday but still finished

## Jackson makes four-wheel-drive debut

Reigning John Easson Award winner Matthew Jackson made an impressive four-wheel-drive rallying debut in his Subaru Impreza, despite being ill for the majority of the event.

Jackson was suffering from flu-like symptoms and struggled to compete on Friday, but felt progressively better through Saturday evening and Sunday.

Competing in the national class, Jackson and co-driver

Claire Williams went on to finish 11th overall.

"I was much better on Sunday compared to Friday," said Jackson. "We got there in the end. There's loads left to come but for us it was important to complete all the miles and not make any stupid mistakes. The time was probably awful for Brenig [last stage] but we needed to finish. For our first time in a four-wheel-drive car, I'm made up."

## RALLY REPORT

### Cronin is fast as Pringle and Cumiskey are caught out in Bantry

#### Fastnet Rally

By Brian Patterson

Organiser: Skibbereen and District Car Club  
When: October 30 Where: Bantry, West Cork  
Championship: Plasticbag.ie Southern 4 Rally  
Championship Stages: 6 Starters 79.

**Daniel Cronin, co-driven by Shane Buckley in his Mitsubishi Lancer E9, won his local Fastnet Rally in some style.**

Dundalk's Brendan Cumiskey, driving his Ford Fiesta R5, made a valiant effort to catch the flying Cronin towards the end, but had to settle for second. Cumiskey was co-driven by Ronan O'Kane.

Cronin topped the early running ahead of Jonathan Pringle, as the early going proved slippery. But with the roads drying, Pringle fitted harder compound tyres to his Ford Escort Mk2 at the Bantry

service and took fastest time through stage three.

However, it all went wrong for the Cavan man Pringle in the next test, where he reckoned he would have to push really hard to make an impression on Cronin. Sadly the Pringle Escort caught gravel on a fast right-hander, and was sucked into a ditch and rolled. This was a sad end to the rally for Pringle, who has chalked up some great results this season.

Cumiskey then moved into second and he set fastest times through stages four and five. He had moved to within 12s of Cronin starting the final stage. Cumiskey gave his R5 his best, but his massive charge came to naught when he spun the car and stalled the engine, losing further time trying to get his Fiesta out of a ditch.

This left Cronin to win by 37s, with George Condell in third a further 20s back. Pauric Duffy did hold third going into the final stage but, like Cumiskey, he lost valuable seconds and had to settle for fourth.

#### Results

1 Daniel Cronin/Shane Buckley (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) 1h02m14.1s; 2 Brendan Cumiskey/Ronan O'Kane (Ford Fiesta R5) +37.5s; 3 George Condell/Gavin Sheehan (Toyota Starlet); 4 Pauric Duffy/Jeff Case (Fiesta R5); 5 Vincent McSweeney/Eamon Hayes (Honda Civic); 6 Jason O'Mahony/Breda O'Driscoll (Civic); 7 Jason Ryan/Finbar Quirke (Civic); 8 Cal McCarthy/Eamonn Dullea (Citroen C2 R2); 9 Leonard Downey/Mark Murphy (Escort); 10 Adrian Levis/Alison Levis (Civic).  
**Class winners** Barry Archer/Anthony Cronin (Civic EK4); McCarthy/Dullea; Cumiskey/O'Kane; Martin Lordan/Rory Hennessy (Escort MK2); Victor Beamish/Susan Beamish (Vauxhall Nova); McSweeney/Hayes; Allen Treacy/Eoin Treacy (Toyota Corolla GT); Denis Hickey/Sean Nolan (Escort); Condell/Sheehan; Charlie Hickey/Johnny Hickey (Escort RS); Eric Cahnan/Bernard Foley (Peugeot 106 S16); George Swanton/Kevin Barry (Escort Mk1); Noel Hurley/JP O'Brien (Saab 99 EMS); Cronin/Buckley.

### Black eyes win on return from injury

Callum Black is hoping to win on his return on the Wydean Rally this weekend after breaking his wrist in September.

Black was expecting to compete on the Trackrod Rally before falling off a horse. He's now hoping that despite a strong entry list, he can compete for the win.

"It's just to get more seat time in the car and I think we can win it if we have a good run," added Black. "Rob Swann will be quick and Martyn England in his Fiesta R5+. Shaun Gardener is another who will be there or thereabouts."

Damian Cole is also expected to be a frontrunner as he wheels out his Ford Fiesta RS WRC. The event returns for the first time since 2015, as the organising team took a break from running the event. The rally features 40-miles of competitive stages based around the Forest of Dean with the service park based at Vantage Point Business Park in Mitcheldean.

## AUTOSPORT FEATURES EDITOR

# SCOTT MITCHELL

"Motorsport should jump on closed roads"



**M**otorsport's not available on the national curriculum. Schools around the country are far better equipped (at far less a cost) to have football, rugby and tennis in PE lessons than karting or Junior 1000.

What's the point? That motorsport's not easy to fall into. It's not a jumpers-for-goalposts kind of sport. It's not cheap or easy to get started in. It's not exposed to a wide group of people and those who are exposed to it discover a very high point of entry when they want to pursue it further.

That matters because the majority of sports thrive off those who find it engaging to participate, do so at whatever level their ability allows – and become fans of the upper echelons.

Accessibility is motorsport's biggest issue and Wales Rally GB had a good stab at tackling that last week. The regroup's return to the centre of Chester last Friday night, before each car passed underneath Eastgate Clock, was something of a big deal.

That put the WRC grid and the national entries front and centre before a mix of people from genuine rally fans, and locals who happened to be in the right place at the right time. It's not a million TV viewers, but it's something – and the streets were packed with those looking for autographs and pictures.

That's where it can all start...

Taking motorsport to the people is one of the only obvious ways of easing the hurdle of accessibility. And there's something interesting on the horizon: the long-awaited closed-road legislation.

When that comes into effect, British motorsport needs to grab the bull by the horns. Push for a closed-roads British Rally Championship round in England. Get the British Hillclimb Championship to put on a Craigantlet-style show in Southampton. Try and pull off a British Touring Car Championship street demonstration in Corby.

Big series like the BTCC, and events like Formula 1's British Grand Prix, are doing well at the moment. But where's the next generation of fan? Declining TV figures in grand prix racing are proof that with more competition than ever for people's attention, motorsport's long-term future is far from nailed on.

As the consumer pool shrinks it'll be the national parts of the sport that die first.

There is not an easy answer or a quick fix, but outreach events can be a part of the solution. Of course it's difficult, of course there would be hoops to jump through, of course someone, somewhere, will have to foot the bill.

But motorsport – be it at international or national level – has to fight harder than ever for its place in this world. If it loses that battle, the cost will be far greater than any of the above events would ever be.



**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
mn.letters@haymarket.com

# RACING NEWS

## F1 ROUND-UP



Sainz was unhappy at censure

### Sainz blast

Toro Rosso racer Carlos Sainz has hit out at his time penalty during the Mexican GP. The Spaniard was handed a five-second penalty for shoving Fernando Alonso's McLaren-Honda onto the grass at the start of the race. Sainz, who went on to finish 16th, said: "I think it was harsh because at the start you cannot look 360 degrees. When I saw him it was late, but it's not like he was side-by-side with me. I've seen people not get a penalty for much worse."

### Alonso adds

Alonso, who finished 13th, also had his say on the incident, countering: "We spent like 50 laps behind Carlos, and obviously we had the move on the first lap, which was not very fair. They put five seconds [penalty], but when you spend 50 laps behind that car your race is already compromised. On the first lap we were on the wrong side at the wrong moment. We had a little incident that put us in a difficult position for the remainder of the race, so not a nice result."

### Ricciardo's view

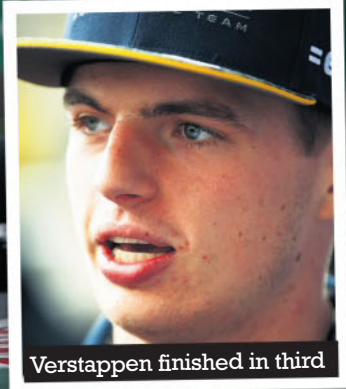
Daniel Ricciardo reckons that Mexican GP winner Lewis Hamilton deserved a penalty for his off at the start of the race. Ricciardo said after the race: "There should be a f\*\*king wall there [at Turn One]. I don't understand the start – how can you be leading the race, defend, lock your wheels and go off the track, and stay in the lead? Lewis deserved a penalty – anyone in that position deserves a penalty. I saw Max cut the chicane defending from Seb. He got a penalty, so I don't know what was different with Lewis's. For me, if you lock up the brakes and cut the corner, it's a mistake. You have to pay the price."

### Wolff v Brawn

Mercedes head Toto Wolff believes his relationship with former team boss Ross Brawn is "intact" despite Brawn revealing that he couldn't trust the team structure in his new book, *Total Competition: Lessons in strategy from Formula 1*. Wolff said of the comments: "First of all there was a lot of controversy around the book, but succession and transition are never easy. It's a delicate matter. For me it's no problem, and actually we've been in touch and he has said some quite nice things about us not dropping the ball, and the relationship is intact."



Vettel ranted on the radio



Verstappen finished in third

# VETTEL AND MAX AT LOGGERHEADS

## Penalised pair lash out at each other after tempestuous Mexican GP

By Rob Ladbrook

**Sebastian Vettel and Max Verstappen have taken more swipes at each other after clashing in a turbulent Mexican GP, in which both drivers were penalised.**

Vettel was angered when Verstappen refused to give up third place after running wide and cutting the first corner during the closing stages of the race when under pressure from the German.

Red Bull's pit wall suggested Verstappen hand the place to Vettel, but the Dutchman refused and instead continued to defend, allowing his Red Bull Racing team-mate Daniel Ricciardo to attack Vettel for fourth. Vettel sent a series of angry radio

messages to his Ferrari team during the closing laps, including shouting 'here's a message for Charlie [Whiting, race director] – F\*\*k Off! F\*\*k Off!' as he crossed the line in fourth.

Verstappen initially headed to the podium, where he found out he'd been handed a time penalty for cutting the corner, promoting Vettel to third. However, the German was later called to the stewards and penalised 10 seconds for moving in the braking zone during his clash with Ricciardo. The Australian inherited third as a result, with Verstappen fourth.

Vettel blasted Verstappen after the race, and also said he apologised to Whiting for his outburst. "I went to see him [Whiting] right after the race, but I don't understand why you are making a

fuss and asking questions [about his abusive language]," said Vettel.

"It was not the right thing to say, equally in my defence emotions and adrenaline is pumping high so I don't understand why you are trying to push me into a corner about it. Out of respect I told him [Whiting] what I did. He is aware, and that's it.

"With Max, I was quicker and closing the gap, got into DRS, put him under a lot of pressure, he made a mistake. It was clear that he should have moved over. He didn't move."

Vettel and Verstappen exchanged hand gestures on the cool-down lap, before Verstappen countered: "I don't know how many times he is using bad language in general. I think he has to go back to school to get some language. I

will speak to him because this is ridiculous the way he is handling it.

"He's always so frustrated, the whole weekend he's shouting on the radio. He's just a very frustrated guy at the moment."

Both drivers also disagreed with their respective race penalties. Verstappen said of his: "It's ridiculous. Mine was similar to when Lewis [Hamilton] ran off [at the start], he gained a massive advantage. OK, if they don't give a penalty for that, don't give me a penalty at the end."

Ferrari team head Maurizio Arrivabene said: "We gained a podium and they removed it with bureaucracy – fantastic. When they give a five or 10-second penalty you can't appeal. You just have to listen to what they decide."

## Lewis: Brakes were to blame

Lewis Hamilton has blamed his stuttering start to the Mexican GP on an anomaly with his front brakes, which he says he was surprised didn't make him crash.

Hamilton suffered a huge lock-up on his run to the first corner before skating off the circuit at Turn One and rejoining before Turn Three.

"On the formation lap I had a glazed right-front brake, I just couldn't wake it up," said the Briton, whose win in Mexico moves him within 19 points of Nico Rosberg.

"I had 500 degrees [centigrade] in the left-front and 150-200 in the right-front. So when I went into Turn One the right-front just locked. I was carrying so much speed there I was lucky I didn't go into the wall or something.

"After that I had the biggest vibration, I didn't know if I was going to be able to make the first stint [without pitting early]."

## Magnussen in the frame for seat at Haas F1

Kevin Magnussen has held talks about switching to the Haas F1 Team for 2017, as speculation over the Dane's future at Renault continues.

Haas team head Gunther Steiner confirmed during the Mexican GP weekend that he had held discussions with Magnussen as the team evaluates its driver options for next year. Romain Grosjean is already confirmed at the squad, but three names are in the frame should Haas opt to kick out Esteban Gutierrez.

Magnussen is thought to be a leading contender, alongside Jolyon Palmer and Esteban Ocon.

"We've spoken with Kevin, like we've talked to a few other drivers," said Steiner. "There are not 10 [names] on the shortlist anymore, we are down to two or three, but we are talking, with Esteban also still in the mix.

"There are obviously a few seats available in the F1 market, and everybody is trying to get their different agendas in. You want the best driver, with a lot of money, and you have the pros and cons of getting money or not. Pretty soon somebody will make a decision and things will fall into place."

Magnussen said he was still firmly focused on retaining his



Magnussen could swap teams

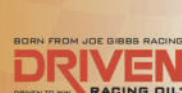
seat with Renault, which has already signed Nico Hulkenberg for next season.

"I want to stay here, that's my target and what I want to do," said Magnussen. "It's a factory team that has the ability to fight for championships in the future, and that's what I want to be a part of."

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Tel +44(0)1929 551557 Fax +44(0)1929 551567  
racing@aaoil.co.uk www.aaoil.co.uk



'Hamilton win keeps Rosberg in sight'  
Mexican GP report, p26



Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mick Walker

# BMR SUBARUS TO BE TWEAKED FOR 2017



BMR Subaru will be altered for '17

Moffat tested Levorg

The Subaru Levorg GT British Touring Car Championship machines will have an alteration to their centre of gravity next season to bring them into line with other cars in the category.

Team BMR built four of the estate-shaped machines for the contest this season, and the factory-backed cars were driven by Colin Turkington, Jason Plato, James Cole and team principal Warren Scott.

The two-litre turbocharged cars have a boxer engine, which means the weight in the powerplant is lower down in the chassis than most other cars.

Turkington won five races and finished in

fourth place in the standings, while Plato won at Knockhill and ended up seventh in the points.

At a recent teams' meeting, other outfits on the grid voted in favour of the championship's technical chiefs coming up with a formula to level out the centre of gravity on all cars.

Team boss Scott said he was disappointed by the decision, but recognised that this had been done at the behest of rival squads.

"This is a shame, but it is how the championship works, and we signed up to the BTCC. There was a perception that we had an advantage with the weight

distribution of the car, but I would argue that our speed towards the end of the 2016 campaign came because we were going into each of the race meetings without too much in the way of success ballast. We have to accept this and move on."

● Laser Tools Racing driver Aiden Moffat tested for the Team BMR squad at Donington Park last week as he evaluates options ahead of his 2017 campaign. The young Scottish driver has also lined up some running in GT3 and GT4 sportscars before determining his future direction. "He adapted to rear-wheel drive really well," said Scott. "We were all impressed."

## Morris to race in 2017 Daytona 24 Hours

British GT driver Seb Morris will race in the top class of next year's Daytona 24 Hours after winning the Sunoco Whelen Challenge.

Morris finished third in the British GT3 points this year, taking four pole positions, a race victory and a fastest lap in his debut GT season. The Sunoco contest scores drivers a points average dependent on their respective results.

Morris has won the prize after closest rival, Radical European Masters star Marco Cencetti, failed to score enough points during last weekend's round at Jerez to overhaul Morris's total.

Morris will now get a fully-funded seat in a Whelen-backed Daytona Prototype for the January 28/29 event. He is the third British GT racer to win the prize, following Jonathan Adam last year and Phil Keen in 2015 [when he raced Radicals], who were both ineligible having won



Morris will head Stateside

previously. Morris's team and co-drivers are yet to be announced.

"It was disappointing to miss out on the British GT title this year, but my sights have been set on winning the Sunoco Challenge and racing at Daytona," he said.

"Manufacturers and big teams like drivers who have proven themselves in big races, which is difficult for young guns like me with limited budget. Racing at Daytona isn't just about having a good time, it's demonstrating what I can do in one of the world's biggest sportscar stages."

## Files secures late Macau Guia TCR entry

TCR Germany champion Josh Files has secured a late deal to take part in the TCR Guia Race of Macau later this month.

The 25-year-old will drive the same Target Competition Honda Civic that he won the German title with and will make his second appearance in the event that forms part of the Macau F3 World Cup support bill. Last year Files took part in an uncompetitive Opel Astra and is confident of better results this time.

"I'm going with Target Competition in a Honda, so I'm going with my championship-

winning car and I'm going to fight for wins," said 2013 Renault UK Clio Cup champion Files. "This year I'm in a good car, a championship-winning car with a championship-winning team. I'm a lot more confident to go there now and enjoy the race weekend and fight for wins."

"I have a big task at hand because Tiago Monteiro [Honda World Touring Car Championship driver] is doing it too. Monteiro has that bit more experience of the circuit but I have more experience in the car."

## THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Louis Deletraz claimed the Formula V8 3.5 points lead at Jerez last weekend as erstwhile leader Tom Dillmann managed a best result of eighth. The pair collided in the opening race – with Deletraz given a 10-second penalty for causing the contact – while second in race two handed Deletraz the lead. Matthieu Vaxiviere led the opener after guesting poleman Jack Aitken made a shocking start, but made a mistake in the closing stages and handed Matevos Isaakyan a maiden win. Egor Orudzhev made a brilliant start from fifth to claim

the race two win, with Aitken bouncing back from his earlier disappointment to take fourth... Jimmie Johnson won the NASCAR Sprint Cup race at Martinsville last weekend to secure a spot in the Homestead title showdown. The six-time champion overcame bodywork damage and fuel dramas to take the victory...

The Strakka LMP2 squad will miss the remainder of the World Endurance Championship season after engine problems with its Gibson-Nissan 015S at Fuji have proved to be terminal. Customs rules have prevented the team from getting an engine to the Chinese round this weekend and the team decided it wouldn't be worth competing in the Bahrain season finale as the Gibson would be given a three-minute penalty for exceeding its engine allocation for the year...



Photo: LAT

Will Palmer tested a McLaren Formula 1 car at Silverstone last Wednesday as part of his prize for winning the 2015 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award. 19-year-old Palmer drove Jenson Button's 2011 Canadian Grand Prix-winning MP4-26, completing three five-lap runs on the Grand Prix circuit.

## F1 RACING'S ASSOCIATE EDITOR

# STUART CODLING

"A good circuit tests a driver's skill set"



"This is a crap circuit," an ex-Formula 1 driver remarked to me in passing last weekend. "Totally neutered. Not what it was..."

Well, nothing is, is it? One of the sport's greatest challenges at the moment is that at a time when it needs to be moving forwards it still has its eyes focused on the contents of the rear-view mirror. No wonder it keeps bumping into things.

And, yes, the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez *might* have been improved if it had been relaid with a more high-grip asphalt surface when it was renovated, but anyone who thinks the iconic Peraltada corner could or should have been retained in the layout is deluding themselves. We're talking about a corner on which no less an eminence than Ayrton Senna briefly feared for his life after overturning his McLaren in the gravel.

With a main road on the other side of the fence, there was no way the run-off could have been brought up to modern safety standards. It's a shame to hear people who should know better echoing the uninformed sentiments of the kind of person who sits at home with their trousers around their ankles, bashing their opinions into internet forums.

The Mexico venue's knockers also like to point out that the drivers don't like the low-grip surface and some of the fiddly low-speed corners. Again, this is a self-reinforcing point: racing drivers love to go fast, and if you ask them whether they prefer quick corners to slow corners they'll always plump for the former. But of course, they don't like easy fast corners. We're back into Eau-Rouge-ain't-what-it-used-to-be territory.

For those watching trackside, a sequence of tricky low-ish-speed corners with iffy grip levels such as Mexico City's first three turns can be a great insight into driver technique. They may not be fast, but they're difficult to get right; and surely, that should be part of the challenge. A good circuit should exercise many different elements of a racing driver's skill set.

Just standing at Turn 1 at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez you can appreciate the silky braking technique of the likes of Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas; it's a question of left-foot finesse rather than daring lateness. You can see, too, how the crisply balanced Mercedes spears neatly towards the apex, and compare it with the ugly, towing-a-caravan pendulousness of the Renault. If every car passed by in the blink of an eye, you'd never see these details.

So the Mexico track isn't what it was, it's what it is. On Saturday morning Bernie popped his head out of his office and was collared for a 'selfie' by a passing VIP. Judging by his body language, BCE wasn't entirely familiar with the procedure or purpose of this ritual, but he put his social-media aversion to one side and did the honours. If Bernie can (grudgingly) live with the now, why can't you?



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# RACING NEWS

Photos: Richard Styles, Jakob Ebrey

## IN BRIEF

### Hawkins to VW Cup

Jessica Hawkins, 21-year-old former kart and single-seater racer, made her Volkswagen Racing Cup debut with Team Hard at Brands Hatch last weekend. She achieved two top 10 finishes in preparation for a full assault on the championship in 2017.

### Fuller's debut

Tom Fuller, the 30-year-old son of BARC Intermarque racer Mark Fuller, made his car racing debut in the family Mercedes SLK silhouette at Brands Hatch last weekend. The former karter took a best result of seventh in the Allcomers races.

### Smalley Scholar

Adam Smalley has secured a fully-funded season in Ginetta Juniors next year after winning the Junior Scholarship. The 15-year-old took part in driving, media and fitness assessments in a three-day shootout at Blyton Park and emerged on top after making it through to the final with Matt Luff and Toby Goodman.

### Hollamby's horror

BTCC team boss Shaun Hollamby returned to driving duties for a guest appearance in the Volkswagen Racing Cup at Brands Hatch. After a strong Friday, his race only lasted a few seconds as he was an innocent party in a multi-car first lap shunt, which left his Maximum Motorsport Scirocco in a sorry state after rolling at the foot of Paddock Hill.

### Caroline expects to stay in F4 in '17

British Formula 4 racer Jamie Caroline is likely to remain in the category next season despite making his BRDC British F3 debut in the Autumn Trophy at Snetterton last weekend.

The 17-year-old took a best result of third at Snetterton driving for Douglas Motorsport but is set to remain in F4 for the 2017 season with either Carlin or Double R Racing.

Caroline had a tough first season of single-seaters, switching from Jamun to Fortec part-way through, but claimed his maiden win in the final weekend at Brands Hatch.

"It's a big learning curve jumping into the F3 car," he said. "It's a much faster car to drive."

"I'm not looking at this championship in the short term, but it's something to think about for 2018."

"I'm going to race in Formula 4 again and it's likely between Carlin and Double R. I've got a sponsor to bring on board and it should all be finalised in the new year."

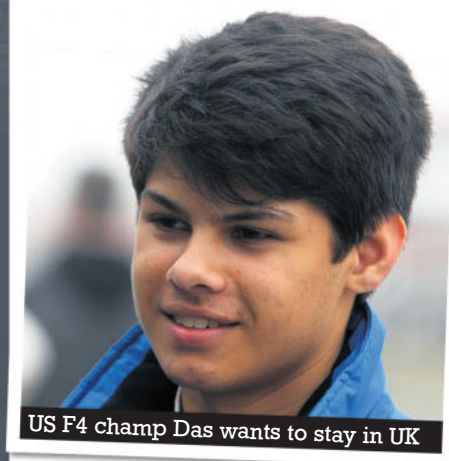


# AMERICAN ACE CLOSE TO BRITISH F3 CAMPAIGN

## F4 champion Das in talks with Carlin



Das ran with top team Carlin in F3



US F4 champ Das wants to stay in UK

By Tom Errington

**American single-seater champion Cameron Das is in talks to contest the full BRDC British Formula 3 Championship with Carlin next year.**

The 16-year-old from Brooklandville, Maryland won this year's Honda-powered US Formula 4 Championship and joined last weekend's Autumn Trophy contest with the Farnham team as he assesses his options for 2017. He finished seventh in the Autumn Trophy points with a best placing of fifth on his first visit to the Norfolk track.

"I'm in talks with teams, but I'm

mainly focusing on trying to get a seat with Carlin," said Das, who took eight consecutive wins to seal this year's US F4 title.

"British F3 is a very good starting step as a platform towards European F3 and the strength of coaching and training in the UK is just so high that I'm very eager to ensure my next career step is in Europe.

"I've enjoyed my taste of the British F3 Championship, the car is a lot of fun and it's a big step up from an F4 car."

Autumn Trophy champion Enaam Ahmed is also chasing a return to the full championship next season, but is unlikely to remain with Carlin.

Ahmed won two of the three races on a one-off outing with Carlin last weekend, and said his 2017 programme was up in the air. He previously finished fifth in the full 2016 championship with the Douglas Motorsport team.

"I raced with Carlin this weekend as a big sponsor came in and wanted me to race with them," Ahmed said. "I'm not actually sure where my future lies and I certainly haven't signed with anyone yet."

"Carlin kept me calm and collected this morning [Sunday] with the bad weather disrupting things. Winning the title is a huge boost for me in my 2017 aims."

## Smith 'let down' by Mini officials after qualifying exclusion over rear-view mirror irregularity

British Touring Car driver Jeff Smith has hit out at his controversial exclusion from Mini Challenge qualifying at Snetterton last weekend, after his rear-view mirror was protested.

Smith had qualified on pole for the first race on Saturday when his Eurotech Racing-run car was protested by a rival driver for

having a non-permitted convex rear-view mirror fitted. The mirrors are mandated in the BTCC, but aren't written into Mini Challenge regulations.

Smith was excluded from the session and made to start at the back of the grid for race one, with a 10-second delayed start penalty. Smith said: "Whilst I appreciate

that the regulations have not been written in a manner to incorporate the use of these mirrors, I feel let down that the championship did not stand in and influence the protest as it clearly gave no performance advantage and I lost a pole and possibly a race win over something absolutely petty. It makes a mockery of the sport."

Mini Challenge promoter Antony Williams said: "I feel for Jeff and we do plan to have the mirrors written into the regulations from next year as they do bring a safety benefit. But rules are rules; the implementation of the rules, including technical matters, is an MSA matter and we cannot influence that."



Exclusion frustrated Smith



Monger took three F4 podiums in '16

## Monger to stay with JHR for second campaign in British Formula 4

British F4 racer Billy Monger will remain with JHR Developments in the series next year.

The 17-year-old finished 12th in the standings in his maiden season in single-seaters this year, taking three podiums and narrowly missed out on his maiden win at

Rockingham with technical trouble on the last lap.

It will be Monger's third year with JHR after finishing fifth in Ginetta Juniors in 2015 with the team.

"For me, it was a no-brainer to stay with JHR," he said. "They're a great bunch of guys and I feel very

much at home inside the team, and that kind of environment really inspires confidence."

"The target for 2017 has to be race wins, and if we can achieve that on a consistent basis, then there's no reason why we can't challenge for the championship."

## Mini squad Excelr8 adds Creventic endurance programme to stable

Mini Challenge squad Excelr8 will expand into the Creventic 24 Hour Series next season with a bespoke endurance John Cooper Works machine.

The new car is built on the standard F56 JCW Challenge car, but with heavy modification to adapt the car to long distance racing. It features the same turbocharged two-litre BMW engine as the Challenge cars, but has been boosted from 255bhp to 345bhp with forged internals, a

gas flowed head, Garret turbo and custom manifold.

The car will go through an intensive testing programme over the winter ahead of a full campaign in the pan-European Creventic class next year.

Excelr8's Oliver Shepherd is behind the project and formerly was part of the Creventic paddock with the Marc Cars team.

Shepherd said: "We wanted to make the most extreme version of the JCW, and where better to

prove it than endurance racing?"

"When building the car we had to think about where the ultimate performance was and then dial it back to ensure it lasted. The engine is capable of 390bhp, but we're running lower for longevity as endurance racing is half about speed and half about reliability."

"The Creventic series is fantastic, and it's a great platform to show what the current Mini is capable of and what Excelr8 can produce."



The Challenge car will race in Creventic 24 Hours series

**'Ahmed claimed honours as fog stopped play'**  
Full F3 Autumn Trophy report, p29

Photos: Richard Styles, Jakob Ebrey, Fresh Orange Photography, LAT



Mectech man Smith will race Ligier

# RML TO MAKE SPORTSCAR RETURN WITH LMP3 ASSAULT

British constructor RML will return to sportscar racing for the first time in six years next season after partnering with Mectech Motorsport for a dual campaign in the European Le Mans Series and British Prototype Cup.

RML (Ray Mallock Limited) has taken delivery of its first Ligier JS P3 LMP3 chassis and will field Mectech Radical drivers Bradley Smith and Evgeny Klyucharev for a full season of ELMS next year, and plans to also dovetail that programme with multiple cars in the new Prototype Cup class.

The deal marks the first time RML has entered a traditional category of sportscar racing

since 2011. The squad has won several ELMS LMP2 titles, including in 2007 and its last full term in 2010. It has also fielded works Le Mans programmes for brands such as Aston Martin, MG and more recently Nissan, where it developed the ZEOD Garage 56 entry in 2014. It has also won numerous FIA World Touring Car Championship titles with Chevrolet.

RML's commercial director Simon Holloway told *Motorsport News*: "We've been watching the growth of LMP3 closely in recent seasons and it's experiencing a real boom at the moment, and next year it'll be even bigger."

"I've known Bradley [Smith]

and the Mectech team since karting and this seemed like a perfect chance for us to go back to sportscars as we have a proven car already in the Ligier and two strong drivers.

"For us it will be a toe back into ELMS, and may lead us back to LMP2 in the future also, but for now LMP3 is the challenge."

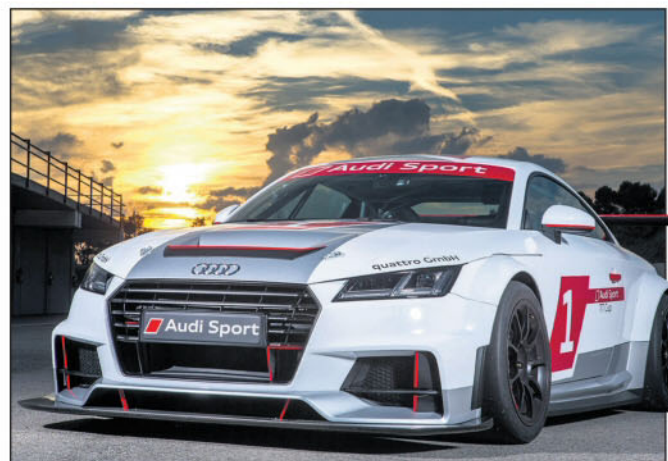
"The Prototype Cup is also firmly in our plans as it's a great stepping-stone. Drivers have to learn the skills needed in prototype racing, and the British series allows them to race with other cars without the stresses, pressures and budgets of the European championship."

"The two calendars don't clash so the plan is to run the same

cars in both series. We've already got interest for a second car also, so hopefully we can secure enough ELMS entries. We're also hoping to do the Road to Le Mans race [which supports the 24 Hours in June]."

Mectech head Mike Smith added: "RML's ambitions and our own fit perfectly for next year. We've won three Radical titles on the trot as a team, so LMP3 is the natural next step to expand into."

"It's great to work with RML as we'll pool resources and engineers and it allows us to create a ladder for both drivers and staff to progress to a very high level of sportscar racing and Le Mans."



Walton has enlisted help of Slidesports to prepare TTs for racing

## New-build TTs to contest VW Racing Cup

Mini racer Simon Walton will become the first person to field a new-generation Audi TT in the Volkswagen Racing Cup in 2017.

Walton, who competes in the Cooper Class of the Mini Challenge, has bought two brand new two-litre TFSi TTs for both himself and his son Owen to race next season.

The cars were delivered last month and have already done a track day at Croft, before being sent away to VW specialist Slidesports to be built into race cars for next year.

Walton Sr, who runs the Swan Flight case business, said: "We've

got special dispensation to run the TTs in the VW Cup as they're the new model so it works for the series and for Audi."

"Nobody has built and raced a new TT in this country, so it's a good challenge to be doing the first development with things like the rollcage, brakes and such."

"The cars are front-wheel drive, 230bhp and are great fun, and they should easily be competitive against the usual Golfs and Sciroccos on the grid. We just wanted to do something a bit different - this fits the bill. Owen and I will still do Mini Coopers next year too so it'll be busy."

## Hatchman Hammond tests endurance Leon

Classic Stock Hatch regular Pip Hammond swapped his Vauxhall Nova for a SEAT Leon Eurocup car in a test at Silverstone last week with Zest Racecar Engineering.

Hammond tested the car - built to TCR regulations - at the Northamptonshire circuit last Monday, sharing the track with British Touring Car Championship race winner Tom Ingram and sportscar outfit FF Corse.

"Everything I have raced - the Porsche and the Nova - has been production-based with standard suspension and treaded tyres," said Hammond. "To get into a car with three times more power, sitting on the other side with a paddleshift, all of the grip of the

slick tyres and then massive brakes with no servo assist, was an eye-opener."

The 2011 Stock Hatch champion Hammond, who also won two races in a bit-part campaign in the 750 Motor Club championship this year, is in line to compete in the car at selected events next season.

Zest plans to campaign the Leon in select Touring Car Endurance Series (TCES) rounds in 2017.

"The car is really suited to TCES; because it's a one-make championship car as a base, it's built to be reliable," added Hammond.

The team is scheduled to test again in Barcelona, to which Hammond has been invited, although a date has not yet been arranged.

Hammond in Leon



Photo: Gary Hill



**A SsangYong Korando made a brief appearance at Brands Hatch last Saturday. The pickup truck - which will be raced in the one-make SsangYong Racing Challenge that is scheduled to launch in 2017 - was entered into the Allcomers event at the circuit, but driver Ash Slight lost control at Paddock Hill bend on his first qualifying lap and the Korando finished on its side in the gravel trap.**

## DEPUTY EDITOR

# ROB LADBROOK

**"The WEC will survive, with or without Audi"**



Le Mans 24 Hours was Audi v Peugeot for years

**This isn't good. This isn't good at all. But, crucially, it isn't the end of the world.**

Since its arrival into the sport in the late 1990s, Audi has grown into perhaps the most iconic sportscar racing brand of the modern era. It was a pioneer, both in terms of racing car design and engine technology.

Audi pretty much single-handedly made the world sit up and take notice of diesel technology. In fact before 2006 you'd struggle to buy a diesel car in America. All that changed after Audi's win at Sebring that year with the revolutionary R10.

But now we've come to this. Eighteen years and 13 Le Mans wins later and the dream is over. Audi has contested its last Le Mans already, well, its last for the foreseeable future anyway.

Questions had been raised about the future of the programme, with the Volkswagen-Audi Group not keen on bankrolling two of its brands against each other in the same arena, especially when suffering the fallout from the 'dieselgate' emissions scandal.

For a firm already with rocked credibility over its diesel engines, a racing programme centring on one doesn't really add up.

Audi's withdrawal will be keenly felt in both the FIA World Endurance Championship and the Le Mans 24 Hours. It reduces the ranks of the LMP1 division by effectively 30 per cent, and leaves just Porsche and Toyota to battle it out.

But is that such a bad thing? Remember, when the WEC was reborn in 2012 it featured just two brands - Audi and Toyota. Admittedly it should have been three, but Peugeot opted to pull the plug a few months beforehand, forcing Toyota to step in swiftly. But before that Le Mans was almost exclusively Audi v Peugeot for five years, and nobody was crying out desperately for a third factory team then.

The WEC, and Le Mans, will survive. Granted, manufacturers bring a lot of credibility and marketing power to a championship, but that championship cannot be dictated by or overly dependant on them.

Manufacturers come and go, and WEC boss Gerard Neveu has already said that while Audi will be missed, its absence won't devalue the championship.

"One manufacturer is leaving, others will soon be arriving, and we have a 32 car grid for next year. This is the life of a championship," he said.

So chin up, and instead of being sad Audi is gone, instead be thankful its 18-year programme happened at all.



**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
mn.letters@haymarket.com

# RACING NEWS

Photos: Ollie Read, Jakob Ebrey

## OLYMPIC CYCLING STARS HOY AND KENNY SHARE A RADICAL AT JEREZ

By Peter Scherer

**Multiple gold medal-winning Olympians Sir Chris Hoy and Jason Kenny were reunited as a team for the first time since the 2012 London Olympics when they shared a Radical RXC Spyder in the final round of the Radical European Masters at Jerez last weekend.**

The duo finished third in class in the first two races and were fourth in the finale. The cycling stars teamed up to take part in the race after Radical contacted the pair before this summer's Rio Olympics.

"Radical had been in touch before the Olympics and said that if Jason got a gold medal in Rio, it would be good to put us in a car together," said Hoy. "Well, of course he did better than that [winning three]."

Hoy started racing in Radicals before progressing to compete in British GT and in LMP3 and LMP2 machinery – which included racing at Le Mans earlier this year – after retiring from cycling. Kenny previously raced in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge in 2013

before his cycling commitments restricted his motorsport outings, but he made his comeback at Brands Hatch in the Radical Challenge at the end of August.

They had always been keen to race together sometime, as their car racing interest goes back a number of years, with Kenny introducing Hoy to the track.

Kenny added: "I have been so busy training and after the Ginettas managed one race in the Radical SR3s at the Nurburgring in 2014. I was so made up to be on the podium and loved the driver change and team work, so vowed to have another go some time."

Hoy is next due out in the Race of Remembrance at Anglesey later this month, where he will share a car with a Paralympic cyclist.

● Tony Wells secured the Radical European Masters class title with two wins out of three in the season's finale at Jerez in the SR8 he shared with James Littlejohn. Marcelo Marateotto and Marco Cencetti were crowned SR3 champions for a second year and with it took the overall crown.



Kenny (l) and Hoy took two class podiums in RXC Spyder

### New budget class for Mini Challenge next year

The Mini Challenge will introduce a new budget class for next season in an effort to lower Cooper Class costs.

For next season the Coopers will be split into two categories – Cooper Pro and Cooper Am.

The new Cooper Am class will run for cars with minimal modifications with budgets estimated to be around £10,000 per season for a privateer entry running their own car.

The Cooper Pro class will run for the current naturally aspirated 1.6-litre 130bhp cars, which are also fitted with the six-speed Cooper S

gearbox. The Am cars will be detuned to 120bhp and will retain the standard five-speed gearbox, which is currently used in the Scottish Mini Cooper Cup. The Am class will also run on treaded Dunlop tyres, instead of slicks.

A conversion kit of build parts will be supplied for the new Am cars and costs £3495 + VAT, or ready to race packages will cost £6495 + VAT with a donor car.

Mini Challenge promoter Antony Williams said: "Budgets are still the biggest challenge in motorsport,



Cooper Am costs will be lower

and the Cooper Am class is a stripped-back option, which should allow drivers to build a car and have a full season of racing for around £10,000. Removing a bit of power lets us keep the standard gearbox, which saves a lot."

### British GT crew Farmer and Barnes to GT Open

British GT men Mark Farmer and Jon Barnes will warm up for their title challenge next season by joining the International GT Open grid at Barcelona this weekend.

The pair, who finished fourth in British GT this year and took their maiden race win together at Spa-Francorchamps, will share a second Aston Martin Vantage GT3 entry from TF Sport. Salih Yoluc and Euan Hankey will race TF's other Vantage in the event.

TF boss Tom Ferrier said: "I'm delighted to welcome Jon and Mark to our GT Open programme. It's a very positive thing for the team to run two cars in the series and it's timely for the drivers too as it will keep them fresh and in the zone over the long winter break."

Farmer and Barnes will return to British GT next year as part of an unchanged line-up from TF Sport, with reigning champions Derek Johnston and Jonathan Adam in the sister car.



Farmer (l) and Barnes will race at Barcelona

## KARTING REPORT

Photos: Gary Hawkins



Barnicoat (left) and Bradshaw fought hard for the victory



Final podium (l-r) Prior, Bradshaw, Crees and John Surtees

### Bradshaw beats the stars for Surtees Challenge win

#### Henry Surtees Challenge

By Rob Ladbrook

Organiser: HSF/Buckmore Park Kart Club When: October 26  
Where: Buckmore Park, Kent Starters: 25

**Karting star Callum Bradshaw booked himself a British Formula 4 test with Carlin after coming out on top of a star-studded field in the seventh annual Henry Surtees Challenge event at Buckmore Park.**

Bradshaw took a controlled victory in the final after beating drivers such as European F3 race-winner Ben Barnicoat, GP3 driver Jake Dennis and Ginetta Junior champion Will Tregurtha, which highlighted the entry.

The event aims to help boost the careers of aspiring drivers via a selection of top prizes, all donated by leading teams and suppliers. All proceeds from the event go toward the Henry Surtees Foundation.

Despite the horde of established car racers, the front row for the Pre-Final had a familiar look about it, with the cream of the arrive-and-drive karting world always figuring well at this event. All drivers run on Club 100 115cc TKM-engined Birel hire karts, with drivers switching chassis between each session.

Easykart frontrunner Owen Jenman grabbed pole ahead of last year's winner Piers

Prior. Upholding car-racing honour was a second row of British F4 man Alex Quinn and Barnicoat. Bradshaw felt his first kart was down on power and started just fifth, but benefited from trouble for others ahead in what was a fraught first race.

When the lights went out Jenman headed the pack, but Bradshaw got the best getaway, running third at the end of the first lap before displacing Quinn for second.

Jenman couldn't get a gap and soon the top five ran as one as Bradshaw, Barnicoat, Quinn and Prior piled the pressure on.

Jenman was elbowed wide through Hairpin Two, allowing Barnicoat to steal into the lead ahead of Bradshaw. Barnicoat managed to forge a slender lead, aided when Charlie Turner began to pressure for second, having battled his way up the order mid-race. Turner snatched second spot from Bradshaw a lap from home, but the order at the flag didn't last.

From the 25 entries, the grid managed to rack up a total of 24 place penalties for various transgressions, with Barnicoat pinged two places for track limits, and Turner getting four for multiple contact.

The amended result gave Bradshaw the win, and pole for the Final, ahead of Barnicoat, Turner and Prior.

With drivers switching chassis, there is a certain amount of fortune involved in which drivers benefit from a marginally stronger kart with each session. That proved a factor.

Barnicoat got away well to run outside Bradshaw to grab the lead through Henry's Bend, but couldn't pull away. "I don't think the kart I had under me in the final was quite as good," said Barnicoat. "I was having to drive the widest Birel ever made!"

Barnicoat's defence lasted an impressive eight laps, with Bradshaw literally pushing him around at points, unable to find a gap, but one appeared at turn one.

"Ben was defending well, but he left a little gap on the inside so I went for it," said 15-year-old Bradshaw. "I knew my kart was faster than his, so it was just about picking my moment."

Once ahead, Bradshaw excelled as Barnicoat acted as the cork in the bottle to those behind. The impressive Michael Crees did manage to sneak past for second after pulling off a great move into Hairpin One to pass both Barnicoat and Ross Martin as they fought ahead of him.

Barnicoat held on for third on the road ahead of Prior, Turner, Martin and Ginetta racer Ben Green, but was demoted to fifth for a second track limits infringement.

"It's been an amazing event," said Bradshaw. "The prizes are amazing and will really benefit all of us."

**Results**  
Pre-Final (16 laps) 1 Callum Bradshaw; 2 Ben Barnicoat +2.180s; 3 Charlie Turner; 4 Piers Prior; 5 Matthew Taylor; 6 David Robinson. Pole Owen Jenman. Fastest lap Turner 45.680s. Starters 25.  
Final (20 laps) 1 Bradshaw; 2 Michael Crees +2.370s; 3 Prior; 4 Turner; 5 Barnicoat; 6 Ross Martin. P Bradshaw. FL Crees 45.410s. S 25.



# CONGRATULATIONS DAVID 2016 RALLY AMERICA CHAMPION



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# WALTER HAYES TROPHY PREVIEW

'Grady takes the honours at Snetterton'  
Mini Challenge report, p29

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



# CARROLL CHANGES ENGINE AFTER WOEFUL FESTIVAL

## Defending winner hopes new powerplant will bring him Walter Hayes victory



Boyd (r) congratulates Carroll in 2015

Carroll topped last year's Walter Hayes

By Jack Benyon

**Reigning Walter Hayes Trophy winner Graham Carroll is hoping a new engine supplier will help him to challenge for victory on this year's event.**

Last year Carroll returned after a lengthy absence to win the WHT in a Medina Motorsport Van Diemen run by BM Racing. But the Scot has been developing Ralph Firman's new Firman RF1600 car this year, and a troublesome development period culminated with an off-the-pace performance at the Formula Ford Festival due to a struggling engine. His team-mate, Luke Williams, was a frontrunner in the event.

"It should definitely be better than Brands," said Carroll. "We've got a new engine, we've gone back to a guy in Ireland who used to build our engines. I think the engine Ralph uses is a new guy on the block, and these guys in Ireland have been doing it for years. The car was good at Brands, but when I put my foot down I could just feel people driving away from me."

Stephen Patton is the builder primed with constructing Carroll's engine. His engines powered Carroll to his 2008 national title, and would have won that year's Walter Hayes Trophy too, had it not been for an error from Carroll when leading the final that handed the win to Team USA Scholarship driver Conor Daly.

**Boyd is back**

Carroll was a returnee last year, while Wayne Boyd was the favourite for victory after winning the 2015 Festival. Now Boyd is back at the WHT after missing the Festival through his European Le Mans Series LMP3 commitments.

"I did test John Loebell's Van Diemen at Silverstone a couple of months ago, so it is not like I haven't had any preparation, but there has been nothing recently," said Boyd. "It was a shame to miss the Formula Ford Festival – it is an event I love. I was committed to racing in LMP3 in the ELMS in Portugal. I was put in for the first stint, which I didn't mind – it meant I got out of the car and was able to follow the Festival on live timing on the web, which I did."

"The Walter Hayes Trophy always seems to throw together the best in the category, and if you look at the entry list this year, there are about 20 guys who are in with a chance of winning it. It is an exceptional event and so long as my calendar is free, it is one that I will always try to do."

**The category's best**

As part of what Boyd labels "the best in the category" is a number of potential contenders.

Last year's runner-up and podium finishers Oliver White and Scott Andrews both return, while frontrunners James Raven (Cliff

Dempsey Racing) and Michael Moyers (Kevin Mills Racing) both return after colliding in the final last year. Niall Murray is fresh off a dominant Formula Ford Festival win and will be tough to beat after driving away from the other contenders at Brands Hatch.

Three-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Joey Foster suffered a lacklustre Festival, but performs well at the Hayes. Oliver Askew – part of the Team USA Scholarship scheme – also impressed at the Festival, and has completed hundreds of laps in the last month ready for the WHT.

One intriguing entry is Stuart Gough, who will return to a Kevin Mills-run car for the first time since 2004. Having not won the WHT in his 12 attempts so far, he believes that his Spectrum this year will be his most competitive car. The team has won twice using the Australian chassis.

The intriguing battle of Kevin McGarrity and Bas Leinders, who fought for the 1995 British Formula Ford Championship, will no doubt prove spectacular. The two will have Ray GR15s from the Graham Brunton stable to do battle.

Robert Barrable returns to a familiar car, which has been raced by Jordan Dempsey this year. The seventh-place finisher from last year has been kept sharp with a British GT campaign this year in GT4, and

should be in tune with his car quickly. Dempsey takes over the Motorsport Ireland Van Diemen LA10, which should have been campaigned by Jake Byrne. He pulled out of the programme mid-season, and Dempsey took over for the Festival and WHT. Byrne, who finished in the top 10 at the Festival this year, misses the event to attend a college graduation ceremony.

**Small margins**

With many factors in the event staying the same, there is a small change to the regulations on minimum weight in the cars.

Previously the WHT was a 420kg minimum, car only. Now the minimum weight is 500kg for car and driver, which brings it in line with the current BRSCC FF1600 regulations.

"I'm in line with everybody else at 500 kilos now," said event organiser James Beckett. "The Hayes has always been car only at 420kg. I've always run the event mostly to the Ford [BRSCC National series] technical regulations and now we're fully in line with that."

There will also be an extra race this year, squeezed into the timetable just before the final to give eliminated cars extra track time.

"We've added a race for the top 36 Post-'89 cars that don't make the grand final," added Beckett. "It gives them another chance to have a race."

**RECENT WINNERS**

**2015: Graham Carroll**  
Van Diemen JL13  
**2014: Wayne Boyd**  
Van Diemen MS13  
**2013: Scott Malvern**  
Spectrum 011C  
**2012: Tristan Nunez**  
Ray GRS08  
**2011: Adrian Campfield**  
Spectrum 011C



Carroll: '15

**HEAT DRAWS**

**Heat one**

DRIVER	CAR
Kyle Kirkwood	Ray GR07
Matt Round-Garrido	Van Diemen JL16K
Jordan Dempsey	Van Diemen LA10
Robert Barrable	Van Diemen RF02
Ben Norton	Spectrum 010B

**Heat two**

Felix Fisher	Van Diemen VD02
Stuart Gough	Spectrum 011C
Rob Hall	Ray GR16
Peter Daly	Royale RP21
Oliver White	Van Diemen JL15K

**Heat three**

Niall Murray	Van Diemen RF99
Kevin McGarrity	Ray GR16
Wayne Boyd	Van Diemen JL16K
Fernando Ribeiro	Van Diemen RF79
Josh Fisher	Van Diemen JL014

**Heat four**

Chase Owen	Ray GR11
Michael Moyers	Spectrum 011C
Bob Higgins	Van Diemen RF90
Luke Williams	Firman RF1600
Joey Foster	Ray GR08

**Heat five**

Ed Moore	Van Diemen JL013K
Parker Thompson	Ray GR08
Neville Smyth	Ray GRS12
Ian Gough	Van Diemen DP08
Scott Andrews	Spectrum 011C

**Heat six**

Graham Carroll	Firman RF1600
Stephen Daly	Ray GR11
Oliver Askew	Ray GR15
Bas Leinders	Ray GR16
Chris Middlehurst	Van Diemen LA10



Murray: Favourite after Festival



Joey Foster will look to rebound after poor Festival



Raven returns to the WHT with Cliff Dempsey Racing

# MEXICO GP REPORT



BY STUART  
CODLING

## Briton keeps Rosberg in his sights with Mexican victory

**L**ewis Hamilton kept his world championship hopes alive with victory from pole position in Mexico, controlling the race beautifully after an opening-lap scare, but the race ended in controversy as the battle for third place behind Hamilton and Nico Rosberg was decided by a succession of time penalties.

Max Verstappen crossed the line third on the road for Red Bull, only to be demoted immediately before he had the chance to get his hands on the trophy.

Sebastian Vettel duly stood on the podium for the first time since the Italian Grand Prix, but he didn't get to enjoy it for long, since he was then given a penalty that handed third place to Verstappen's team-mate, Daniel Ricciardo.

The 25 points for victory brought Hamilton seven points closer to Rosberg, who still leads the championship race by 349 points to 330 with two rounds to run.

### Qualifying

Picking the right moment was the key to nailing an effective qualifying lap, since the layout of the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez features three very technical sections in which it's easy to lose time when going through traffic. Throughout practice the drivers had complained about the effects of traffic and so it continued during qualifying.

There was one fewer car to contend with on track from Q1 onwards, since Jolyon Palmer had to skip the session entirely after an impact with a kerb in practice – measured at 12g – cracked the chassis of his Renault. To add to Palmer's frustration, his team-mate Kevin Magnussen completed Q1 well clear of the drop zone.

Both Haas drivers struggled in practice and neither progressed to Q2. Romain Grosjean was the slowest of the runners, saying he had gone as fast as his car could go, while team-mate Esteban Gutierrez took too much kerb at the exit of the esses on his final flying lap and was demoted to 17th by Manor's Pascal Wehrlein.

Daniil Kvyat was 18th, failing to make the cut after his Toro Rosso suffered a power loss early in the session after his first quick lap. Sauber's Felipe Nasr and Manor's Esteban Ocon didn't improve enough to join their team-mates in Q2, ending the session 19th and 20th behind Kvyat.

Since drivers in the top 10 have to start the race on the tyres on which they set their fastest laps in Q2, the top teams' race strategies then started to come in to focus. Both Mercedes set their fast laps in Q2 on the soft Pirellis, theoretically the best choice for the first stint of the race, while both Red Bulls went for super-softs. Ferrari seemed intent on a split strategy, running both Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen on soft tyres at first and then sending Raikkonen out on

super-softs, but the Finn had to back out of his fast lap on super-softs after encountering traffic. Others – including the Force India and Williams drivers – couldn't make the soft tyres work and had to run super-softs in a bid to get through to Q3.

If the early bath for Gutierrez wasn't disappointing enough for the home crowd, Sergio Perez missed Q3 by just over a tenth over a second. Perhaps less surprising, given this circuit's demands on engine power, neither McLaren went further, although it was a considerable improvement on last year's showing. Fernando Alonso was 11th and Jenson Button 13th, sandwiching Perez, while the remainder of the drivers eliminated in Q2 were those most accustomed to departing in Q1 this season: Magnussen, Marcus Ericsson and Wehrlein.

Traffic still played a role in Q3 as Hamilton set provisional pole with a clear track ahead of him, then just failed to improve on his time after meeting other cars on his warm-up lap for his second run. But he had still done enough to remain ahead of Rosberg, who improved to second on the grid after a scrappy first run put him a provisional fourth behind the two Red Bulls.

Verstappen and Ricciardo also went quicker on their second runs, just not by enough, lining up on the second row, and once again Ferrari fell short of expectations: Raikkonen and Vettel were edged into sixth and seventh places by Nico Hulkenberg's Force India. The battle for fourth place in the constructors' championship between that team and Williams – represented by Valtteri Bottas and Felipe Massa in eighth and ninth, ahead of Carlos Sainz in the Toro Rosso – was as delicately poised as that between Hamilton and Rosberg for the drivers' title.

Evidence of the pressure at the top arrived in the form of Hamilton's downbeat demeanour after qualifying, in spite of qualifying on pole. He described Q3 as "the worst session of my weekend." Lewis had come to crush Rosberg, not to edge ahead of him...

### Race

With just half of the top 10 starting the race on the preferred soft-compound Pirelli tyre, the 900-metre run to the first corner at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez was almost inevitably going to provide drama.

And so it did, as Hamilton went too deep into the corner, locked his front-right wheel and skidded off, over the grass, resuming in the lead at Turn 3. He later put the lock-up down to a brake disc which had glazed on the formation lap, and then suddenly gripped hard at the critical moment.

Hamilton's cause was aided by Rosberg and Verstappen banging wheels between Turns 1 and 2, which sent Rosberg on a small off-track journey of his own. He too rejoined with his position intact, and he was allowed to keep it after the stewards examined the incident.

As the field funnelled through Turn 2

# HAMILTON KEEPS THE FIGHT ALIVE



Hamilton's one flaw was this lock-up at the start

there was more bumping and banging, and Gutierrez tagged the back of Wehrlein, sending him spinning into Ericsson's Sauber. Ericsson also spun but he was able to get his less-damaged car going again, while Wehrlein was out on the spot.

Just a few metres further on, Sainz was defending his position from Alonso by edging the McLaren onto the grass at the exit of Turn 3 as they were both flat on the gas, which sent a furious Alonso into a tankslapper he only just held. Once the stewards got on to that incident, having judged the Wehrlein-Ericsson shunt not worthy of further action, they hit Sainz with a five-second penalty.

The safety car was deployed to enable the marshals to sweep up sundry pieces of Sauber and Manor, and during this three-lap period Red Bull brought Ricciardo in speculatively from fourth place for a change to medium-compound Pirellis. Renault also looked to take advantage of the neutralised course to bring Palmer in for mediums, and his consistent pace over a long stint on these would enable him to bag a 14th-place finish from last on the grid.

As Hamilton pulled clear, Rosberg spent several laps with Verstappen

hovering within DRS range before breaking away. As this battle stabilised, others developed behind as the Ferraris (led by Raikkonen in fifth place) looked to leapfrog fourth-placed Hulkenberg, Massa and Bottas had to fend off a determined Perez while running on the less advantageous super-softs, and Ricciardo pushed hard to break back in to the top 10.

By lap 12 Ricciardo had elevated himself to 10th at the expense of Alonso, and he gained another position as Verstappen pitted for mediums, emerging behind Alonso. But Ricciardo's further progress looked like it was about to hit an obstacle in the form of the four-car battle for sixth between Massa, Vettel, Bottas and Perez. Hulkenberg and Massa pitted on lap 14, enabling Raikkonen and Vettel to push on, but Bottas was able to make his super-softs – which Pirelli suggested had at most 18 laps in them – last until lap 19, by which time Ricciardo was right on the tail of him and Perez. Next time around Perez pitted for mediums as well, and the way was finally clear for Ricciardo to push on.

The main loser in this pit stop sequence was Hulkenberg, who lost

track position to both Ferraris but stayed ahead of Massa and Bottas, while Perez failed to jump the Williams cars in the pits and took to complaining over the team radio about the timing of his stop. The leading duo pitted on laps 17 and 19 for mediums, leaving Vettel in the lead, and rejoined in what would become a net first and second place once Vettel finally pitted.

But Vettel continued to lap at a competitive pace until long past the recommended life of his soft Pirellis (22 laps). He didn't break for the pit lane until the end of lap 31, by which time his tyres had been around the Autodromo 36 times. Crucially, this enabled him to exit the pits ahead of Hulkenberg, now running in seventh place.

Behind Hamilton and Rosberg, Red Bull had ordered Ricciardo to let Verstappen by into third place since they were running on very different strategies, while a further six seconds down the road Raikkonen had a two-second cushion over team-mate Vettel. The leapfrogged Hulkenberg spent much of this middle stint running on his own in seventh, with a margin of over 10 seconds to the pursuing Williams duo and Perez, until Bottas



Vettel had a frustrating race, and then lost podium after penalty

**'There's no doubt Max makes things happen'**  
Red Bull's dramatic race, p28



# ROUND



Photos: LAT



Win has kept Lewis in the title chase



passed Massa and tried to shut down the gap.

Ferrari gave Raikkonen some extra work to do by pitting him for another set of mediums on lap 45, a call which deposited him into the gap between Hulkenberg and Bottas. Four laps later the race up front sparked into life as Sainz baulked Rosberg at Turn 1 while being lapped, enabling Verstappen to launch an opportunist move up the inside at Turn 4, but he failed to get his car stopped in time and sailed straight on as Rosberg took the corner.

Ricciardo stopped for a new set of soft tyres on lap 50, emerging between Hulkenberg and Raikkonen, but he made short work of the Force India and set about catching the cars ahead at a rate of around 1.5s a lap. Raikkonen took a further 16 laps to find a way by Hulkenberg but when he did, he did it in style, going around the outside into Turn 4, pinching the Force India into a spin.

As the Mercedes pulled clear and Verstappen's tyres faded, Vettel made use of his fresher rubber to reel in the Red Bull - while Ricciardo began to loom large in his own mirrors. The crunch point came on lap 67 as Verstappen over-shot Turn 1, ran over the grass and shot back on to the track, still ahead of Vettel.



Williams' Bottas topped the speed traps with an impressive 231.5mph

Both cars lost momentum, enabling Ricciardo into DRS range and opening the door for him to launch an assault on Vettel at Turn 4 two laps later.

Ricciardo arrived with his wheels locked but both cars made it through unscathed, with Vettel still ahead of Ricciardo but behind Verstappen, who ignored a suggestion from the pitwall that he should "probably" move over for the Ferrari, having gained an advantage by short-cutting the course. And that was the order in which they crossed the line behind Hamilton and Rosberg two

laps later, with Vettel fulminating over the team radio about Verstappen being allowed to stay ahead.

Verstappen was given a penalty for gaining an advantage when he went off-track, but after Vettel collected the silverware he was summoned to the stewards' office to answer a charge of swerving in the braking area during Ricciardo's Turn 4 lunge. A 10-second penalty gave third place to Ricciardo and put Vettel down to fifth, behind Verstappen but ahead of Raikkonen, Hulkenberg, Bottas, Massa and Perez.

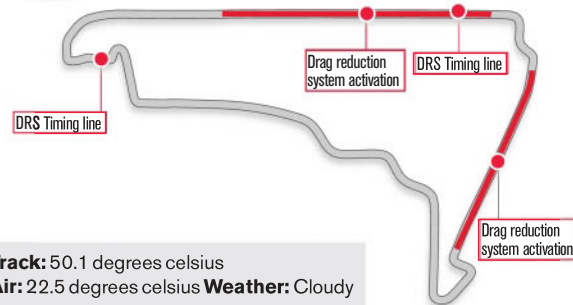
## RACE FACTS

Results © 2016 Formula One Administration Ltd



### MEXICO GRAND PRIX

**Circuit:** Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez **Laps:** 71  
**Race distance:** 189.75 miles **Lap:** 2.672 miles  
**Lap record:** 1m20.521s (Nico Rosberg, 2015)  
**2015 winner:** Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)



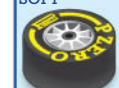
**Track:** 50.1 degrees celsius  
**Air:** 22.5 degrees celsius **Weather:** Cloudy

### TYRE CHOICE

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## RESULTS

### FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 19/21

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	1h40m31.402s
2	Nico Rosberg	GER	Mercedes	+8.354s
3	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	+20.858s
4	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	+21.323s
5	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	+27.313s
6	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	+49.376s
7	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Force India-Mercedes	+58.891s
8	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Williams-Mercedes	+1m05.612s
9	Felipe Massa	BRA	Williams-Mercedes	+1m16.206s
10	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	+1m16.798s
11	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap
12	Jenson Button	GBR	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap
13	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap
14	Jolyon Palmer	GBR	Renault	-1 lap
15	Felipe Nasr	BRA	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap
16	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	-1 lap
17	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Renault	-1 lap
18	Daniil Kvyat	RUS	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	-1 lap
19	Esteban Gutierrez	MEX	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap
20	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap
21	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Manor-Mercedes	-2 laps
R	Pascal Wehrlein	GER	Manor-Mercedes	LO/collision

Winner's average speed 113.250mph Lap leaders: Hamilton 1-17; Rosberg 18-20; Vettel 21-32; Hamilton 33-71

**FASTEST LAP | DANIEL RICCIARDO: 1m21.134s**

ON LAP 53 (AVERAGE SPEED: 118.66mph)

## QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m18.704s
2	Rosberg	1m18.958s
3	Verstappen	1m19.054s
4	Ricciardo	1m19.133s
5	Hulkenberg	1m19.330s
6	Raikkonen	1m19.376s
7	Vettel	1m19.381s
8	Bottas	1m19.551s
9	Massa	1m20.032s
10	Sainz	1m20.378s
11	Alonso	1m20.282s

POS	DRIVER	TIME
12	Perez	1m20.287s
13	Button	1m20.673s
14	Magnussen	1m21.131s
15	Ericsson	1m21.536s
16	Wehrlein	1m21.785s
17	Gutierrez	1m21.401s
18	Kvyat	1m21.454s
19	Nasr	1m21.692s
20	Ocon	1m21.881s
21	Grosjean	1m21.916s
22	Palmer	no time

Perez and Gutierrez buoyed the crowd



## CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

### DRIVERS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Nico Rosberg	349
2	Lewis Hamilton	330
3	Daniel Ricciardo	239
4	Sebastian Vettel	192
5	Kimi Raikkonen	178
6	Max Verstappen	175
7	Sergio Perez	85
8	Valtteri Bottas	85
9	Nico Hulkenberg	60
10	Fernando Alonso	52

### CONSTRUCTORS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Mercedes	679
2	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	422
3	Ferrari	370
4	Force India-Mercedes	145
5	Williams-Mercedes	136
6	McLaren-Honda	74
7	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	55
8	Haas-Ferrari	29
9	Renault	8
10	Manor-Mercedes	1
11	Sauber-Ferrari	0

## NEXT RACE

With just two races left, can Rosberg hold on at the top in Brazil?

**BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX**  
NOVEMBER 13

TURN OVER FOR OUR RACE HIGHLIGHTS P28

# GP EXTRA

# ROUND



## MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



### LEWIS HAMILTON

Most of the frontrunners made errors or underperformed in some way last weekend, so we can forgive Lewis his faux pas at the first corner. Aside from that, Hamilton delivered a comfortable pole and consummate victory, despite the pressure of the championship fight. What he really needs is for the increasing threat of Red Bull to get a car or two between Hamilton and Nico Rosberg.



## MOTORSPORT NEWS SPECIAL AWARD

### DRAMA AWARD - MAX VERSTAPPEN

Once again, Verstappen courted controversy and it was right he got a penalty after running off the road defending third from Sebastian Vettel. But there is no doubt he makes things happen. When Rosberg made his minor error, you just knew Max would try something, even if it didn't come off. That was the second of two bold moves on Rosberg and he then went on to infuriate Vettel in the closing stages. Never a dull moment.



Hamilton is the 14th driver and fifth Briton to win a world championship Mexican GP. The first was Jim Clark (above), who won the inaugural 1963 event in his Lotus 25.

### FASTEST LAPS

DRIVER	TIME	LAP
Daniel Ricciardo	1m21.134s	53
Sebastian Vettel	1m22.497s	61
Kimi Raikkonen	1m22.512s	47
Lewis Hamilton	1m22.596s	66
Nico Rosberg	1m22.792s	43
Max Verstappen	1m22.887s	66
Kevin Magnussen	1m23.146s	53
Romain Grosjean	1m23.278s	53
Nico Hulkenberg	1m23.288s	50
Esteban Gutierrez	1m23.456s	63
Valtteri Bottas	1m23.540s	65
Felipe Massa	1m23.576s	64
Sergio Perez	1m23.607s	62
Daniil Kvyat	1m23.618s	59
Felipe Nasr	1m23.657s	58
Fernando Alonso	1m23.668s	69
Jenson Button	1m23.777s	70
Marcus Ericsson	1m24.340s	65
Carlos Sainz	1m24.467s	52
Jolyon Palmer	1m24.574s	64
Esteban Ocon	1m24.964s	43
Pascal Wehrlein	N/A	

### STATISTICS

# 8

Daniel Ricciardo now has as many fastest laps in Formula 1 as James Hunt, Gilles Villeneuve, Ralf Schumacher and Jenson Button.



Hamilton matched Alain Prost's tally of F1 world championship race victories in Mexico. Only Michael Schumacher (91) has more.

# 51

# 231.5

Fastest speed in mph officially recorded during the Mexican GP, set by the Williams of Valtteri Bottas.

## MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON

### CARLOS SAINZ

Sainz has been one of the most consistent drivers of 2016. He put in another fine qualifying performance in Mexico to line up 10th, but that was ruined when he forced friend Fernando Alonso onto the grass exiting the first chicane on lap one. Had it not been for Alonso's rally-style save, it could have caused a multi-car accident. It did earn Sainz a five-second penalty, which contributed to him finishing 16th.



Ricciardo set the fastest tour

# RACING REPORTS

**SNETTERTON: MSVR BY TOM ERRINGTON**
**OCTOBER 29/30**

Photos: Richard Styles

## AHMED SHINES AS FOG LEADS TO CANCELLED F3 FINALE



Ahmed was on podium every race

Ever encroaching fog meant Enaam Ahmed took the BRDC British Formula 3 Autumn Trophy crown a race early as the weather led to the fourth race being cancelled. He edged out rivals Joey Mawson and Dan Ticktum after the Carlin man won two of the three sprints.

With visibility making even the safety car near-impossible to spot just hours before Sunday's sole race, Ahmed made a superb start from pole to retain the lead ahead of Ticktum.

Ticktum, who was making his UK motorsport return following his one-year ban handed down by the Motor Sports Association, had readapted to racing swiftly and entered the finale just five points adrift in the standings.

Knowing how difficult it is to pass on the Snetterton 300 layout in perfect conditions, let alone a deep fog, the Double R Racing driver tried an early move at the hairpin.

The move ended with the top two touching, Ticktum sliding onto the grass in retirement, and he blamed Ahmed for the collision.

"I went for a pass on Ahmed and he moved very, very late in the braking zone and closed the door," he said. "It's too late for me then, I've already committed to the move so I was onto the grass where there's no grip at all.

"I'll be taking it to the clerk of the course as it was just bad driving. Something has to be done about it."

Any such appeal fell on deaf ears, with Ahmed adding: "It was a tricky race and it was very dangerous out there. I went off on the first lap earlier and then Dan and I collided at the hairpin. I didn't see him; I didn't know it was him. It was bad visibility, you couldn't see down the straights and I was also caught out in braking zones as well."

He wasn't the only one. That same chaotic opening lap had Ben Hingeley and James Pull colliding and prompting a safety car.

With Ticktum out of the race, it was fellow title contender and reigning German Formula 4 champion Mawson looming in Ahmed's mirrors as the safety car circulated.

When the race went green, any chance of a lead battle ended when Mawson misjudged his braking and locked up at Riches.

Mawson responded with a fastest lap to take race four pole and leave only 17 points between himself and Ahmed going into it, but the worsening fog ended any hopes of a last race, let alone championship showdown.

"I was so glad there wasn't another race," said champion Ahmed. "It was so

scary out there. It's been two nail-biting days but it is so special to win a title, especially against European racers like Callan [O'Keefe], Marcus [Armstrong], Mawson and Ticktum."

That quartet were right up there with Ahmed from the get-go on Saturday, as the weekend started with the top 10 in the 12-car grid split by just over half a second in qualifying.

Ahmed's lap, just 0.053s quicker than Ticktum's, would prove to be crucial at a circuit with overtaking chances at a premium.

On the grid, Ahmed grasped his opportunity, making a lightning start as fellow front-row starter Ticktum made an error and lost second to Mawson.

"I held the clutch too long and I bogged down, it can be put down to the fact I've not raced from the grid in a while," said Ticktum.

Mawson followed Ahmed closely but the distance between the two was too much, as Ticktum was third.

But the Brit wasn't too disappointed, as the free air in third place meant he was able to set a lap time good enough to take race two pole.

Despite having used four new tyres for the first race, Ticktum managed his older set superbly to ensure he won the next race and kept the pressure on Ahmed's points lead.

The eventual winner nailed his second attempt at a front-row start, as Mawson took his turn to make a poor start. The Douglas Motorsport man fell to third as Ahmed jumped to second.

Ticktum had estimated that his tyres would lose around a tenth a lap to his title rival, but he was helped by Mawson's battling with Ahmed with the lost time meaning Ticktum won at his favoured circuit.

"The start was definitely on my mind for the second race," he said. "I was too concerned with others in that opening race, this time I focused on myself and went for it."

"If you get a good start it's very hard to be passed. Everyone behind is in dirty air and by the time you reach the hairpin you've broken the tow, so it becomes about not making mistakes."

In the end those fine margins decided the title, with Ticktum's failed move on Ahmed in the finale ensuring the Carlin driver seized the crown ahead of Mawson and the consistent O'Keefe, who pipped Ticktum to third in the final standings.

Mawson was the only man who ever looked likely to challenge the top two, but he finished behind Ahmed in each race. "I had more pace than Ahmed at times," said Mawson. "He just kept on finishing ahead of me!"

### RESULTS



Ahmed and Ticktum tangle in fog

**BRDC British F3 Autumn Trophy (12 laps)** 1 Enaam Ahmed (Carlin); 2 Joey Mawson (Douglas Motorsport) +1.627s; 3 Daniel Ticktum (Double R Racing); 4 Callan O'Keefe (Fortec Motorsports); 5 James Pull (Carlin); 6 Tarun Reddy (Double R Racing). FL Ticktum 1m44.066s (102.70mph). P Ahmed. S 12.

**Race two (12 laps)** 1 Ticktum; 2 Ahmed +3.868s; 3 Mawson; 4 Callan O'Keefe (Double R Racing); 5 Reddy; 6 O'Keefe. FL Armstrong 1m44.251s (102.52mph). P Ticktum. S 12.

**Race three (8 laps)** 1 Ahmed; 2 Mawson +0.403s; 3 Jamie Caroline (Douglas Motorsport); 4 O'Keefe; 5 Cameron Das (Carlin); 6 Sasakorn Chaimongkol (Hillspeed). FL Mawson 1m44.286s (102.48mph). P Ahmed. S 12.

**Points** 1 Ahmed 99; 2 Mawson 82; 3 O'Keefe 61; 4 Ticktum 59; 5 Caroline 52; 6 Reddy 51.

**Mini Challenge JCW (10 laps)** 1 David Grady; 2 Nathan Harrison +3.710s; 3 Charlie Butler-Henderson; 4 Brett Smith; 5 Jono Brown; 6 Sam Osborne. FL Grady 2m07.240s (83.99mph). P Luke Caudle. S 27.

**Race 2 (5 laps)** 1 Grady; 2 Harrison +0.523s; 3 Butler-Henderson; 4 Smith; 5 Henry Neal; 6 Brown. FL Harrison 2m08.188s (83.37mph). P Grady. S 27.

**Mini Challenge Cooper/Cooper S/Open (9 laps)** 1 Scott Jeffs; 2 Tim Porter +4.192s; 3 Rob Austin; 4 Jonathan Davis; 5 Scot Adam; 6 Keith Issatt. Class winners Davis; Tim Bill; Max Bladon;

Will Foulkes. FL Jeffs 2m12.065s (80.93mph). P Carlito Miracco. S 28.

**Race 2 (6 laps)** 1 Jeffs; 2 Adam +1.788s; 3 Porter; 4 Davis; 5 Issatt; 6 Richard Mills. CW Davis; Taelor Shand; Bladon; Foulkes. FL Adam 2m12.405s (80.72mph). P Jeffs. S 28.

**Lotus Cup (28 laps)** 1 Jason Baker (Elise); 2 Adam Mackay (Exige V6) +0.895s; 3 Adam Balon (Exige V6); 4 Ryan Savage (2-Eleven); 5 Andrew Wright (Exige); 6 Rob Myers (Exige V6). CW Mackay; James Little (Elise Cup R). FL Baker 2m01.618s (87.88mph). P Baker. S 19.

**Lotus Elise Trophy (10 laps)** 1 James Little; 2 Jason Baker +4.498s; 3 Alex Ball; 4 William Stacey; 5 Seth Walpole; 6 Jason McInulty. FL Stacey 2m10.883s (81.66mph). P Ball. S 18.

**Race 2 (9 laps)** 1 Baker; 2 Stacey +0.182s; 3 Little; 4 Ball; 5 David Alexander; 6 Stuart Ratcliff. FL Stacey 2m11.251s (81.43mph). P Mark Richardson. S 17.

**Track Attack Autumn Trophy (7 laps)** 1 Philip Collard (Mazda RX7); 2 Tony Hunter (Renault Clio) +17.083s; 3 Sonny Hardy (Renault Clio); 4 Nick Gwinnett (Renault Clio); 5 Steve Cassar (Honda Integra); 6 Paul Buckmaster (Mazda RX7). CW Hunter; Andy McLennan (Suzuki Swift); Johnny Hamui (Missan 370Z); Carl Powell (Toyota MR2); Jason Jesse (VW Bora). FL Lee Gillard (Subaru Impreza) 2m14.970s (79.18mph). P Ryan Mone (Porsche 944). S 30.



Little took last lap Lotus victory

## GRADY CLAIMS MINI CHALLENGE TITLE



Two victories allowed Grady to seal title in style

Two races would decide the destination of the **Mini Challenge JCW** title, with foggy weather meaning the cancellation of the third event, while the second ran mainly under safety car conditions.

Coping with all that could be thrown at him was David Grady, who claimed the title he was unlucky not to secure last year at the same venue.

"Unbelievable, the biggest achievement in my 20 years of racing," said an overwhelmed champion. "I did the hard work yesterday in qualifying and winning the first race."

Poleman Luke Caudle led the opening race away followed by Grady, who took advantage of Caudle out-braking himself at Riches and hitting the safety barrier on the third lap. Title challenger Nathan Harrison followed in second place while Charlie Butler-Henderson, who held on to a massive slide at Riches, was promoted to third after Luke Reade picked up a track limits penalty.

That left just nine points between the top three, but the conclusion to the season was an anti-climax with three laps run behind the safety car resulting in only two competitive tours. Still,

Grady had to hold off a rampant-looking Harrison when the field was initially let go. Descending fog soon brought another caution period though, and Grady's second safety car restart for one final racing lap gave him a bigger margin to hold to the flag. CB-H was being cautious in third place and held off the eager Brett Smith, but he had to hand over his title to Grady. "David is a worthy champion and pushed me hard last year too, but I will be back next year," said CB-H.

Carlito Miracco took an early lead in the first multi-class **Cooper and S Class** race, which faded along with his turbo boost, handing victory to a charging Scott Jeffs. Tim Porter got the better of Rob Austin while Jonathan Davis was a class-winning fourth.

Racing resumed in the gloom on Sunday with Jeffs unchallenged to wrap up the Cooper S title while Scot Adam made progress to finish second ahead of Porter. Davis won the Open class again while Max Bladon's 14th victory of the season in the Cooper section confirmed his superiority.

The destination of the **Lotus Cup** came down to a head-to-head battle

between Ryan Savage and Adam Mackay, with the Scottish teen Mackay having the edge over his rival. This didn't extend to Jason Baker, who cruised to victory while Savage suffered a drivethrough penalty to blunt his challenge.

Alex Ball claimed the **Lotus Elise Trophy** title in dramatic fashion as his car faded with a slipping clutch. The champion elect easily led but was powerless to fend off James Little on the final lap at Agostini while Jason Baker powered by on the run to the flag.

Baker completed the season with a narrow victory over William Stacey, having taken the lead away from Jason McInulty at Wilson.

Fast-starting Lee Gillard led the early laps of the **Track Attack Autumn Trophy** until the engine of the Subaru Impreza went sick, allowing Philip Collard to stroll to the chequered flag. Paul Buckmaster found a series of nippy front-wheel-drive cars too difficult to keep behind with second-placed Tony Hunter the first to demote the Mazda RX-7. Sonny Hardy, in another Renault Clio, also made it through.

**Lewis Beales**

# RACING REPORTS

**BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BY BRIAN PHILLIPS**
**OCTOBER 29/30**

Photos: Gary Hawkins



House took VW title with win in decider

## HOUSE HITS HOME AFTER LANDING VW CUP CROWN

**A decisive victory in the final race of the season helped Philip House to claim the Volkswagen Racing Cup title after a tense triple-header that featured four drivers with a chance of taking the title.**

Two were effectively ruled out in race one. Trouble started when poleman Jamie Bond was nudged sideways at Paddock Hill. Three cars then got together at the foot of the bend and guest driver Shaun Hollamby was pitched into a roll. Potential champion Bobby Thompson was also involved, and fellow contender Kenan Dole's car was pushed off the reformed grid with a fuel pump problem.

Bond won the rerun with House a secure second, two places ahead of surviving title rival Tom Witts.

The top five were reversed on the race two grid, and Witts took full advantage, beating Darelle Wilson to the flag with House sixth.

The decider went comfortably to House after Bond retired with a sudden loss of power. This was despite a broken clutch, which limited the new champion to fourth gear from lap two. Witts spent too long behind Simon Rudd and couldn't catch House once he reached second.

The ninth **Vee Festival** featured three races but had an entry well short of a full grid. Despite this there was some excellent on-track action. John Hughes missed qualifying but dashed from last to fourth in his Scarab before a stoppage when podium contenders Ian Jordan and Ian Buxton were involved in a Paddock Hill incident. Hughes headed Craig Pollard before the rerun was flagged off with just two laps completed after a car beached at Clark Curve.

Martin Farmer won race two on the road but was demoted to fourth by a track limits penalty. This promoted

Peter Belsey to first, with Pollard and Hughes (up from 10th on a reversed grid) next.

Pollard led the first lap of the finale and closed up in traffic, but Hughes ended his limited 2016 season with a narrow victory. Belsey was a distant third with Ben Miloudi and Farmer next. Stephen Morrin completed the top six and earned an award as the leading Irish finisher.

Chris Enderby's Radical dominated Saturday's **Allcomers** races. Peter White's SR3 was a double second even though he lost more than half a minute on one lap in race two when all his gears went temporarily missing. Caterhams occupied most of the other leading places.

Kevin Otway wasted his qualifying advantage with a lap one spin in the first **Open Mono** race. A caution period helped him close up again to finish fourth, while Chris Kite's

Dallara swooped past Mark Reade (Leastone) for the win. Kite's terrible start in race two dropped him to seventh, but he picked off those ahead for a second success.

Race victories in the ever-popular **Victor Meldrew Trophy** were earned by Karl Graves (BMW 120d) and Lewis Turner (Citroen Saxo), but the profound mysteries of the Meldrew handicapping process meant the coveted trophy returned to the hands of 2014 winner Jody Halse. His BMW was classified fourth and seventh in the two races.

Sunday's **Allcomers** wins were shared by Nick Starkey and Anthony Bennett (Caterhams). Starkey came under pressure from Ian McDonald's Radical SR1 with Bennett third after cooking his tyres.

Bennett made a better job of it in race two, winning by a whisker over McDonald with Starkey third.

### RESULTS

**Volkswagen Racing Cup (12 laps)** 1 Jamie Bond (Golf); 2 Phil House (Scirocco) +4.062s; 3 Simon Rudd (Golf); 4 Tom Witts (Golf); 5 Kieran Gordon (Golf); 6 Mark Smith (Scirocco). Fastest lap Bond 52.224s (83.26mph). Pole Bond. S 11. **Race 2 (21 laps)** 1 Witts; 2 Darelle Wilson (Scirocco) +1.233s; 3 Rudd; 4 Gordon; 5 Toby Davis (Golf); 6 House. FL Wilson 52.468s (82.88mph). P Gordon. S 14. **Race 3 (21 laps)** 1 House; 2 Witts +3.619s; 3 Davis; 4 Gordon; 5 Kenan Dole (Golf); 6 Rudd. FL Gordon 52.546s (82.75mph). P Bond. S 14.

(90.10mph). P Enderby. S 25.

**Mono Open (16 laps)** 1 Chris Kite (Dallara 393); 2 Mark Reade (Leastone 1000) +1.838s; 3 Chris Lord (Vauxhall Lotus); 4 Kevin Otway (Van Diemen); 5 Joe Power (Leastone 1000); 6 George Fowler (Raynard SF84). FL Kite 48.170s (90.27mph). P Otway. S 10. **Race 2 (18 laps)** 1 Kite; 2 Otway +1.151s; 3 Lord; 4 Kevin Couling (Tatuus); 5 David Jones (DSE PR3); 6 Fowler. FL Kite 48.306s (90.02mph). P Otway. S 10.

**Vee Festival (2 laps)** 1 John Hughes (Scarab Mk5); 2 Craig Pollard (Bears GAC) +0.335s; 3 Ben Miloudi (Storm); 4 Tim Probert (Storm); 5 Peter Belsey (Spyder Mk2); 6 Martin Farmer (GAC). FL Hughes 53.552s (81.20mph). P Pollard. S 17. **Race 2 (17 laps)** 1 Belsey; 2 Pollard +0.751s; 3 Hughes; 4 Farmer; 5 Miloudi; 6 Probert. FL Hughes 52.822s (82.32mph). P James Cater (RTV Sheane). S 16. **Race 3 (17 laps)** 1 Hughes; 2 Pollard +0.203s; 3 Belsey; 4 Miloudi; 5 Farmer; 6 Stephen Morrin (Leastone JH004). FL Pollard 52.919s (82.17mph). P Hughes. S 16.

**Victor Meldrew Trophy (15 laps)** 1 Karl Graves (BMW 120d); 2 Tony Halls (Toyota MR2) +1.484s; 3 Terry Searles (MG ZR190); 4 Jody Halse (BMW M3); 5 Lewis Turner (Citroen Saxo); 6 Len Colley (BMW 325). FL Barnaby Davies (Toyota Starlet) 53.903s (80.67mph). P Don Hughes (Peugeot 306). S 30. **Race 2 (15 laps)** 1 Lewis Turner (Citroen Saxo); 2 Mark Thomas (Ford Anglia) +0.499s; 3 Chris Webster (Mazda MX-5); 4 Halls; 5 Len Colley (BMW 325); 6 Chad Donner (Ford Escort). FL Halse 54.897s (79.21mph). P Hughes. S 28.

**MSVR Allcomers (24 laps)** 1 Chris Enderby (Radical SR4); 2 Peter White (Radical SR3) +4.946s; 3 Mark Rider (Caterham); 4 Tim Davis (Caterham C400); 5 Nick Starkey (Caterham); 6 Hugh Coulter (Caterham C400). FL White 47.929s (90.73mph). P Enderby. S 29. **Race 2 (25 laps)** 1 Enderby; 2 White +42.801s; 3 Rider; 4 Davis; 5 Starkey; 6 Coulter. FL White 48.264s

**MSVR Allcomers (23 laps)** 1 Nick Starkey (Caterham); 2 Ian McDonald (Radical SR1) +0.351s; 3 Anthony Bennett (Caterham CSR); 4 Andy Thompson (Seat Toledo); 5 Tom Brenton (Ford Sierra XR8); 6 Bob Hosier (Seat Leon). FL McDonald 51.252s (84.84mph). P Bennett. S 11. **Race 2 (21 laps)** 1 Bennett; 2 McDonald +0.586s; 3 Starkey; 4 Chris Everill (Ginetta G50); 5 Thompson; 6 JJ Ross (Renault Clio). FL McDonald 51.511s (84.42mph). P Starkey. S 11.



Bennett won Sunday Allcomers R2



Hughes charged to Vee Fest double



Graves won first Meldrew Trophy encounter on road

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# HISTORICS

'Williams is likely to be at the front'  
Allcomers action, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

## DOWN THE PUB WITH

**PAUL CROSBY**

Age: 63 Lives: Towcester  
Rally of the Tests contender

### He rallied as a youngster

"I started road rallying as soon as I got a driving licence in an 850cc Mini. They were just flat-out days and I loved it. I ended up doing some stage rallies and rolled the Mini into a ball when we hit a tree on the Suffolk Stages. So that was my rallying career over at the age of 19 or 20. I didn't have any money to repair the car."

### He worked in F3

"I decided to get a proper job and I was a trained BMC mechanic. But I was more interested in how to make the car go round corners better, so I got into Formula 3 racing with Dr Joseph Ehrlich and I worked for him for three or four years building F3 cars. I learned a huge amount and went from there to March Engineering where I was race engineer and team manager. I ran people like Nigel Mansell and Mike Thackwell and then started my own business called Crosby Composites."

### He engineered some top names

"We started off in fibreglass and progressed into carbon fibre and I built it into a multi-million pound company and sold it two years ago. My first love has always been cars and how they work and I did some freelance engineering for Dave Price and Eddie Jordan. So I ran Martin Donnelly and Jean Alesi in F3000, then David Coulthard and Gil de Ferran. So alongside the business I did race engineering alongside all these wonderful drivers and wonderful teams."

### He went back to rallying

"When I sold the business I decided I'd like to have a go at rallying again. So I tried it out to see if I enjoyed it like I did when I was thrashing up and down country lanes as a youth. So I bought a 1969 Porsche 911 and the rest is history. The first event I did was Throckmorton three years ago, with my son navigating and we had a fantastic time."

### He's out this weekend

"I now do as many events as I can. I'm lucky enough to have people like Andy Pullan sit alongside me. I bought an MG TB as I wanted to do some pre-war rallies like the Flying Scotsman and 1000-Mile Trial. The Porsche 356 is a new addition for things like the Rally of the Tests. I did Throckmorton with it as a shakedown and I think it will be okay this weekend."



Crosby: loves rallying

# CALL TO BOOST HISTORIC RALLIES

## Organiser urges governing body to help halt gravel rallying slump



Historic gravel rallies have suffered in 2016

By Paul Lawrence

**Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship manager Colin Heppenstall has called on the governing body to help stem the decline in gravel-based historic stage rallying.**

Heppenstall says that the change to event running order, imposed by the Motor Sports Association, has had a major impact on the number of

historic cars competing on gravel and had led to the Category 1 field, for pre-1968 cars, being almost wiped out. However, the problem carries forward into later categories and the 2016 BHRC witnessed a 25-30 per cent reduction in entries for gravel rallies.

"Options to increase participation in historic rallying have been proposed to the MSA to keep this section of the sport healthy and to keep it

within the Rally Futures agenda," said Heppenstall. "I hope the MSA will grasp this chance to keep historic rallying alive on gravel while keeping people safe. The MSA has to decide if it wants to help this branch of the sport continue."

Historic competitor response to road conditions experienced further down the overall field has been very negative and a growing number of car owners are switching to asphalt events.

Heppenstall says that the introduction of Category J2 for cars from up to 1990 into the MSA regulations for 2017, to bring the MSA in line with the FIA, will not help the current challenges facing historic rallying.

"The BHRC does not need four-wheel-drive cars bringing the problems and issues that happened in the late 1980s and we will not be including them in the BHRC."



Langridge has 2017 plan

### Langridge keeps up the family tradition with Formula Ford ambition

Alison Langridge has joined her father Andy and brother Adrian in historic single-seater racing and plans to do more next season after a debut Historic Formula Ford run at Silverstone.

Alison has been show-jumping

with horses but has now turned her attention to racing her father's Lotus 61 with support and tuition from Dan Eagling. The very original car was restored by Eagling at Lifetime Racing last winter and he gave it a successful

debut run at Castle Combe in April.

"I've had three tests and one race weekend so far and I'm getting better every time," said the Oxford-based racer. "I want to do a full season next year."

### Rally of the Tests has strong entry

Four former winners in the entry list will make this weekend's Rally of the Tests one of the most competitive fields in the event's 15-year history.

Heading the field away from the Bournemouth start on Thursday evening will be 2015 winners Howard Warren and Iain Tullie in one of three Porsche 356s in the capacity 100-car entry.

"The Rally of the Tests is always one of the most challenging historic events," said Warren. "It's a strong field and the winner could come from any of the top 20 crews."

The oldest car in the entry is the 1925 Bentley Supersports of William Medcalf. The route from Bournemouth to Chester takes in overnight halts in Bristol and Stoke-on-Trent and spectator information is available at [heroevents.eu](http://heroevents.eu)



**Rudi Lancaster and Guy Weaver finished the top historic runners within the National section of Wales Rally GB. The Ford Escort Mk2 crew took ninth overall and first two-wheel-drive among the National field. Devon-based Lancaster was a Peugeot Challenge contemporary of Richard Burns 25 years ago.**

### Hunt car to go on show in London

The 40th anniversary of James Hunt's World Championship victory in 1976 will be marked during the Regent Street Motor Show on Saturday.

Hunt's title-winning McLaren M23 will be on show in central London during the build-up to the following day's London to Brighton Veteran Car Run.

Last year, 450,000 visitors attended the show as the entire length of Regent Street from Piccadilly Circus to Oxford Circus is closed to traffic for the day.

Hunt's son Freddie, who has raced himself, will be present while closer to Piccadilly Circus the Silverstone Classic event display will have several Grand Prix cars from the 1980s on show.

## IN BRIEF



Paul Barrett is a hard-tryer

**Barrett pushes on**  
Northern Irishman Paul Barrett has been declared winner of the hard charger of the year award in the Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship. Barrett and Welsh co-driver Dai Roberts finished second overall in their Pinto-engined Ford Escort Mk2 after a superb season, capped by overall victory on the Severn Valley Stages.

### Bannister on course

Steve Bannister will be confirmed as winner of the Northern Historic Rally Championship on this weekend's Malton Forest Rally. Only Phil Jobson could stop Bannister taking the title but he is not entered for the Yorkshire event after an accident on the Isle of Man. Father and daughter Brian and Nikki Middlemas won the asphalt section in their Hillman Avenger.

### Tim's French win

Yorkshireman Tim Pearcey and his Scottish co-driver Neil Shanks won the recent Hoppeland Rally in France in Pearcey's Ford Escort Mk2. On incredibly slippery roads near the Belgian border, they topped a 50-car historic field. "We thought we'd lost the rally on the last stage as we caught two Porsche 911s in the dark and had to follow them for a couple of miles," said Pearcey.

### Get an Eifel of this

The organisers of the ADAC Eifel Rallye Festival have confirmed the 2017 date of July 20-22 for the event's seventh edition. The German event is one of the world's biggest celebrations of rallying history and attracts 150 cars from five decades of rallying and 40,000 spectators. It is based on the town of Daun in the Eifel Mountains.

### Allcomers full up

With over 40 entries, the HSCC Allcomers race planned for the Walter Hayes Trophy meeting at Silverstone has been split into two races on Saturday. The field is divided at 1970, with George Daws (Merlyn Mk6A) heading the earlier cars and John Pearson (Alfa Romeo 156), Andrew Schryver (Chevron B26) and Mark Williams (Vogue SP2) likely to lead the later cars.

### Cariss get power

Stuart and Linda Cariss will aim to defend their class C2 British Historic Rally Championship title next season. A fresh engine, gearbox and axle, originally destined for a new shell, will now be installed in their Ford Escort Mk1 and Cariss hopes for an extra 40bhp to put them to the top of the 1600cc cars.

### Escort crew's fun

Mike Tomkinson and Shaun Whitehurst finished WRGB National at the first attempt in their BDG-powered Ford Escort Mk2. The couple, who entered the event to celebrate their 50th birthdays, finished third historic crew and 13th overall. They ran one car in front of Jimmy McRae on the event.



# PREVIEW: MN CIRCUIT RALLYING

Photos: Whittle Photographic, Jakob Ebrey, SMJ Photography

## CALENDAR

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship 2016/17

EVENT	VENUE	DATE
Neil Howard Stages	Oulton Park	November 5
Cadwell Stages	Cadwell Park	November 20
Rockingham Stages	Rockingham	December 3/4
Brands Hatch Winter Stages	Brands Hatch	January 21
Snetterton Stages	Snetterton	February 19
Donington Rally	Donington Park	March 5
Lee Holland Rally	Anglesey Circuit	March 19
Alan Healy Memorial Rally	Cadwell Park	April 9



David Tinn won most events last season

# CIRCUIT RALLYING IS BACK



Sharrock (centre) won't defend title

## MN's Circuit Rally series returns with a bang. By Jack Benyon

**T**he Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship is back, and this year we know exactly what to expect. Thrills, spills and some flat-out rallying.

This time last year, the series was about to get underway for the first time ahead of its debut season.

While the first event, the Neil Howard Stages, has always been well backed as a standalone event, no one knew how many entries the events later in the year would receive and if the championship would be a success.

In 2016, that was well and truly answered when Anglesey in March doubled its entry from the previous year. That proved that the championship wasn't a bunch of local ringers entering for the craic. Last year, proper championship battles emerged, and the classes produced thrilling action.

So, where to go from here? The championship was so successful last year that it's difficult to identify a specific area to improve. One slight grumble may be the lack of top-end machinery up front on every round.

Certain rounds drew WRC cars, but some lacked marquee cars at the front. Looking at this year's championship entrants, that problem seems to have been answered. Take a

look at the strength of the entries for the first three rounds and that's plain to see.

One thing that has changed from last year is the calendar. Donington Park (March 5) replaces last season's January Croft round. Donington held its first rally for almost two decades in 2015, and the two it has held since then have been very popular.

Championship co-ordinator Darren Spann has first-hand experience of the magic Donington has witnessed in the past.

"I'm delighted we have been able to add Donington Park to the championship," says Spann. "As a child I spent consecutive years stood in the vast crowd at the RAC Rally, watching my rally hero Richard Burns flying through the stages."

"Richard was so precise and so committed and visibly the fastest through the tight technical section of stage, I'm really looking forward to watching our championship competitors tackling this iconic venue in March."

"Maybe, just maybe, the next Richard Burns will start their career in this championship."

Wholesale calendar changes weren't necessary. The first three rallies on the calendar, at Oulton Park, Cadwell Park and Rockingham, sold out in under 45 minutes.

If that doesn't show that the

championship is filling a niche, then nothing will.

One element that did need to be replicated was the prize structure offered last year. The winner of the championship, James Sharrock, got a free entry to the Neil Howard Stages, plus 12 asphalt tyres after he won the Michelin Cup for the registered crew that had amassed the most points on Michelin tyres.

That represents almost a full season of tyres in the bag and worth well over £2000. Not only are there tyres on offer for the winner at the end of the year, there's also a set raffled off to a randomly chosen class winner.

Speaking of Sharrock, he's confirmed he won't be back to defend his title on every round.

The Ford Escort Mk2 driver is contemplating trips to Ireland and into the forests in a new car. For the Neil Howard Stages, he is down to drive a Group N Mitsubishi Lancer, but there might just be a change and a surprise from the Sharrock camp on Saturday.

That means it is likely there will be a new champion, along with a new round. But the fundamentals remain the same. Circuit rallying got a much needed boost with the backing of competitors last season. The added crews and incremental improvements by the organisers means the series is set to surpass its success of 2015-2016. ■

## Neil Howard Stages opens MN Rally season

The Neil Howard Stages never fails to disappoint. Regularly one of the best supported single-venue events in the country, the event is once again set to thrill.

Headlining the entry list is last year's winner Steve Simpson in his Subaru Impreza S12B WRC. Behind him are four Ford Fiestas at the ready should he slip up.

Kevin Procter, who finished second in an Impreza last year, has a two-litre Mountune-engined S2000 Fiesta, followed by previous winner Graham Coffey. British championship contender Rhys Yates is at car four in a Fiesta R5, and John Stone rounds out the Fiesta assault in his 2.5-litre

Millington S2000 chassis car. It's certain Simpson will be pushed to the limit.

In the classes, Martin Hodgson will be tough to head in the D1 class in his 2.5-litre Ford Escort, while Paul Sheard's Mazda MX-5 narrowly missed out on the Class B title last year and returns to fight again. In Class A, reigning champions Joe Cunningham and Marc Fowler return in a Vauxhall Corsa, after taking last year's fight down to the final stage of the last rally.

The Oulton Park organisers have opted for a year without the short gravel section, but will instead make use of the loose asphalt used on the Oulton rally school.

## SEEDING ENTRY LIST

Neil Howard Stages, Oulton Park, November 5

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Stephen Simpson/Patrick Walsh	Subaru Impreza S12B WRC
2	Kevin Procter/Derrick Fawcett	Ford Fiesta
3	Graham Coffey/Victoria Myers	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
4	Rhys Yates/Tom Woodburn	Ford Fiesta R5
5	John Stone/Carl Williamson	Ford Fiesta S2500
6	Adrian Spencer/Mark Hewitt	Subaru Impreza S9 WRC
7	David Turnbull/Simon John Rogers	Subaru Impreza S11 WRC
8	Bruce Edwards/Jim Smith	Darrian T9 GTR
9	Paul Swift/Jessica Swift	Ford Escort Mk2
10	James Sharrock/Stuart Faulds	Mitsubishi Lancer E9



Rhys Yates should challenge for Neil Howard Stages win

# SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Hal Ridge, mcpics.net, Colin Casserley



Maxwell lifted world title in Vauxhall

## Hot Rod world-beater Maxwell to Hednesford

National Hot Rod World Final winner Adam Maxwell is returning to the English points series at Hednesford this weekend.

The County Antrim racer took part in the last meeting in England at Foxhall Heath and came from the back of the grid to finish in second place in the final.

He will return on Sunday for the final race before the mid-season break in the 2016-2017 calendar:

"I always said after I won that I would try to travel to as many events as possible," said Maxwell, who won a prize drive in South Africa as a result of winning the World Final at Ipswich in July. "I feel it is a good thing for the world champion to do. It is important to be an ambassador for Hot Rod racing and to be seen out there."

As well as racing at Hednesford, Maxwell will also take part in the Scottish series at Lochgelly this Saturday.

# WHORTON-EALES GETS F1 ENTRY

## Renault Clio Cup champion to make his BriSCA F1 debut at Birmingham Wheels



Whorton-Eales took nine wins and Clio Cup crown

By Matt James

### Renault UK Clio Cup champion Ant Whorton-Eales will make his BriSCA F1 debut at Birmingham Wheels on November 12.

The Lichfield racer, who took nine wins on his way to the Clio crown this season, will take part in the meeting-opening Under 25s race at the Gala meeting.

The 22-year-old is the nephew of former BriSCA F1 World Final winner Murray Harrison, and his father Mark has also contested short oval racing.

Whorton-Eales has built and races a classic hot rod, but this will be his first outing in an F1 car:

He said: "I am really looking forward to this. I have driven a car before and I really enjoyed it, but racing one will be something else. I have seen the entries and there are some great drivers,

so it is going to be a real test for me.

"I hope I will be fast, but then there is the contact to take into account as well. The hits do look hard, but that is something that you have to deal with when you are at the front.

"This is just a one-off at the moment as I will still concentrate on circuit racing, but now the season is over. I am able to go and do something without too much pressure. I just hope I don't let the circuit racing boys down."

The meeting, which starts at 1700hrs, also features BriSCA F2 and V8 Hot Stox on the bill.

The 2013 National Hot Rod World Final winner John Christie will also feature at the meeting. He has been loaned the car of experienced racer Paul Hines for his debut in the category. The Northern Irishman will take part in the full meeting.

## MN's Rallycross man Ridge returns to competition aboard supercharged Mini

Motorsport News' rallycross correspondent Hal Ridge will race a supercharged BMW Mini in the final round of the BTRDA Rallycross Championship at Croft this weekend.

Ridge, who hasn't competed in a rallycross event in Britain since 2012, will race the car in which Martin Hawkes won the final round of the British RX BMW Mini Championship at Croft a fortnight ago.

Hawkes ran the car for Ridge in a short test last week at Teeside Autodrome.

The BMW Mini cars will race together with SuperModified competitors at the event, where Terry Durdin, Paul Lawrence and Efstratios Hatzistefanis will make their rallycross debuts.

The Supercar entry list is headed by 'Mad' Mark Watson, but season-long SuperModified front-runner Tommy Graham has been forced to withdraw from the season finale following engine failure in his Ford Escort at the penultimate round and won't fight for the title.

Toyota MR2 driver Marc Jones is top of the SuperModified title race heading into the final round, but is third in the BTRDA overall standings behind Peugeot 106 pair James Orton and Richard Todd, who top both the Production category standings and the overall table.

A number of drivers from Belgium and Holland will also compete in the SuperModified category, as will MSA SuperNational champion, Tony Lynch.



Hal Ridge has tested the supercharged Mini Cooper already

## AUTOTEST

### Ferguson's double closes the gap

Autotest

By Paul Phelan

Organiser: Connaught Motor Club Date: October 29/30 Where: Strandhill and Grange, Co Sligo Championship: Rounds 5/6, Hewison Autotest Starters: 13/14

Two victories for defending champion Steven Ferguson brought him closer to Hewison Autotest points leader Paul Mooney, who scored a second and a third place.

The pair now have three wins apiece from the six rounds held. Mooney had three penalties on Saturday and failed a test on day two, while a broken CV joint cost Ferguson a 20s maximum on Sunday but he recovered well to narrowly beat David Thompson's Nova by 0.6s.

Guy Foster's Mini Special was fourth overall each time, with Tom Devaney and Timmy Lynch sharing the sports car honours.

#### Results

Saturday: 1 Steven Ferguson (Mini-Nova Special) 707.3s; 2 Paul Mooney (Mini-Nova Special) +14.2s; 3 David Thompson (Nova); 4 Guy Foster (Mini Special); 5 Ian White (Mini Special); 6 Paddy Power (Mini Make); 7 Chris Grimes (Mini); 8 Tom Devaney (Westfield); 9 Liam Cashman (Westfield); 10 Timmy Lynch (Westfield); 11 Paul Phelan (Mini Special); 12 Paul Lowther (Striker). Class winners Grimes; Mooney; Devaney; Thompson.

Sunday: 1 Ferguson 821.0s; 2 Thompson +0.6s; 3 Mooney; 4 Foster; 5 Power; 6 Lynch; 7 White; 8 Grimes; 9 Devaney; 10 Cashman; 11 Lowther; 12 Phelan. CW Grimes; Mooney; Lynch; Thompson. Novice award: Michael Cullen (Westfield).

## BriSCA F1



Speak secured yet another F1 title

### Rob Speak snatches another BriSCA title at the last gasp

BriSCA F1

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Startrax Where: Belle Vue, Manchester When: October 30 Starters: 41

#### The BriSCA F1 season is one of the toughest in motorsport, comprising of 49 meetings and over 250 races on both shale and Tarmac.

It is also one of the most competitive, with 23 different final winners and, going into the National Series Shootout finale, five drivers still had a chance of clinching the title.

Nigel Green was on top of the points table with Rob Speak in second just ahead of Dan Johnson, Frankie Wainman Jr and Tom Harris.

Green was first to make his mark with a third place in heat one, but Wainman Jr and Harris both failed to finish and would have to rely on making the final

via the consolation race.

Heat two provided drama when Speak looked to be heading for a race win that would have narrowed Green's lead but, on the final circuit, he was spun out by Johnson, who was a lap down and seized his opportunity to steal some points from Speak.

Johnson followed up by winning the consolation but Harris and Wainman both had mechanical problems in the race and both failed to transfer to the meeting final, ending their chances of the title.

Going into the final, Green held a slender eight-point advantage over Speak, with Johnson 30 marks behind.

Green's title hopes were dashed when a mechanical problem forced him to retire midway through the race. Johnson seized his opportunity to close the gap by finishing second, with Speak following him home in third.

## CAR TRIAL

### Kitching retains his BTRDA Gold Star

Car Trials

By Duncan Stephens

Organiser: BTRDA Where: near Yeovil, Somerset When: October 23 Starters: 17

Henry Kitching retained his BTRDA Gold Star with a faultless drive at Woolbridge Motor Club, a venue that had previously been used as a sporting trials site, near Crewkerne.

Kitching made the long trip to Somerset from Yorkshire as favourite to add to his British championship last month, but overnight found the gearbox leaking oil, which left him troubled. The long, slippery grass helped Kitching immediately open out a decisive class lead, which he extended to 25 points during the day over Mark Hoppe.

Meanwhile, Trevor Moffatt had his own tussle with Nick Pollitt, who he beat by 12 points to secure the runner-up position in the Bronze Star.

In the front-wheel-drive class, there was an intriguing entry with two normal new-car class competitors switching to try and boost their Silver and Bronze Star chances.

Rupert North has become the man to beat in this class this year, but Shawn Franklin immediately had him under pressure. Thereafter a super day-long battle ensued swinging both ways, which Franklin finally topped by six points superbly. However, North was content with the Silver Star runner-up position.

The rear-wheel-drive class has had numerous overall and class winners this year, so a very tight battle was expected. Barrie Parker was completely off form from the off, but recovered slightly during the afternoon, leaving him with just the Mac Hazlewood trophy for most qualifying points during the year.

Meanwhile, Steve Courts stamped his authority from round one and slowly pulled away as the grass dried in the sunshine to net him the Silver Star.

#### Results

Woolbridge Motor Club Trial  
1 Henry Kitching (Vauxhall Corsa) 73.6 per cent (Gold Star winner); 2 Steve Courts (Hillman Imp) 86.0 per cent (Silver Star winner); 3 Shawn Franklin (Citroen Saxo); 4 Mark Hoppe (Citroen Saxo); 5 Rupert North (Rover Mini); 6 Dave Oliver (Hillman Imp); 7 Trevor Moffatt (Ford Ka); 8 Kevin Roberts (Dutton Phaeton) (Bronze Star winner); 9 Nick Pollitt (Vauxhall Corsa); 10 Dave Walker (Vauxhall Corsa).

# HAVE YOUR SAY

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

## MN SAYS...

# Tough times for VW

### The German firm looks to be out of the WRC

The dark cloud hanging over Volkswagen's participation in the World Rally Championship is, I fear, entirely predictable. Perhaps the only surprise is that it has taken this long to filter through to the front line.

The manufacturer has dominated the sport since it reentered the WRC's top flight in 2013. It has certainly not been shy when it comes to putting its hand in its pocket, but the emissions scandal that has enveloped the firm was always going to raise alarm bells.

It might be that VW, which could leave the sport at the end of 2017, is fully able to finance a continued programme on the stages. But the exit is more about the perception of the firm. It has to be seen to be 'doing the right thing'. That means Audi out of the World Endurance Championship and VW out of rallying.

The shock waves from the emissions scandal show no sign of slowing down.

**Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)**



## LETTERS

### Rally GB thanks: part one

With 164 competitors from 23 nations, the longest competitive route in recent history, a return to Chester after 20 years and a new RallyFest stage at Cholmondeley Castle that drew 10,000 fans, the 2016 Dayinsure Wales Rally GB could not have been a better showcase for UK rallying.

The continued backing of the Welsh Government as our principal funding partner remains invaluable, alongside the support of our 2016 title partner, Dayinsure, and our other partners and suppliers; their involvement has made a huge contribution to the progress the event has made in recent years.

Crucially, the rally would not have been possible without the support of almost 2000 volunteer marshals and officials, covering so many varied roles.

Whether contributing to the safety, logistics, promotion or the smooth running of the event, their efforts are sincerely appreciated by everyone at the MSA and IMS, not to mention the wider rallying community of competitors, teams and fans.

We hope that the rally was as special for you as it was for us and we look forward to seeing you all again next year.

**Ben Taylor**  
Managing Director  
International Motor Sports

**Rob Jones**  
Chief Executive  
Motor Sports Association

### Rally GB thanks: part two

On leaving the Gartheiniog stage of Wales Rally GB on three cylinders last weekend, we tried to make our way to Aberhrrnant without success, so we rolled back into the village of Dinas Mawddwy and found ourselves outside the Red Lion.

While I called the service crew from the pub's landline as there was no service on the mobile, the driver was being cross-examined by an 85-year-old lady who lived in the village.

She knew the car was a Ford Escort Mk1, the same as Roger Clark drove in the 1972 RAC when she had taken her son to see him and the other drivers.

We then entered the pub and were immediately brought a beer by a local man. It was not long before another local man entered the pub (the undertaker) enquiring after the car, did it need a tow, the loan of his shuttle or would we like to garage the car in with his collection of rally cars for safe keeping.

Finally, Steve the stage commander came into the pub



Motorsport News, October 26

with his band of helpers: something he had been doing for the last 35 years and it soon became clear that this group of people including the undertaker were passionate about the rally.

They knew what it does for their little community and the part they play in delivering us the competitor the best possible stages. Thank you to you all for your hard work, time and effort you all put in it is much appreciated by us all.

**Aziz Tejpar/Tim Sayer**  
Car 239  
Via email

### Where's Jimmy's book?

It was really great to read Jimmy McRae's magic moments and what a great job as editor last week (*Motorsport News*, October 26).

Every time I see Jimmy at an event I can't help feeling I should go up to him and politely ask: 'Excuse me, Mr McRae, isn't it time you wrote a book?'

Probably a question he gets asked on a regular basis.

There are books by Russell Brookes and books on Roger Clark and, of course, Colin McRae but what would be great is an autobiography by the great man himself.

So hopefully he will read this and think: 'yes, the time is right.'

I am sure any such tome will be a best seller.

**Steve Winter**  
Via email

### Penalty kicking

Consider the following: with 10 minutes remaining, Wayne Rooney's shot appears to have crossed the goal line.

TV replays clearly show it was a goal.

The referee defers his decision until after the match has finished. It couldn't happen, could it?

Well how come it is allowed to happen at what is supposed to be a top level sporting event: namely, last weekend's Mexican Grand Prix...?

**Rob Henson**  
Via email

## YOUR PICS



**MN.LETTERS@HAYMARKET.COM**

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

**ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!**



Darren Bowen captured this dramatic shot of the 2017 VW WR Car



Three-wheeled action, taken by Fay Tilley



Jamie Pinchbeck got this rare Renault racer



Greg Tomkins snapped a Metro



Come fly with me... snapped by Geoff Bengough



Shunt at the recent Festival, by Gary Hand



Sprinting, from Jamie Pinchbeck



Mark Ashby's rallycross shot



Ashley Field's Darrian, by Martin Cooper

GET MN ON THE GO

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## TV GUIDE

At a loose end this evening? Why not tune in for highlights of the final round of the **British Rallycross Championship** at Croft from earlier this month to whet your appetite early for a weekend full of four-wheel action on your box? (Wednesday, 1855-2000hrs, Motors TV).

If you prefer rallying without the 'cross', hop across the Irish Sea for highlights of last month's **Donegal Harvest Rally** from the north of the Republic (Friday, 1200-1230hrs, BT Sport 2).

There's club racing action for you to feast on, too; for an eclectic mix of sports prototypes, be sure to catch the **OSS** finale from Silverstone a fortnight ago, and that's followed swiftly by the finale of the **Formula Jedi Championship** from the same venue (Friday, 1825-1855hrs and 1855-2000hrs, Motors TV).

While live touring car action takes place down under this weekend (see live TV), the best bits from the 2016 **DTM** season are also available in a one-hour season review. The championship was a close-run thing, with Marco Wittmann, Edoardo Mortara and Jamie Green all entering the final round in with a shout of claiming the title (BT Sport 2, Friday 2200-2300hrs).

But finally, if you still haven't got over the excitement of **Wales Rally GB**, you can also re-live the best bits from all 22 of last weekend's action-packed stages in the heart of North Wales (Saturday, 1750-1855hrs, Motors TV).

## LIVE TV



Australian Supercars head to New Zealand

- World Endurance Championship: Shanghai**
- **Race:** Sunday 0230-0935hrs, Motors TV
- 1500-1650hrs, Motors TV
- **Race two:** Sunday 1300-1445hrs, Motors TV
- Australian Supercars: Pukekohe**
- **Race two:** Saturday 0330-0445hrs, BT Sport 1
  - **Race four:** Sunday 0315-0430hrs, BT Sport 1
- NASCAR Sprint Cup: Texas**
- **Race:** Sunday 1930hrs, Premier Sports

- Euroformula Open: Barcelona**
- **Race one:** Saturday 1405-1500hrs, Motors TV
  - **Race two:** Sunday 1205-1300hrs, Motors TV

- International GT Open: Barcelona**
- **Race one:** Saturday



Battles at Hungaroring were part of highly dramatic season of tin-top action in the DTM

## LISTINGS



Two weeks after the Festival, Kents head to Silverstone

### RACING SATURDAY / SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**  
**Walter Hayes Trophy:** FF1600, Allcomers, Open Wheel, Closed Wheel, Clubmans **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1145hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1015hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £10  
**Web** silverstone.co.uk  
**Contact** 08704 588260

### SATURDAY / SUNDAY

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**  
**BARC meeting:** Trucks, Legends, Pickups, Intermarque, Saloons, Tin Tops **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1105hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1045hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £24, under 13 free **Web** msv.com  
**Contact** 0843 453 9000

### RALLYING THURSDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Bournemouth, Bristol, Stoke, Chester**  
**RAC Rally of the Tests** **Starts** 1730 **Admission** free  
**Web** heroesevents.eu

### SATURDAY

■ **Ballycastle, Northern Ireland**  
**River Ridge Recycling Glens of Antrim Rally** **Starts** 1030hrs **Admission** free  
**Web** anicc.org.uk

■ **Walters Arena, Neath**  
**British Cross Country Championship** **Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** free  
**Web** marches4x4.com

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**

**Neil Howard Stages**  
**Starts** 0857 **Admission** Online £15, Gate £20. Children under the age of 13 go free  
**Web** nhstages.blmcc.co.uk

■ **Craik Airfield, Fife**  
**Glenrothes MC Kingdom Stages** **Starts** 0830  
**Admission** TBA  
**Web** glenrothes-msc.com

### SUNDAY

■ **Dalby Forest, Yorkshire**  
**MEM Malton Forest Rally** **Starts** 0931 **Admission** free  
**Web** maltonmc.co.uk

### SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY

■ **Coventry stadium, West Midlands**  
**BriSCA F1** **Starts** 1800hrs  
**Admission** adults £20, concessions/students £15, children (11-15) £5, children (under 11) free  
**Web** f1stockcars.com/coventrystox.com

### SUNDAY

■ **Croft, Yorkshire**  
**BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship** **Starts** 0900hrs  
**Admission** adults £8, children (15 and under) free  
**Web** btrda.com/rallycross, croftcircuit.co.uk/racing/btrda

■ **Hednesford Hills, Staffordshire**  
**National Hot Rods** **Starts** 1500hrs  
**Admission** adults £16, seniors £12, children (14 & under) £7  
**Web** spedeworth.co.uk

Details correct at time of press

## THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

# MOTORSPORT NEWS

Haymarket Consumer Media  
 Bridge House, 69 London Road  
 Twickenham TW1 3SP

**EDITORIAL**  
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5865  
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**Editor** Matt James  
 matt.james@haymarket.com  
**Deputy Editor** Robert Ladbrook  
 robert.ladbrook@haymarket.com  
**Group National Editor** Jack Benyon  
 jack.benyon@haymarket.com  
**Junior Journalist** Stephen Lickorish  
 stephen.lickorish@haymarket.com  
**Junior Journalist** Jack Cozens  
 jack.cozens@haymarket.com  
**Group Rallying Editor** David Evans  
 david.evans@haymarket.com  
**Art Editor** Mike Stokoe  
**Office Manager** Joanne Grove  
 joanne.grove@haymarket.com

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**  
**Historics editor** Paul Lawrence  
**Grand Prix columnist** Anthony Rowlinson  
**Origination/Repro** Dave Sternberg

**Photography** LAT Photographic:  
 Steven Tee, Glenn Dunbar, Sam Bloxham,  
 Zack Mueger, Adam Warner

**SUBSCRIPTIONS/BACK ISSUES**  
 Haymarket Consumer, FREEPOST  
 RTUC-XCCH-TJJS, 3 Queensbridge,  
 Northampton NN4 7BF  
 UK 0344 848 8834  
 Overseas +44 (0)1604 251 457  
 Email help@motorsportnews.themagazineshop.com

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**Advertising Director** Matthew Witham  
**Sales Manager** James Robinson  
**Display Sales Executive** Sam Packham  
**Classified Team Leader** Jonathan King

**PRODUCTION**  
**Production Manager** Anthony Davis  
**Production** Katrina Renwick

**PUBLISHING**  
**Direct Marketing Executive** Maria Fernandez  
**Syndication Sales Enquiries** Roshini Sethi  
 +44 (0) 20 8267 5396  
**Group Publishing Manager** Sunita Davies

**MANAGEMENT**  
**Group Director** Tim Bulley  
**Group Editor** Anthony Rowlinson  
**Group Publisher** Stuart Williams

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**Editorial Director** Mark Payton  
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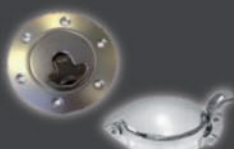
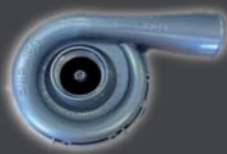


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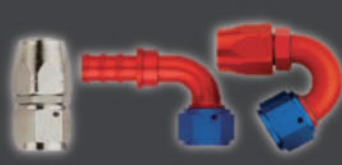
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**Ben Kavanagh**  
 Classified Advertising  
 T: +44 (0) 208 267 5389  
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