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MOTORSPORT NEWS

GINETTA'S NEW 'LMPT' RACER P20



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CLOSED ROADS FOR RALLY GB!

Law change means shake-up in Wales

By David Evans

The route for October's Wales Rally GB is undergoing a complete overhaul to include closed public roads for the first time in its World Rally Championship history.

Last week, Wales mirrored England's move by devolving authority to close roads for motorsport events from Westminster to the governing body of British motorsport.

That will have a wide-ranging impact on rallying and racing in the principality.

Britain's Deeside-based WRC counter is expected to lead the way in demonstrating the varied use of the new power and officials from the event were in Wales inspecting potential route changes last week.

Full story p2-3



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VERGNE'S CHILEAN TRIUMPH

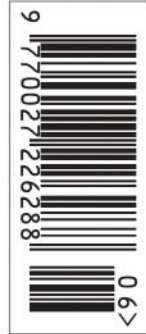


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Law change may lead to dramatic route



Famous Rally GB stages can be extended with rule

By David Evans

This year's Wales Rally GB will undergo its biggest route overhaul since the move to the north of the country in 2013 with closed public roads featuring for the first time.

Wales followed England's lead in allowing the Motor Sports Association – British motorsport's governing body – to grant permits for the suspension of the Road Traffic Act for competition with the additional approval of the relevant local

authority. Previously, an Act of Parliament had been required to bring rallies to public roads.

Senior officials from Rally GB were on location in North Wales last week, where plans are already being worked on to bring significant change to the route for the October 4-7 rally.

Rally GB managing director Ben Taylor told MN he was excited about the potential change in Welsh law brought for Britain's round of the World Rally Championship.

"It gives us the chance for a complete refresh of the route," said Taylor. "Obviously it doesn't change the stages we have on offer, but it definitely does change the way we can use them."

Taylor is keen to make best use of the new power to deliver more action in North Wales, where the event comes closest to major cities such as Manchester and Liverpool.

"North Wales was always a key area, if and when the law

changed in Wales," said Taylor. "Looking at the stages last week, it's really exciting to see what's going to be possible. As we've always said, we're not advocating the use of mile upon mile of closed public roads, nothing like that – that's not the nature of this rally. What we're looking at for this year is the chance to close small sections of public road."

This legal change will most likely bring about the return of the Penmachno test and lengthen the challenge of Gwydir and the Clocaenog, Brenig and Alwen complex.

"The Penmachno forest has traditionally offered two six-kilometre [3.72 miles] stages, give or take," said Taylor. "But Penmachno North and South were split by a public road going through the middle of them. Including those stages wasn't always the most efficient use of our superb marshalling force, but closing that road means we have a seven-mile stage



Spectators would benefit

changes for the UK's WRC showpiece

CLOSED ROADS FOR 2018 WALES RALLY GB



Jim Clark Rally would benefit if closed-road rule was passed in Scotland



Joining stages together would help ease pressure on the marshalling force

which we can use twice. That makes a lot of sense.

"It's the same in Gwydir, the cars will come out of the woods, dash down the road and back in – and the potential in and around Brenig and Clocaenog is huge.

"What we're looking for is a very much expanded, full day of action in North Wales. We're aware we have a big population base not far beyond the doorstep of these stages and we want to make it easy for fans to come and see the best action on this fantastic rally."

Running a full day of competition in North Wales will also satisfy the teams' request to see the cars back in the Deeside service park for a lunchtime service.

"Last year the cars were only back in service last on Saturday afternoon," said Taylor. "They fitted the [spot] lights and went back out for the night stages. I understand the concerns of the teams and this is why I'm

determined to get the cars back for a proper lunchtime service this time. We're very proud of our exceptional service park facility in Deeside and we want to make full use of it."

Taylor said the impact of the law change would be felt less in mid-Wales, where the length of uninterrupted forest road was less of a problem.

"There was always a lot of talk about creating a big, 50-kilometre [31.07-mile] stage in Dyfi and Gartheiniog," he said. "And we could do this by using the road up the middle. But you have to ask the question of why are we doing that? If the reason is just to create a longer stage than the one we've had before, I'm not sure there's a strong enough case for that – particularly with the FIA leaning, most recently, towards more shorter stages."

With all mid-Wales stages likely to be running on one day, Taylor accepts that there could be the need for a cull of some classics.

He added: "Fitting Hafren, Sweet Lamb, Myherin, Dyfi, Garth, Dyfnant, possibly Pantperthog into one day would be very, very difficult, but having too many stages and too much mileage is a very nice problem to be confronted with. As with all of the stages, we have a constant compromise between the length of stage, the accessibility for competitors, the geographical location in relation to the route, spectator access, marshal availability, hospitality access, the demands of live television – there's so much to think about.

"But what we have, following last week's news, is a great opportunity to take Wales Rally GB to the next level and that's what we'll be doing.

"I'm really optimistic about delivering an exciting and innovative route for October."

The route has to be filed with the FIA for the WRC stakeholder discussion in April.

Why closed-roads can work, but don't expect a SuperPrix soon

The dominoes are falling, Wales being the latest, England being the first. Closed-road competition is becoming a more and more feasible option for event planners. But what does it mean for the events you want to see and the immediate future?

Due to the sheer marshal numbers needed and the mammoth task needed to pull it together, a fully closed-road stage rally won't happen in Wales until at least 2019, and don't be surprised if it takes longer. While the new Act of Parliament makes things easier, it won't be governed in a way that there will be an 80-mile stage rally on closed roads every weekend. It's just not feasible and the implications for anything going wrong would be massive.

A closed-road circuit event is difficult to push through. Everyone wants to see a return of something like the Birmingham Superprix, but the sheer disruption it would cause is a difficult sell for local authorities. Again, difficult, not impossible. But expect years of work to go into events of that magnitude. A hillclimb or sprint event would be easier to organise and far more achievable in the short term.

The most frequent use will be, as Taylor is



Birmingham event: lengthy planning

planning for GB, to link stages together. That can allow organisers to run longer stages, and less stages, which will reduce the numbers of marshals and ever-stretched safety crews. That's exactly what rallying needs, less strain on organisers and volunteers. Expect to see this happening towards the end of 2018. As well as the massive planning needed in each case, the Motor Sports Association will need to match with due diligence to insure the event or section of closed-road is one that should run. The final domino is Scotland. Get that passed and we're another step closer to Jim Clark and Mull...

For a timeline on closed roads for motorsport in the UK, visit motorsport-news.co.uk.

Jack Benyon

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Wolff bothered

Mercedes head Toto Wolff has admitted to being "bothered" by the clashes between Mercedes' junior Esteban Ocon and Sergio Perez at Force India last year. Force India had to impose team orders at one stage to calm the two drivers down. "What bothers us are these intra-team rivalries that end with two damaged cars," said Wolff, who mentored Ocon through the troubles. "This applies to Esteban and Checo [Perez]. As a team boss, I'm so annoyed by that."

Not so peaky...

McLaren insists its new collaboration with Renault must not produce a car that is "too peaky". McLaren technical director Tim Goss said the team had prioritised making its new car with amenable characteristics, unlike Mercedes' 2017 car, repeatedly labelled a "diva". "So much of producing a great F1 car is giving the drivers a car they can exploit," said Goss. "There is no point giving them one with peaky performance. We need one that works well over a broad operating envelope."

...more blinder

McLaren has also dropped a big hint that it's set to revert to an all Papaya Orange livery this year. In a new social media campaign accompanied by #BeBrave, McLaren shows a video of the classic, all-orange M7 chassis raced by Bruce McLaren in the late 1960s as a teaser for the new MCL33.

Ham to sign

Mercedes expects Lewis Hamilton to sign a contract extension imminently. Team head Toto Wolff said negotiations on a fresh deal with the four-time world champion were ongoing, and that it was "just a matter of time" until a deal was done. Hamilton has reportedly been courted by Ferrari, but Wolff said: "Lewis has become such an important pillar of our team that it is a no-brainer that we continue with each other."

Renault: 85 per cent

Renault F1 boss Cyril Abiteboul reckons his team is attempting to challenge the top squads with "85 per cent of their resources" this year. The team is still engaged in rebuilding the squad after buying out Lotus at the end of 2015. Renault has recruited 100 extra staff since and is growing its team to around 750 staff. "Basically, the challenge I'm giving our team is to be able in the medium-term to compete with the top teams with 85 per cent of their capability and resources," said Abiteboul. "That's in terms of budget, but also in terms of headcount. I'm not trying to match what Mercedes has or what Red Bull has, just for the sake of matching."

ALONSO READY FOR LE MANS BID

Spaniard prepared for huge 25-race 2018 dual campaign



Alonso will tackle the WEC for Toyota

By Rob Ladbrook

Fernando Alonso began his Le Mans testing programme with Toyota last week, ahead of his mammoth split programme between Formula 1 and the FIA World Endurance Championship this year.

Alonso confirmed last week that he will form part of Toyota's line-up for this year's Le Mans 24 Hours, and for much of its WEC campaign too. The Spaniard will share a TS050 Hybrid LMP1 with Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima. Briton Anthony Davidson has been named as Toyota's test and reserve driver to make way for Alonso.

With the WEC gearing up for its superseason – split across two years – this year's schedule includes just five rounds. Alonso will also tackle the three events that will take place in 2019, providing he has no other clashing commitments that take priority.

Alonso tested as part of Toyota's line-up at Aragon in Spain last week, undertaking a three-day test, which also included night running. Alonso drove for Toyota at last year's WEC rookie test in Bahrain. This was his first outing in the new-spec 2018 car.

The deal means that Alonso is facing a mammoth 25-race schedule this year, but that could extend to 26 as it is understood that the date for the WEC

round at the Toyota-owned Fuji Circuit in Japan may change to avoid clashing with the US GP, meaning Alonso could do both.

Alonso is keen to chase motorsport's triple crown – of winning the Monaco GP, Indy 500 and Le Mans.

Upon securing his LMP1 deal, Alonso said: "I've never been shy that I wanted to do Le Mans. We tried for the Indy 500 last year, came close, but just missed out. This year I have the chance to race at Le Mans, thanks to McLaren and Toyota.

"It is a big challenge – much can go wrong – but I am ready, prepared and looking forward to the fight. My deal to race in the WEC was only made possible

through the good understanding and relationship I have with McLaren. In no way will this challenge take away from my main target of F1 with McLaren."

McLaren head Zak Brown added: "Everybody within our organisation appreciates that a motivated, hungry and happy world-class driver such as Fernando is a formidable asset to any team. We've always said we'd consider each opportunity for him on a case-by-case basis. At McLaren we're racers at heart, and our team is built on a brave heritage of competing and succeeding in different forms of the sport. Equally it's important that nothing detracts from our number one goal of success in Formula 1."

ALONSO'S 2018 SCHEDULE

DATE	RACE
March 25	Australian Grand Prix
April 8	Bahrain Grand Prix
April 15	Chinese Grand Prix
April 29	Azerbaijan Grand Prix
May 5	WEC Spa
May 13	Spanish Grand Prix
May 27	Monaco Grand Prix
June 10	Canadian Grand Prix
June 16-17	Le Mans 24 Hours
June 24	French Grand Prix
July 1	Austrian Grand Prix
July 8	British Grand Prix
July 22	German Grand Prix
July 29	Hungarian Grand Prix
August 19	WEC Silverstone
August 26	Belgian Grand Prix
Sept 2	Italian Grand Prix
Sept 16	Singapore Grand Prix
Sept 30	Russian Grand Prix
Oct 7	Japanese Grand Prix
Oct 21	United States Grand Prix
Oct 28	Mexican Grand Prix
Nov 11	Brazilian Grand Prix
Nov 18	WEC Shanghai
Nov 25	Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

Alonso: Le Mans challenge



Davidson: on the bench for Toyota

Davidson dropped to reserve role to make way for Toyota's new arrival

Former world champion Anthony Davidson will have "a busy programme" with Toyota this year, despite being relegated from its front-line squad to make way for Fernando Alonso.

Davidson, 38, has been an integral part of Toyota's line-up since 2013 and won the WEC title in 2014 alongside Sebastien Buemi.

Davidson won five races in 2017 despite not contesting the full WEC season after

he skipped the Austin race for what was described as "personal reasons" following a disappointing outing in the previous round in Mexico.

Alonso will take his race seat for much of this year, with Davidson now holding the reserve driver role.

"I believe we have an extremely strong line-up with real strength in depth," said Toyota team president Hisatake Murata. "Fernando is a rookie in the WEC but he

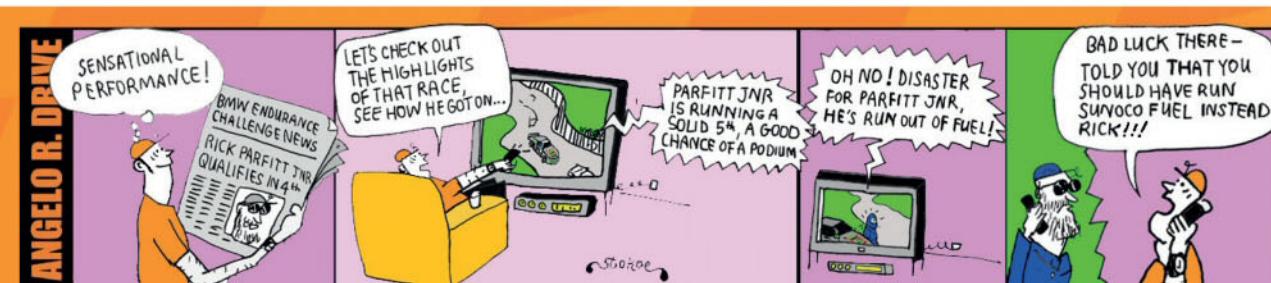
brings speed and experience gained from many years at the top of his sport.

"We are all excited to work with him, but endurance racing is a team effort and we know all of our drivers are performing to a very high level.

"I would like to thank Anthony for his professional approach in difficult circumstances. He remains a strong part of our driving line-up and he will be busy this season."

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"Toyota's aim is to be faster than Ginetta..."
The new G60-LT-P1, p20



Photos: LAT

BTCC SUPPORTS GRID GIRLS



BTCC teams are to supply "a person" to hold board

Grid girls will not be outlawed in the British Touring Car Championship following a tweak to the 2018 rules which will now allow teams to choose who represents their car on the grid.

Last week, F1 bosses decided to outlaw grid girls, claiming it was at odds with "modern day societal norms". The news brought a mixed reaction from those within motorsport. A similar decision has been made by the bosses of darts.

However, the BTCC has made an amendment to its start line procedure

regulations. The rule now states: "Registered teams are required to supply one person per registered car in suitable clothing to be on the grid for each race with the start line board at the front of the registered car's grid position when directed to do so by officials."

It will allow teams to make a decision, but most team bosses have backed the use of grid girls. Speedworks Motorsport's Amy Dick said: "There is nothing seedy, exploitative or sexist about it, the girls work for us very

much on their own terms and have input into what they are going to wear.

"Our grid girls are independent business women. They are commercially savvy through social media, on-event hosting etc. In fact they become an integral part of the promotional team as a whole throughout the season on and off the grid."

HMS Racing boss Simon Belcher says that it has no plans to alter its set-up for 2018 to promote its Alfa Romeo Giulietta, driven by Rob Austin.

Belcher said: "Our grid girl is Jo Paddon and she has worked for us for the last three seasons. Jo does far more than hold the name board on the grid, she is always around to interact with our supporters and has a great rapport with them all, she also updates our social media over the weekend.

"While we may have a grid girl she is like every other member of our team. She even helps pack up the garage at the end of a race weekend. It's about what you do and making a difference not what sex you are."

Coulthard wins Race of Champions

David Coulthard claimed his second Race of Champions victory last weekend, triumphing at Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

The Scot was up against two-time World Rallycross champion Petter Solberg but won the best-of-three shootout 2-0. He beat Solberg by just over half a second in Euro NASCAR machinery before comfortably winning in the Vuhl 05 sports car battle to seal the title.

"I had to work hard out there so thanks to Petter for a great race," said Coulthard. "He's a great sport and a great champion. When I went out of the RoC Nations Cup yesterday after winning just one race out of three my son switched off the TV because he thought 'Daddy's too old' so I'm delighted to show him experience can be a good thing too."

Timo Bernhard and Rene Rast secured the Nations Cup for Team Germany after defeating Latin America pairing Juan Pablo Montoya and Helio Castroneves in the final.



Coulthard: second RoC win

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

IndyCar will trial a windscreen cockpit protection device for the first time later this week in the open test at Phoenix. Four-time champion Scott Dixon will test the device with IndyCar planning to run it in varying light levels to assess its impact on driver visibility...The

WRT Audi of Robin Frijns, Stuart Leonard and Dries Vanthoor won the Bathurst 12 Hours, but it was a race that was marred by a huge collision between Ash Walsh and John Martin in the closing stages that meant the final portion of the contest was spent with the cars on the grid awaiting a restart. The

Schnitzer BMW of Chaz Mostert and Marco Wittmann had led in the early stages until it received a penalty for passing backmarkers before a restart and then collided with the Porsche of Earl Bamber. Second place fell to the Mercedes of Jamie Whincup, Tristan Vautier, Kenny Habul and Raffaele Marciello.

British GT4 champion Will Tregurtha crashed out of the race mid-way through... **Frijns will make his DTM debut this season with Audi following Mattias Ekstrom's decision to focus on the World Rallycross Championship this year. Audi is yet to confirm which drivers**

will drive for its teams... Harrison Newey, son of legendary Formula 1 designer Adrian, has secured the Asian Le Mans Series title along with Thomas Laurent and Stephane Richelmi after winning the season finale at Sepang last weekend. It was the ORECA crew's third victory of the season...



WRT Audi won Bathurst 12hr

British squad signs up for European LMP3 races

British team RLR M-Sport will contest both this year's Michelin Le Mans Cup and European Le Mans Series with its Ligier LMP3.

The team has signed Italian Formula 4 runner-up Job van Uitert to share with Canadian John Farano and Rob Garofalo in the ELMS, while Farano and van Uitert will share in the Le Mans Cup.

It is understood that the team is also evaluating options to do some rounds of the UK-based LMP3 Cup Championship.

Van Uitert, who was one of the stars of the 2016 Formula Ford Festival with Geva Racing, said: "I can't think of a better team to tackle my first season of sportscars with. Achieving success at the Le Mans 24 Hours is my ultimate goal and this is the first step toward that."



Photo: LAT

The new car that will be used in Formula E from the 2018/19 season has been unveiled. The striking new design features the halo cockpit protection device and it is also the first FE car that is capable of lasting an entire race meaning an end to the mid-race car swaps. The Spark Racing Technologies-produced car features a new McLaren Applied Technologies battery as well as more aggressively-designed front and rear wings.

Rob Huff joins WTCR in Volkswagen Golf

Former World Touring Car champion Rob Huff will enter the World Touring Car Cup this year in a Volkswagen Golf TCR car run by Sebastien Loeb Racing.

The Briton, who claimed the WTCC title in 2012, has previous experience of the Golf having won in the TCR International Series last year with a similar car. With the WTCC adopting TCR regulations, he will now continue in a Golf having raced a Citroen in the WTCC last year.

"It's great to join the WTCR, which is run by the same people at Eurosport Events I've worked with for 13 years in the WTCC, and continue the great relationship I started with Volkswagen last year in TCR," said Huff.

"It's also a fantastic opportunity



Huff: switching cars for WTCR

to join Sebastien Loeb's team. They've won the WTCC independents' title for the last two years and, with no manufacturer entries in WTCR, that'll put us right at the front.

"My aim this year is absolutely to win the title."

He will be partnered at SLR by Mehdi Bennani, while Gabriele Tarquini and Norbert Michelisz will race Hyundai's in the series this year.

RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Plato struggled last season

PLATO CONFIRMS BTCC RETURN WITH SUBARU

Two-time champion will be back in reworked Levorg this season



Plato will race again

By Matt James

Double champion Jason Plato will remain with the Team BMR Subaru squad in the British Touring Car Championship for a third season.

The 50-year-old has won two races with the programme over the last two seasons and says that work done at the team's headquarters over the winter can help him win more regularly in 2018. The 96-time race winner finished 12th last year and is aiming for

an upturn in form this term.

Plato said: "We have been through what happened last year, and looked at it from every angle. We can see there are some areas that we can work on. We have some exciting new developments in progress which should see the Subarus fighting at the sharp end of the grid yet again. April can't come soon enough."

"Sure, last year didn't go the way I wanted it to, and that hurts me personally. It was my worst year of racing, because I wasn't really

competing. I want to come back stronger than ever and get back to winning ways."

Plato will be alongside reigning champion Ash Sutton in the estate-shaped Levorg machines.

Warren Scott, BMR Racing team principal, said: "I am pleased to retain Jason in the team for another year and am looking forward to supporting him to his 100 wins as well as his fight for the championship throughout what promises to be an unforgettable year."

Jordan extends BTCC stay until end of 2020

Andrew Jordan has committed to the British Touring Car Championship until the end of 2020 after inking a new deal with his backer Pirtek.

Jordan had an existing contract up until the end of this term, but it has been extended for three further seasons to cover his activities in the BTCC.

"I am delighted," said the 28-year-old. "Pirtek has been with me since I was 15 years old in junior rallycross, and I

think that must make this one of the longest running deals in UK motorsport.

"It shows the value that the BTCC offers too. We did look around at other championships just to see where we were at, but there was nothing else that offered what the BTCC does. It works for us and it works for Pirtek."

Jordan has been confirmed at the WSR team for a second season in 2018 at the wheel of his BMW 125i M Sport.



Jordan has fresh agreement with Pirtek

Briton Harrison Scott seals a switch to Pro Mazda

Euroformula Open champion Harrison Scott will contest the Pro Mazda Championship in 2018 with RP Motorsport Racing.

The 2014 and 2017 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist will continue with the Italian team that took him to 12 Euroformula wins last season, and will partner Lodovico Laurini in the American series.

"Last year was fantastic, but now we will have to start again with the same hunger for successes," said Scott.

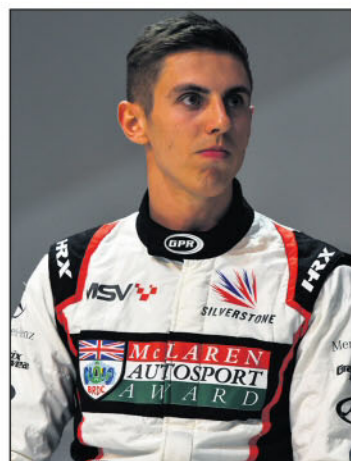
"We are aware that there will be a lot of work to do because everything will be new for us this season, but we are ready and determined to face this new challenge."

Elsewhere in America, BRDC British F3 racer Jamie Chadwick tested a USF2000 car at the Homestead-Miami Speedway with Benik.

The 19-year-old, who won the British GT4 Championship in 2015, is looking to return to the British F3 series in 2018 but admitted racing in America could eventually be an option.

"It went really well and one of the cool things in America is the circuits are mega, it was like Rockingham on steroids," she said.

"I think racing in America I've not thought too much about previously but more recently I've been looking at what I can do this year."



Scott will head over to America

IN BRIEF

Allen joins Fortec

British Formula 4 racer Lucca Allen has moved to the Fortec Motorsports squad for 2018. The Irishman made his debut in the Snetterton round last year after he turned 15 with Falcon Motorsport, but he has now been announced as Fortec's first driver for this year. The team has a full line-up of drivers with the rest due to be revealed shortly.

MG Trophy drivers

The MG Trophy is encouraging drivers to enter its Class C for MG ZR 160 machinery. The class champion Matt Turnbull and runner-up Andy Spencer will both be moving to different classes for 2018, leaving space in the budget division. "We have several Class C cars for sale, ready to race from as little as £4200 and 25s and under benefit from half price race entries so for under £6500 you can race on all the top UK circuits this year," said series chairman Pete Macwaters.

Burton's good cause

Renault UK Clio Cup Junior driver Gus Burton will raise money for the Sparkle Foundation, which provides aid to children in Malawi, this year. The Pyro driver, who was unable to compete in the final rounds last year after injuring his hand playing rugby, will seek sponsorship during the season with all the money raised going to the charity. Burton was fifth in the standings last year with Jamsport.

New LMP3 Cup class

The LMP3 Cup has added a second (PT4) class for this season that is open to the new Ligier JS P4 machine and the Radical RXC. The series struggled with low entry levels in its inaugural season last year, with the grid dropping to as few as five cars at one round, but the addition of the new secondary class will allow the trackday-focused machines to compete.

F1000 eSports

F1000 will launch a new eSports championship this year called simF1000. It will run on Forza Motorsport 7 and is hosted by the Virtual Racing Association. It will act as a companion to the BRSCC series, with virtual races held at tracks in the UK and across the world. F1000 director Frazer Corbyn said: "It's a way to create awareness for our main F1000 championship and give further exposure to our sponsors who suit this type of platform. We've also had a few drivers suggesting it might be a good idea, especially if we added in different circuits."

TCR UK set to run on reversed Knockhill track layout

The Knockhill round of TCR UK will be run on the track's reversed layout.

The May 12/13 event will be the second time in the past year that the Scottish circuit has held a meeting with the track used in the opposite direction to usual, with the reverse layout not used since the 1990s before that.

TCR UK promoter Jonathan Ashman

said: "We think our drivers and teams will look forward to the challenge - even those drivers who've raced there regularly almost certainly won't have used the anti-clockwise circuit. I'm grateful to the team at Knockhill for their enthusiasm for what we know will give competitors and fans plenty to talk about when we head to Scotland."

Porsche star Oliphant joins Ciceley for BTCC

Tom Oliphant will graduate to the British Touring Car Championship this season and will drive a Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes-Benz A-Class.

The 27-year-old, who was the 2015 Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion, has finished fourth in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB for the last two seasons. He will drive alongside Adam Morgan, who is also remaining with the team for his seventh year in the category.

Team boss Russell Morgan, Adam's father, said: "These are exciting times for Ciceley Motorsport with Tom joining Adam. We have two gifted young drivers. As soon as I heard that Tom was available we moved mountains in our quest to sign him. We had to purchase the TOCA TBL licence by the November 30 and that really put the pressure on us to conclude the deal."

"Tom is exactly the type of driver I want in my squad: professional in and



Oliphant will make BTCC debut

out of the car and blisteringly fast. He will be eligible for both the Independents and the Jack Sears Trophy [which this year runs for drivers who have yet to score an outright podium]. I expect him to do well in both. Although Tom has no front-wheel-drive experience, our cars are very well balanced and we have a comprehensive pre-season test schedule arranged."

● Aiden Moffat, who drove the Laser Tools Racing A-Class last season and took an outright win at Donington Park, has yet to confirm his plans.



Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mick Walker, David Archer – Kingsize Photography

Ratcliffe will replace Morris

PARFITT AND RATCLIFFE REUNITE IN BRITISH GT



Double British GT champion Rick Parfitt Jr will be reunited with his 2013 GT4 title-winning team-mate Ryan Ratcliffe in the number one Bentley this season.

Parfitt won last year's GT3 title alongside Seb Morris in the Team Parker Racing-run car, and Ratcliffe comes in after it had been announced Morris and Parfitt were parting ways.

Welshman Ratcliffe lifted the British GT4 crown alongside Parfitt in an Optimum Motorsport-run Ginetta G55 back in 2013, and will now attempt to help him retain the GT3 honours.

"Teaming with Ryan was a no-brainer for this year as he's like my surrogate brother – we raced against each other in Ginetta GT5s and won GT4 together, so this is the next step," said Parfitt.

"He's a really rapid driver with a whole lot of talent, he just hasn't quite had the right environment around him so far to show that. At Team Parker we can nurture him and I know our driving styles will complement each other."

Parfitt described the reunion as the start of his new "two-year plan to win again" in British GT. With a multitude

of factory drivers being confirmed in GT3, Parfitt and Ratcliffe stand as the only Bronze-Silver-graded pairing so far. Most are Gold/Platinum and Bronze.

"I never go into a season entertaining the thought of winning the title," added Parfitt. "I go into each year just wanting to do the best I can. Ryan and I will develop more as a pairing and in British GT consistency counts so much."

"With so many high-rated drivers coming in it is likely to get feisty up at the front, which could play to our advantage if we're boxing clever."

The duo is set to race the same Bentley as last year, with Parfitt saying a switch to the new Continental GT3 – being used by factory teams this year – is unlikely. Customer teams won't get the new car until June at the earliest.

"The new Bentley looks and should be fantastic and we're due to test it, but I doubt we'll actually race it this year," said Parfitt. "If Ryan and I are in the title picture it would be silly to change as we know the old Bentley will still be very competitive. Then for 2019, who knows? But it would be great to have the new one."



Howard claimed the title with the Beechdean squad in 2013 and '15

Beechdean is close to securing a British GT return

Former British GT championship-winning team Beechdean AMR is close to confirming a return to the series in the GT3 class, *Motorsport News* understands.

Andrew Howard's team has been a staple entry into British GT since 2006, and has held a strong relationship with Aston

Martin for the last decade.

The squad ran Howard to the GT3 title in both 2013 and 2015, but withdrew from the top class of the series last year to focus on its European racing programmes in the European Le Mans Series and Le Mans 24 Hours.

According to *MN's* sources, Beechdean is now

close to formalising a deal for a bronze-graded driver to join a platinum factory driver in the team's Aston Martin Vantage GT3, but an announcement was pending as *MN* went to press on Monday.

The team has already begun a GT3 testing programme around the UK and Europe.

Team BRIT take step towards Le Mans in GT4

Team BRIT has purchased an Aston Martin Vantage GT4 as part of its next step to become the first all-disabled team to compete at Le Mans in 2020.

The team, which competed in Fun Cup last year in a car with specially modified controls, is set to compete in a number of events including British GT, Creventic 24 Hours and the Aston Martin Owners' Club GT4 Challenge.

The squad is comprised mostly of ex-servicemen using racing as a rehabilitation tool, but midway through 2017 the team also began taking on non-servicemen with disabilities as well.

The Vantage will feature special hand controls, and will be able to switch between conventional and hand controls depending on the driver. They have been installed and run on

the car, and they will be tested twice before a media day at Brands Hatch on February 23, where the car will be demonstrated on-track for the first time.

"It's a British team, British race car and British engineering," said Dave Player, Team BRIT founder. "We're really proud that we're setting the standard [with hand controls] moving forward."

The drivers due to compete in the GT car are Warren Mackinlay, James Hill, Martyn Compton, Jamie Falvey, James Russell and Ash Hall.

Player added: "It's a group of six and it will be the ones who progress the best who will stay in the car."

The team will continue to run two cars in the Fun Cup Championship alongside its GT commitments.



Team BRIT founder Player says the GT4 Aston Martin is the next step in Le Mans bid

Ex-BTCC man Kerry signs up to BMW Car Club Series

Former British Touring Car Championship racer Rick Kerry has signed up to the new-for-2018 BMW Car Club Racing Series.

The 2005 and 2006 Kumho BMW champion from Ipswich has a BMW 1 Series with an E46 M3 engine, in which he will contest the new 14-race series that shares with the 750 Motor Club, Aston Martin Owners' Club and Castle Combe Racing Club. The organisers have deferred championship status until 2019.

"The treaded tyres keeps the costs down and the power-to-weight ratios are slightly higher than the Kumho Championship used to be, but achievable," said Kerry. "There will be a lot of BMW enthusiasts watching the racing as it's affiliated to the BMW Car Club and I think it's nice to do something different."

"I'm a person who thinks motorsport should be as even as possible. You should have competitive motorsport and I think that's what they are trying to achieve."

The category is aimed mostly at production-spec vehicles, while the power-to-weight ratio aims to limit the advantage of big budget operations."

The new series shares four events with the 750MC, where it will offer entrants in its 330 Challenge and M3 Cup discounted entries to attempt to boost grids.



Kerry will race his BMW 1 Series



Hingeley also tested a GP3 car

Ben Hingeley makes Hitech Euro F3 step

BRDC British F3 frontrunner Ben Hingeley will graduate to the European Formula 3 series with Hitech GP this season.

The 20-year-old will join last year's British F3 champion, Enaam Ahmed, and former GP3 race winner, Alex Palou, for the campaign which begins on May 12 in Pau.

Hingeley had tested a GP3 car with Jenzer Motorsport before choosing to graduate to European F3.

"We did the GP3 test which went really well and we were looking quite positive for that," said Hingeley, 2015 Formula Jedi champion.

"Then Oliver [Oakes, team principal] from Hitech said they were testing over the next couple of weeks and to come along."

"They're [GP3 and European F3] both very good championships, the only big downside of GP3 is the track time. Being on the F1 programme you don't have a lot of track time."



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RACING NEWS



Dorlin (l) and Rowbottom return

Rowbottom, Epps and Dorlin to UK Clio Cup

British Touring Car driver Mike Epps, Renault UK Clio Cup race winner James Dorlin and regular podium finisher Dan Rowbottom will all race in the Clio Cup this season.

Epps, who finished 17th in the BTCC standings last year driving a Team Hard VW CC, will make his debut in the Clio Cup this year with new team Matrix Motorsport.

Epps said: "It makes complete sense for me to step over from the BTCC this season. Having looked at various opportunities, the Matrix Motorsport operation, its plans for the future and the potential of the team really stood out."

Meanwhile, 2016 Michelin Clio Series champion Dorlin will remain with the Westbourne squad in the series after taking two wins in his rookie season.

"I'm really confident we will be in the fight for the title – 2017 was a massive learning curve but we still exceeded our expectations with the two wins," said Dorlin. "Westbourne and myself now want to put everything we learnt together last year to very good use this season."

Elsewhere, Rowbottom has joined the frontrunning Team Pyro squad for this year after finishing fifth for his family DRM team last term. He has been tipped by reigning Clio champion Mike Bushell as a title contender and has begun testing with the team at Barcelona.

Pyro boss Mark Hunt said: "He is definitely capable of winning it. If he can get some wins and consistent top three finishes he can win the championship. He's more mature now and improved a lot last year."

HARPER JOINS JTR AND TANDY IN CARRERA CUP

Porsche GB junior driver secured funding for two years



Harper wanted help from Tandy

By Stephen Lickorish

Porsche GB junior driver Dan Harper has joined the JTR team for the Carrera Cup this year.

The 17-year-old was selected last November as the driver to receive £85,000 towards his budget for two years in the series, along with receiving support from Porsche. He has now chosen to drive for JTR with the squad having Porsche

factory driver Nick Tandy as its boss being the deciding factor.

"I think a big part is Nick Tandy because of his experience and where he is as a Porsche manufacturer driver, so I think they have that to offer over every other team," said Harper. "He knows how to drive a car so if there's any problems he can always jump in the car and can take me under his wing."

"It's about getting as much experience as possible this year.

I've got a lot of things to learn from my last year in Ginettas so it will be a long and steep learning curve but hopefully towards the second half of the season we will score some good results and see where that puts us in the championship."

Tandy added: "Porsche has been very impressed with Dan and he's only 17. We took interest in him straight away because Porsche has selected him as the young driver with

the most potential. In a way they've done the hard work for us in identifying someone with such talent.

"It's a great opportunity for JTR to progress from what we did last year by getting someone of Dan's potential on board.

"We really have high hopes for him and I think myself and the team can help him get on the pace straightaway."

Additional reporting by Gary Watkins

Hawkey swoops onto Porsche grid

Three of the five Porsche GB Junior finalists will be on the Carrera Cup grid this year with Esme Hawkey the latest to commit.

The 19-year-old will race for the returning GT Marques squad that last contested the series in 2016 and finished runner-up in the standings with Dino Zamparelli. Hawkey has strong links with the team having competed with GT Marques in a Porsche Cayman Clubsport GT4 in the GT Cup for the past two years.

She joins the chosen Junior, Dan Harper, and George Gamble in the category this season. This is in contrast to the previous Scholarship in 2016 when only the winner Charlie Eastwood ended up joining the Carrera Cup grid.

"I've really enjoyed racing the Cayman and have learned so much about driving a GT car," said Hawkey. "The ultimate goal for me was to step up to Carrera Cup as it's such a competitive series and I first tested a 911 GT3 Cup with GT Marques at the end of 2016."



Jaguar Saloon and GT Championship will visit Castle Combe and five CSCC meetings, but not Zandvoort

Twelve rounds for Jaguar Saloons and GTs in reduced calendar

The Jaguar Saloon and GT Championship will run a reduced calendar in 2018.

The championship featured 16 rounds across eight race weekends last season, seven of which were organised by the Classic Sports Car Club.

This year only five meetings will run alongside the CSCC, with the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club also dropping its

additional round at Zandvoort

but racing at Castle Combe instead, offering 12 rounds throughout the season.

Terry Dye, the JEC's racing manager, said: "We're not going anywhere exotic this year and have organised Castle Combe ourselves. We'll also run a triple header with the CSCC at Donington Park as that cuts down on expenses and we can cram in more races."

Director of the CSCC David

Smitheram added: "The CSCC and the JEC has always had an excellent working relationship and that hasn't changed. This is the 20th year of JEC Racing, 15 of which have been with the CSCC.

"They're doing a race with Castle Combe rather than us and then we're doing a triple header for them rather than offering them another round."

Britcar Ginetta switch for Woodard as series makes driver rule changes

Woodard Racing will return to Britcar this season with a Ginetta G55 instead of the Mini R56 which had previously been used by the team.

The car will compete in the Endurance championship with driver Daniel Woodard remaining with the team and joined by American Freddy Niblack.

David Birrell, who raced

with the team in Britcar last year, will also race with Woodard Racing but his exact plans have yet to be finalised.

Britcar will also introduce changes to its driver classification system this season to ensure its Endurance and Sprint championships remain attractive to amateurs.

All competitors will be rated as

Pro, Pro Am or Am by a committee that includes experienced drivers Martin Short and Warren Gilbert.

Professionals are not eligible to drive solo in 50-minute races or for more than 60 per cent of two-hour races. The new Pro Am category means that there is no requirement to be paid to be considered as a professional.



Woodard Racing will use Ginetta G55 instead of Mini

FORMULA E: CHILE

Photos: LAT

Frenchman resists Lotterer for second Formula E victory in Santiago. By **Scott Mitchell**

VERGNE FEELS THE HEAT IN CHILE



Win means Vergne now leads the FE standings



Vergne held off late pressure

RESULTS

ROUND 4 Where: Santiago, Chile (CHL) When: February 3
Laps: 37 Distance: 56.787 miles

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	Techeetah	1h01m24.514s
2	Andre Lotterer (GER)	Techeetah	+1.154s
3	Sebastien Buemi (SWI)	Renault e.dams	+1.959s
4	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Mahindra Racing	+2.793s
5	Sam Bird (GBR)	DS Virgin Racing	+4.490s
6	Nelson Piquet Jr (BRA)	Jaguar	+6.364s
7	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar	+7.099s
8	Jerome d'Ambrosio (BEL)	Dragon Racing	+13.308s
9	Antonio Felix da Costa (POR)	Andretti	+14.811s
10	Nicolas Prost (FRA)	Renault e.dams	+21.092s
11	Tom Blomqvist (GBR)	Andretti	+32.924s
12	Luca Filippi (ITA)	NIO	+44.127s
13	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi	+49.398s
14	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO	+1m12.282s
R	Alex Lynn (GBR)	DS Virgin Racing	26 laps/mechanical
R	Nick Heidfeld (GER)	Mahindra Racing	23 laps/damage
R	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt	21 laps/power loss
R	Daniel Abt (GER)	Audi Sport Abt	11 laps/suspension
R	Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Dragon Racing	0 laps/collision
R	Maro Engel (GER)	Venturi	0 laps/collision

Pole: Vergne 1m19.161s (69.80mph). Winner's average speed 55.484mph.
Fastest lap Bird 1m20.235s (68.86mph).

POINTS

Championship (after 4/12 rounds)

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Vergne	71
2	Rosenqvist	66
3	Bird	61
4	Buemi	37
5	Piquet	33
6	Mortara	24
7	Evans	21
8	Heidfeld	21
9	Lotterer	18
10	Abt	12

Jean-Eric Vergne leapt into the lead of the Formula E title race with a victory in Santiago that suggests he is now ready to put together a complete championship challenge.

It took the ex-Formula 1 driver 31 races to win in FE, a series in which he claimed pole position on his debut. Then, in the early races of the 2017/18 season, he was only on the periphery of the lead battle, offering no validation of his Montreal success. Until last weekend, it looked like a one-off.

In Santiago, on the series' maiden trip to Chile, he produced an assured drive in very tricky circumstances. Under extreme pressure from team-mate Andre Lotterer and facing a communications blackout and energy-related misunderstanding, Vergne was flawless.

A set-up breakthrough after intense work in the rookie test in Marrakech with the experienced James Rossiter and Frederic

Makowiecki boosted Techeetah's performance, while Vergne claimed the team also discovered "we had suspension that was basically not working in some corners".

Another pole duly arrived in Santiago, and this time it was converted into victory.

This time, Vergne managed to win in difficult circumstances under which he would probably have wilted if faced with in previous seasons. Lotterer was aggressively pursuing a first win after a trying start to his rookie season, and Vergne was hampered by a pair of problems.

"My energy management system was saying I needed to save a lot more energy to finish the race [it was suggesting he needed an extra lap's worth]," he said.

"I was seeing Andre coming massively quicker in a straight line, so I thought at first he was never going to finish the race. I was pushing very hard in the corners, nearly hit the wall twice, and then I lost communication completely with the team.

"He tried to attack me on the outside, flat. I was thinking there was no way he would finish the race, but actually I was saving one more lap [of energy] than him."

Vergne was a sitting duck as he lifted and coasted at the end of two long straights, with Lotterer attacking on several occasions into the heavy braking zone of Turn 3, a tight right-hander. Twice he drew alongside his team-mate on the wrong line, but the most dramatic moment came when Vergne moved across to defend just as Lotterer, with a significant closing speed, had committed to trying to dive down the inside late on the brakes.

Lotterer nailed his team-mate square in the rear, but somehow the two connected cars – both with locked wheels – stayed out of the barriers. Vergne was arguably too aggressive in his defence and Lotterer certainly thought so, but he should be given the benefit of the doubt because of the closing speed.

In the past, Vergne has slipped into an erratic, almost desperate, style in

stubborn defence of a position, which is an inefficient use of time and energy. There was no repeat here and his energy use remained consistent even in the face of rising pressure. Vergne retained his focus, and won the race with almost an entire lap's energy remaining. As he pointed out: "It means even more for me to win knowing I had one more lap of energy in the car."

On the evidence of Santiago, Lotterer has also found his feet. Second place meant he scored his first FE points finish in emphatic fashion after a difficult baptism with an incident-filled Hong Kong debut and then retirement in Marrakech.

He put the improvement down to the set-up work by the team in the Marrakech rookie test and significant simulator work for himself – plus the fact that Santiago was new to everybody, so he was starting one step fewer behind his rivals.

Techeetah's 1-2 finish was the first by any team in the series' history, and a fine achievement given it is the only

customer operation in the championship. That the works Renault of Buemi had to cling on to the final place on the podium – another FE record, as one powertrain manufacturer locked out the rostrum – shows that the privateer is doing a better job than the factory e.dams outfit at present, and Buemi knows it.

Buemi qualified second but slipped behind Lotterer at the start and then to fourth when Nelson Piquet Jr launched his Jaguar around the outside of the first corner from fifth on the grid. Buemi eventually overhauled the inaugural champion, who retaliated with a late dive into Turn 3 – and ended up needing to find reverse down the escape road.

A charging drive from the recovering Felix Rosenqvist, who only qualified 14th after a set-up mistake, and Sam Bird meant Buemi's focus became securing third, rather than attacking the warring Techeetahs.

Renault's problems pale in comparison to those suffered by the works Audi team and reigning champion Lucas di Grassi. A fourth successive non-score makes di Grassi the only full-time driver this season who has failed to score a point so far. With Audi team principal Allan McNish admitting the team currently did not understand the cause, having arrived in Santiago optimistic an inverter change would solve his run of unreliability, there will be plenty of head-scratching in Germany as Audi bids to rescue its season.

"The title is not in my mind at the moment," said di Grassi. "Even if we manage to score points now, if the car isn't reliable in the next races the title is impossible to fight for."



Andre Lotterer finished second after hounding team-mate Vergne



Another non-finish has dented Lucas di Grassi's title ambitions

HISTORICS

'Derek Bell Trophy for Donington'
F2 headlines festival, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

MIKE STORRAR

Age: 65 Lives: Warrington
Historic trials driver

He's always rallied

"I retired in July from working on transmissions for JCB and I'm loving every minute of being retired. I started rallying by navigating in 1968 and so I've been around a long time. I've still got the famous Morris Marina with the Honda S2000 engine, which I blew up on Mull two years ago. I haven't repaired it yet but it is sitting in the shed waiting to be fixed."

A chance got him into trials

"Mike Harris, the scrutineer, came over to log book the Marina when I was building it and he'd got this Renford trials car that had never been finished. He asked if I could do it, so I finished the Marina and then did the trials car. I had a go in it and thought 'I could do this!'"

He does historic sporting trials

"Sporting trials are great fun. It is the blackest black art I've ever done. It is a complete change from going rallying and being flat-out everywhere to this, where sometimes you are going as slow as you can, but just keeping moving."

Trialling is great value for money

"I do the historic events and I do the Northern Phoenix championship in a newer car. I did 18 rounds of the northern championship last year and it cost me less than it did to do the Mull Rally. When you are on a pension, it makes a huge difference. Tyres are £42 each and will last you all year. It's about economics but it's also about having fun and enjoying it."

He also has an Anglia

"The Ford Anglia I've rallied is also sitting in the shed. It started off with a 1300cc crossflow and ended up with a 190bhp 1600cc Toyota engine. I did the Wales Rally GB National event in 2011 and that was the Anglia's last ever rally. But I've got another bodyshell so that's another project and I'll not be bored in retirement."

He hopes to rally again

"My rallying is in abeyance at the moment but I'd love to go and do Mull again in the Marina because I do think we can get a good result up there. I'd like to do the Isle of Man again and so there is some unfinished business. But it is all about time and money."



Storrar: Historic Trials fan

WILLIAMS HANGS UP HIS CRASH HELMET

National racing legend retires



Williams was a works driver in the Colt

By Paul Lawrence

Barrie 'Whizzo' Williams has announced his retirement from racing after a career spanning 60 years.

Williams, who will be 80 in November, will step down from racing but will remain involved in the sport through his roles with a number of clubs and organisations.

"I've had a bloody good time

racing," he said. "It's all I've ever really done and I've got huge memories. But I've got to be sensible. I still want to put something back into the sport that has given me so much."

His career started at Prescott in summer 1957, after racing from karts for several years. His first race was at Rufforth on Easter Sunday 1960 in a Morris Minor. Barrie competed in races, rallies, sprints and

hillclimbs and scored a major success when he won the 1964 Welsh Rally in his Mini Cooper, which was his first experience of forest rallying.

He raced saloon cars through the 1970s and won many fans with his extrovert style, in and out of the car, and sublime car control. He was a works driver for Colt [Mitsubishi] in the BTCC and won a series of one-make titles in the 1980s.

In 1986 Barrie made his debut in historic racing and over the last 25 years he competed extensively in historic.

He raced ERAs, Jaguar C-types, BRMs and much more and was a regular Goodwood Revival winner.

But now he has decided to retire. "I raced every year for nearly 60 years and it was a way of life, but now it is time to stop," he said.



Rare Connew will be on display

One-time F1 starter to be a highlight at Race Retro show

After more than 40 years in storage, the one-off Connew Formula 1 car will be on show in public at Race Retro on February 23-25.

The 1972 car was designed and built by a team of three,

headed by Peter Connew, who had been a designer for Team Surtees.

It started only one grand prix, the 1972 Austrian, in the hands of Francois Migault and was later stored at Connew's

home. Finally the original team of Connew, Barry Boor and Roger Doran set about restoring the car and the result of more than two year's work will be shown at Race Retro.

Icon Rohrl to return to Ulster for celebration

German rally ace Walter Rohrl will reprise his dominant win on the 1984 Ulster Rally when he is the star guest at the Titanic Deja Vu Ulster Rally reunion on Saturday September 1.

The event is being run to raise money for charity by the Deja Vu Motorsport organisation and will honour one of the finest drives in Irish rallying history.

Thirty-four years ago Rohrl and Christian Geistdorfer blasted their Group B Audi quattro S4 over the Antrim, Down and Fermanagh stages to crush the opposition on the Ulster Rally. They defeated the two-wheel-drive Opel Mantas of Russell Brookes and Jimmy McRae by over four minutes.

Rohrl heads a cavalcade of historic rally cars over famous Antrim stages such as Glen Dunn and Torr Head. Rohrl will be then joined by many of his contemporaries at a gala dinner in Titanic Belfast on Saturday.



Photo: Russ Otway

Bryan Bouffier won the Boucles de Bastogne in a Ford Escort Mk2 over the weekend. The new M-Sport WRC signing triumphed in the biggest historic rally in Belgium. Meanwhile, local hero Thierry Neuville wowed the fans in his Opel Corsa.

Combe ready to celebrate GT40

The seventh Castle Combe Autumn Classic, scheduled for October 6, will celebrate 50 years of the Ford GT40 and its circuit heritage with local racer Ron Fry.

Several GT40s will take part in demonstration sessions alongside other cars from the 95-year history of Le Mans.

Bath garage owner Ron Fry raced two GT40s in the 1960s, carrying his 'RON 54' number plate, and they were among very few GT40s to race at the Wiltshire track. His racing career and close links with Castle Combe will be a feature of the event.

The event will also mark the 65th anniversary of the last race at the circuit for Stirling Moss when his F2 Cooper flipped at Quarry.

IN BRIEF

F2 tops Festival

The HSCC's Derek Bell Trophy will have a prime race slot at the Donington Historic Festival (May 4-6) during a calendar that also includes races on the Silverstone and Brands Hatch GP circuits. For the first time, the DBT pack will race at the prestigious Donington event with 25-minute races on Saturday and Sunday after qualifying on Friday.

Goodwood Ferraris

A new race for pre-'66 road-going sports and GT cars, named in honour of Maranello Concessionaires founder Colonel Ronnie Hoare, will feature at the 76th Members' Meeting at Goodwood in March. Hoare was best known for running Ferraris in period and several 27GTB/Cs are expected on the grid for the opening race of the weekend.

Theo's car for sale

The Austin A35 HRDC Academy car built for TV dragon Theo Paphitis will go up for sale with Silverstone Auctions at the Race Retro sale on February 23. The A35, built in 2016, was used for the celebrity race at the Silverstone Classic last July and has an estimated sale price of between £18,000 and £22,000.

Welch honoured

Austin Healey ace Jeremy Welch has been presented with the 'spirit of the series' award from the organisers of the GT and Sports Car Cup. Welch has contested all but one GTSCC race since the series was created in 2007 and has won the overall drivers' title three times, most recently with co-driver Martyn Corfield in 2016.

Busy Donington

The 2018 Donington Historic Festival will feature 14 grids over three days, taking in some of the UK's leading historic categories. The races range from the Mad Jack Trophy for Pre-War Sports Cars to the opening races of the season for the Super Touring Trophy. Racing will run throughout Saturday and Sunday after qualifying on Friday.

Retallick swap

With regular driver Eliot Retallick recovering from a shoulder injury Tim Tugwell is lining up a replacement driver for his newly-built Hillman Avenger on Rally North Wales. The likely candidate is Tim's brother Mark for a car that replaces the Avenger written off on the Isle of Man last September. The Tugwell brothers rallied together regularly in the 1980s.

Durling's trial

Formula Junior racer and long-time trials driver Simon Durling made his first historic sporting trials appearance for two years at Sywell on Sunday in his Kincraft. With fellow racer and former hillclimber Mark Goodyear as passenger, their day was cut short by clutch failure after only a couple of hills. More outings are planned.

Friend's silverware

Ben Friend collected a haul of awards at the annual BHRC dinner on Saturday including the championship's special award for the most entertaining driver. The East Anglian, co-driven by Clifty Simmons, was a regular giant-killer in his Ford Escort Mk2.

RALLY NEWS

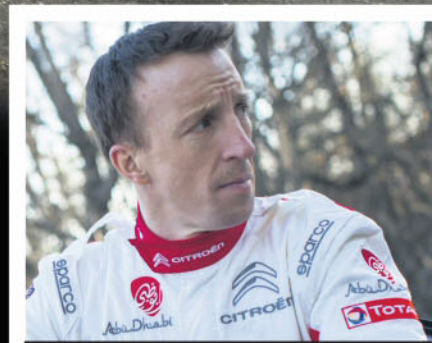
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The C3 WRC has been unstable so far

CITROËN'S BATTLE TO IRON OUT CAR FLAWS

French team in crunch test ahead of Rally Sweden challenge



Kris Meeke is looking for an upturn

By David Evans

This week will be crucial to Citroën's chances of victory at Rally Sweden as the French team runs a four-day test in an effort to bring last year's wayward winter-spec C3 WRC into line.

The 2017 Rally Sweden was one of Citroën's lowlights as both Kris Meeke and Craig Breen struggled to keep the C3 WRC on the road. Breen finished fifth, almost three minutes off the pace while Meeke ran as high as third before going off the road in Vargasen and ending the event 12th. Neither driver was able to find any confidence with the car, which was prone to snap oversteer on the entry to corners. This week is the team's first test in Swedish conditions since last year.

Citroën technical director Christophe Besse is confident advances made with the C3's set-up in low-grip conditions – specifically in the transmission and suspension – will help with next week's second WRC round of the season.

Besse told *MN*: "We improved the gravel car, so we should have a car that's better on snow. But [this week] we need to find the good set-up for this car, which is completely different

from last year's car on snow."

Asked if he was confident four days of testing would be enough to dial the C3 WRC in, Besse replied: "I'm sure it will not be enough, but it's always a compromise if you put every thought on one rally it's not a good thing. We have to be reasonable, it's one rally on this surface, so we give four days and then we work more on gravel. But we hope we will be able to do our best in these four days, we need to be efficient and do a better job than last year."

Breen reiterated Besse's point about the car's hike in speed on dirt, adding: "The car improved a lot on gravel, so we can just hope that it's the same on the snow. At Rally GB last year the conditions were really tricky and the car was working well, but Sweden's a different ball game – we'll just have to wait and see."

Meeke and Breen get one and a half day's testing each, with the fourth day set aside for Mads Ostberg.

Ostberg joins Citroën for what is, at the moment, a one-off return to the Parisian squad. The Norwegian tackled – and won – Saturday's Finnskog Rally in his own Ford Fiesta WRC as a warm-up for next week's Rally Sweden.

"I can't wait," Ostberg told *MN*. "It was good to do that event [Finnskog],



Besse: confident in car advances

it got me into the speed and the conditions. It's really exciting to be back with Citroën and it's so important for me to make the most of the day of testing I will get. I need to learn a lot."

Despite dominating the World Rally Championship for almost a decade, snow rallies were Citroën's Achilles heel. Sebastian Loeb won Rally Sweden and Rally Norway once, but by the nine-time champion's own admission, he didn't win in Sweden on pace.

Citroën hasn't celebrated in Karlstad since Loeb's 2004 success, which came after Markko Martin broke a wheel on his Ford Focus RS WRC, relinquishing a 22-second lead late in the second day.

Citroën chief sets podium target for C3 WRC

Citroën chief executive officer Linda Jackson wants to see a C3 WRC on the podium for every round of this year's World Rally Championship.

Jackson said consistency was the key to Citroën's season this year as she looks to rebuild the brand's spectacular sporting success of a decade ago.

Jackson said: "I'm not going to say how many wins we want or anything like that, but what I will say is the two wins and one podium we achieved last year is not enough. I want to see the team on the podium on every round. That's what the team who won the championship did last year and that's what we have to do this year."

Jackson echoed PSA Group CEO Carlos

Tavares' feelings about budget productivity and efficiency rather than focusing on the size of budget available. But she added she was delighted with new team principal Pierre Budar's start in Monte Carlo, where Kris Meeke finished fourth. "Pierre was right in the middle of his team," she said. "He has a strong management style that will give the team confidence and that's what we need. "Trouble is, when you've been so successful [as Citroën has] it's a hard act to follow. If we'd only been mediocre in the past, it would be easier, but we've dominated. But there are no doubts about Pierre's passion, commitment and ability – we have great

team spirit at Citroën. Everybody wants to win so badly.

"There was a lot of pressure on us last year and it would have been quite arrogant to think we could come and win in our first year back. Another issue was the technical issues as we learned a lot about how the car reacts and then we chopped and changed [our line-up]. Drivers like serenity and stability."

Asked if that meant she disagreed with Yves Matton's decision to replace Meeke at Rally Poland, she told *MN*: "What's to be gained by going back on last year? I could always say yes or always say no, hindsight's a great thing, but it's irrelevant now. We're looking forward to 2018."

INSIGHT: HOW GOOD WAS WRC ALL LIVE?

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'World RX will
become electrified'
Big rule change ahead, p29



BLOCK TEEING UP WRC RETURN



Block has been
in World RX

Ken Block could return to this year's World Rally Championship as part of his revamped programme with Ford Performance.

Block's Ford-backed Hoonigan Racing Division pulled out of World Rallycross at the end of last season and is currently considering options for the coming year. Selected events at home in America are likely for the gymkhana star, but a WRC return is also being talked about at Ford's US base in Dearborn, Detroit.

Ford Performance global director Mark Rushbrook told MN: "Ken's been a great partner and we continue that relationship. We're definitely going to see Ken Block in a Ford through this year."

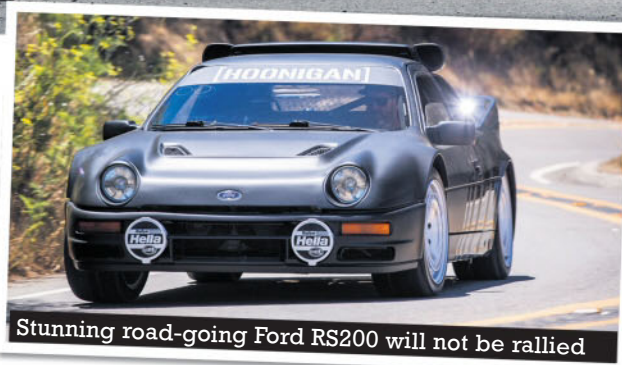
Asked about the chances of a return to WRC action, Rushbrook added: "There's definitely some consideration

for that, but there still needs to be some work to make it happen. Ken is a fabulous driver; I've been in the passenger seat with him and I've got a lot of belief in him behind the wheel and he has a lot of social media reach for us. The relationship works."

Block has recently acquired two of Ford's most sought-after rally cars in the firm's WRC history. He is expected to run a 1993 Ford Escort RS Cosworth in original Group A trim at some point this year, while he has rebuilt a genuine Group B RS200 for the road.

"We're happy to see Ken in Ford heritage cars," added Rushbrook. "We wouldn't want it to be all heritage, it needs to be a mix of old and new."

Block said: "I am intending on heading back out into the woods to do some stage rallies in 2018 and the Escort is one of the



Stunning road-going Ford RS200 will not be rallied

vehicles I plan on racing on gravel. I'm very excited about it. I've always loved these cars and my team director Derek Dauncey finally found one for me that fits the exact specifications of what I was looking for. I'm stoked about it and I'm really looking forward to racing this beast."

The RS200, however, won't be rallied any time soon.

"I'm such a fan of stage rallying," said Block. "The

Group B era is so important and this is my favourite car. I get asked a lot which car's my favourite, and this is it."

Block's biggest WRC programme was nine rounds in 2011, two of which he finished in the top 10 in a Fiesta RS WRC. Since then, he has competed on one-off events, but hasn't been seen in the WRC since Spain in 2014. He has always admitted he wanted to return and see more action at a world rally level.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Fear not: I'll
sort the Rally
GB route"



As I sit and type this column, Wales Rally GB co-ordinator Andrew Kellitt is toiling over the route for Britain's biggest rally. Andrew, I have two words for you: be brave.

Within the confines of Offa's Dyke, you have the nearest thing possible to a clean sheet of paper. In fact, AK, take a break. Get out of the office, head for the hills, leave the route to me. I'll sort it.

Right, where to start? Bull by the horns from the outset, get event managing director Ben Taylor on the blower and he can rattle some cages in Manchester. We'll have the start at Media City on Thursday night. If anybody's up for it, we could investigate the potential for a superspecial somewhere around the city, otherwise straight back to Deeside for an early night.

Friday. Leave while it's dark and head east for Clocaenog and a 10-mile pre-dawn loosener. Up the A5 and into Penmachno for the first time, then on to Gwydir. I'm toying with the idea of sticking a stage down the A4086, a stretch known locally as Llanberis Pass. It really is some piece o' road that one, but I'll leave it up to you, Andrew. Realise it might not be in keeping with the rest of the rally.

Either way, let's head for another Gwydir stage a bit further north than the first one. Then it's west back to Cloc to start that loop again. Admittedly, that last bit of road section could get a bit fiddly, so my recommendation would be to make it plot 'n' bash and just give the chaps some co-ordinates once they're out of Gwydir 2. Again, your call.

And when they've finished that second loop, it's all the way down the A470 to Coed-y-Brenin. For one day only, cyclists won't be allowed to own this stretch of magnificent woodland. And then let's go over the road to the other stage, the name of which escapes me, but I do remember spectating there on the Cambrian. It might have been the Audi Sport. Either way, I stood on the startline and remember it being the first time I'd watched my wellies freeze.

After that, now that it's completely dark again, we'd better go back to Deeside for service. Oops, forgot about a midday service! Do we need one? Not really. Let's have a tyre zone – we could do it at Zip World just north of Betws.

Now, Saturday. This is when the route really gets going. A couple of hours' sleep is all that's needed and then it's a straight run through Aberhirnant, Dyfnant, Hafren, Sweet Lamb, Myherin. Now, here's the interesting bit, we head to Aberystwyth for a rest halt. Remember those? Give the crews four hours off. No service, but they can go to McDonalds.

After that, two loops of Dyfi, Gartheiniog and Pantperthog. Before reversing Myherin, Sweet Lamb, Hafren, Dyfnant and Aberhirnant (don't forget to remind our brilliant marshals to turn the arrows around – we don't want anybody getting confused now...).

Service is optional on that road over the top out of Hafren. It's always blowing a gale, so you'd have to have a pretty serious problem to want to get out up there.

And back to Deeside. As you can see, I've run out of space now, so Sunday's up to you I'm afraid.

WRC Promoter pledges to iron out the kinks with its new All Live streaming service

WRC Promoter managing director Oliver Ciesla says his firm is committed to answering every piece of feedback following the launch of the World Rally Championship's All Live service.

All Live offers rally fans the chance to stream every stage of the WRC live for €9 (£7.90) per month. The service, used for the first time on the Monte Carlo Rally last month, was successful – but MN received correspondence from some fans who struggled to get it working.

One reader, Andrew Bodman, described the service as

'disastrous' in a letter of complaint to Ciesla.

Bodman said: "After watching a few competitors through stage nine on Saturday, the connection was lost and I received the message 'An unknown error has occurred'."

"Stage times and results were not available on your WRC website even by Saturday afternoon, although the problem had been identified on Thursday. The Automobile Club de Monaco had no problem in showing stage times for its rally."

Ciesla said the overwhelming

feedback in his office was positive, but his team would be working further to improve the service.

Ciesla said: "The market has shown that we delivered what the fans want. We looked at some of the comments, but we couldn't find any system failures at our end in terms of All Live. But we will work for the perfect service in Sweden."

On the timing issues, Ciesla added: "Starting in Monte Carlo with night stages in the mountains, this is a beast, but this is the timing supplier chosen by the FIA's tender process so we have confidence."

New FIA man Matton says he needs time to find rallying flaws

Next week's Rally Sweden will be Yves Matton's first event as FIA rally director.

Matton takes over from Jarmo Mahonen in a job which will encompass every aspect of rallying for the governing body. Matton admitted he needed time to identify which areas of the job needed the most attention.

"The biggest challenge is to

be able to change my view on things," said Matton. "Previously I was only one part of the championship, but now I'm involved with them all and the main part of the challenge will be to understand what all of the stakeholders want."

"I know some of the championships, [I've been]

involved with the Middle East and European [Championship], but I have to go and see them and then maybe I can set up a strategy, but we are a long way from that. I need to have a more global view. But this job is rally director not World Rally Championship director. WRC is really important, but I will not be on every event."



Matton has joined the FIA

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

SHAKE-UP IN WALES RALLY GB STAGE FORMAT

Overhaul could mean some elements are dropped



Running in the darkness could be dropped in '18

By David Evans

Cholmondeley Castle and night stages could both be dropped from this year's Wales Rally GB route.

As previously reported (see pages 2-3), the itinerary for Britain's round of the World Rally Championship is undergoing an overhaul following opportunity to use closed roads. That change of route allied to a date shift from the last to the first weekend in October means action in the dark could be skipped for a year.

Cholmondeley's RallyFest stage has also been cast into doubt after event managing director Ben Taylor revealed his intention to return the cars to Deeside for a full lunchtime service – doing that is not compatible with the long liaison section to Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire.

Taylor told *MN*: "Last year's night stages were really popular, delivered unpredictability and, for some, made the rally. Suddenly we had stages with 30-second gaps between the leaders where they'd been split by half a second in the daylight. The spectators loved those [dark] stages and the crews, while not all of them relished the pea-souper in Aberhrrnant,

enjoyed the challenge. That said, these dark stages aren't necessarily the unique selling point of the event and we don't feel the need to do them every year. We have about 50 minutes more daylight for each day of the event this year, running earlier in October and that would mean dark stages would be much later in the day. That would bring additional complications in ensuring these stages are included in the daily TV highlights. It's for those reasons that we think we won't include dark stages."

Stately home tests have been part of the Rally GB route since the event's last time in Cardiff when, in 2012, a stage was run around the Celtic Manor hotel on the outskirts of the capital. Prior to that Blenheim Park in 1999 was the last time.

Since landing in Deeside, Chirk Castle, Kinnel Park and Cholmondeley have been used with increasing popularity.

Taylor said: "This is all going in the melting pot to discuss Cholmondeley. It is a compromise; you stop the rally at lunchtime on the Saturday to take it to Cheshire. Last year we made this more palatable by going back out in the dark, but the previous year we came back to service and that wasn't popular. We have to look at how it all works out."

Dumas in electric Pikes Peak bid

Reigning FIA R-GT Cup champion Romain Dumas will swap his Porsche 911 GT3 rally car for Volkswagen's all-electric race car at this year's Pikes Peak International Hillclimb.

Dumas has won the 12.42-mile Colorado hillclimb three times already, but this will be the first time he has competed in an electric car. His target for the June 24 event will be to lower Rhys Millen's current hill record for all-electric cars of 8m57.118s.

Volkswagen Motorsport director Sven Smeets said: "Romain is one of the fastest drivers to have ever entered the Pikes Peak race. What's more, he has thousands of kilometres of experience with racing prototypes under his belt. This makes him the perfect driver for Volkswagen as it makes its debut with a fully

electric racing car."

Volkswagen's electric racer is expected to test in late March or early April and Smeets told *MN* last month the project is progressing well.

"We hope to present the proper car in March or April," he said. "It's not so easy to test for this event, you can only run at Pikes Peak at the official test days in June so otherwise we're going to be using uphill roads and our own test track in Wolfsburg."

Dumas is looking forward to a return to the event known as the 'Race to the Clouds'.

He said: "Pikes Peak is a challenge, because every driver only has one try. But I have real faith in VW. The team is highly motivated and has already shown on many occasions that it is capable of achieving success right away on unfamiliar terrain."

Aitken-Walker was an Opel icon



Boss hints at Opel return to top level rallying

The Opel brand could be back at rallying's highest level – but the German manufacturer has to demonstrate it's back in the black making road cars first.

The PSA Group paid £1.9 billion for Vauxhall-Opel in November, with PSA CEO Carlos Tavares targeting a rapid financial turnaround from losing £200m last year to profit in 2020. Once that turnaround is complete, Opel will get a board-level greenlight to build a World Rally Car.

Tavares explained: "Opel, as much as any brand of the PSA Group, will have the opportunity to have its motorsport programme as soon as we turn around the company. This is very clear. Currently the motorsport for Opel is very thin. There is the Adam R2, but this is a limited one-make championship and it doesn't cost much

to the company. The priority to Opel is to survive. That's the key point. I don't want them to lose focus.

"I want to tell you the truth. As soon as Opel is turned around and our commitment is 2020, we can talk about it again and I will be eager to have German engineers working in motorsport as much as I have French, Spanish and English engineers – everything possible as long as [the] revival is not at stake."

Opel hasn't run a significant World Rally Championship programme since the Kadett GSI, used by Sepp Haider to win the 1988 Rally New Zealand and Louise Aitken-Walker to take the 1990 FIA Ladies' Cup.

Private German team Holzer revealed an Opel Adam R5 last year, but the car doesn't have official backing from Opel.

Kristoffersson prepares for R5 attack

The dominant force in last year's World Rallycross Championship, Johan Kristoffersson, will contest next week's Rally Sweden in a Skoda Fabia R5 – and he's targeting a top-10 WRC2 finish.

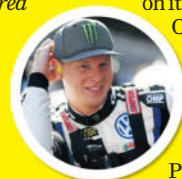
Kristoffersson (pictured right) has competed on numerous rallies in the past, but admits the step up to a potentially WRC2-winning car raises the level.

"I'm doing this rally to help with my preparations for next year's World Rallycross Championship," Kristoffersson told *MN*. "But also because I really enjoy it. Last time I did this event [in 2016] I was in a Super 2000 Skoda, so it wasn't so competitive. This one is. One of the toughest things for me is to take in all of the pacenotes, to listen to all the detail. I got better and now I would say I'm getting about 70

per cent of what the professional drivers are hearing. The problem for me now is the recce, I have to find a way to describe the corner in a really short number of words – this isn't easy, but I'm working on it. I'm getting help from Ole Christian Veiby and Pontus [Tidemand] who are both friends of mine."

Asked how confident he was of beating PSRX Volkswagen

Sweden team-mate Petter and Pernilla Solberg, following in the Historic event driving a Ford Escort RS1800, Kristoffersson said: "I definitely have the car to do that, but you can never underestimate the champion of rallying! For me, I want to be in the top 10."



Kristoffersson: rallying swap



WILLIAM LOUGHMAN MEMORIAL FOREST STAGES REPORT

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BREEN SWEEPS THE ROAD AGAIN, BY CHOICE

Photo: Martin Walsh



Citroen World Rally Championship driver Craig Breen followed up his difficult Monte Carlo Rally weekend by going back to his roots, running the double-zero safety car on the opening round of the Irish Forest Rally Championship last weekend. Breen drove Willie Loughman Memorial Rally clerk of the course James Coleman's blue Ford Escort Mk2. Breen's father Ray made a rallying comeback on the event in a Ford Fiesta R5, with Breen's WRC gravel note man Andy Hayes on the pace notes. They finished fifth overall.

Insurance issue almost halted Irish season

A last-minute insurance deal on the day before the Willie Loughman Forest Rally saved the event last weekend.

Since 1990 Motorsport Ireland has a deal in place which covers road-section insurance. The previous underwriter for this pulled out completely on the week before the event. MIS Motorsport stepped in to arrange cover for the event and the rest of the season, albeit at double the cost.

The cost to competitors will rise from €25-€50 per car, but it is usually included in the entry fee.

Although the deal has been signed for the year, because of the late nature of the deal it wasn't passed by the MI Ruling Council, which could yet disagree with it. The Ruling Council was due to meet yesterday [Tuesday].

"Unfortunately it's the landscape of the insurance market in this country," said Alex Sinclair of Motorsport Ireland.

"Last Friday at 1900hrs I had to agree the deal or we wouldn't have had an event. There is no other underwriter in the market that we can identify at the moment.

"We are unique as we are the only ASN – to the best of my knowledge – which has this as a requirement."

● The EARS R5 Challenge announced in last week's *MN* is for Motorsport Ireland events only, and not for ANICC events.



R5-spec Mirage

McCullough switches to R5-spec Mitsubishi Mirage for Scottish Rally Championship bid

Scottish Rally Championship frontrunner Mark McCullough will switch to an R5-spec Mitsubishi Mirage for his assault on this year's series, which gets underway this weekend.

McCullough has tested the Spencer Sport car, which he has in right-hand drive owing to the fact the car

isn't homologated. "I've had Mitsubishi Lancer Evos in the past so it's a completely different driving style. It will take me a bit of getting used to," said McCullough. "It's sharp and precise, everything you'd look for in an R5.

"It's a right-hand-drive car, that's one of the nice things about the Mirage it gives you

that option. I've driven right-hand drive all my life."

He's set to start third on the road for the Snowman Rally on Saturday, but car number one Garry Pearson has had to withdraw his Ford Fiesta R5 from the entry late on. Mike Faulkner is the second car on the seeded entry list.

Regular championship

frontrunner Jock Armstrong is banned for the first two SRC events due to exposing himself to an oncoming competitor while marshalling on the Solway Coast Rally. David Bogie, who usually competes on the event, is away tackling an event in Sweden.

The event had 92 entries as *MN* went to press.

Mennell gets R2 chance in BTRDA

Dan Mennell is the latest driver to be given an outing in a Ford Fiesta R2 car by Peter Smith.

Mennell joins Tommi Meadows and Ben Friend as drivers given the chance by regular rally man Smith of Swift Caravans.

Mennell will take part in the Malcolm Wilson Rally, based near the Lake District on March 3. It is the second round of the BTRDA Rally Series.

"I'm chuffed to bits," said Mennell of the opportunity. "It's going to take a bit of getting used to, the left-hand drive and front-wheel drive. I had a Renault Clio [which he used on hillclimbs before starting rallying], but I haven't

driven anything on gravel.

"We'll go out and give it a good go but we want a result as well. None of us would be able to do what Peter is letting us do. Giving us a chance, it's great. It is tough to put into words."

The Malton driver has only done four rallies having switched from hillclimbs. He finished second overall on his first event, the Lookout Stages single venue rally, and has since been impressive finishing fourth and fifth in class on his first two gravel outings.

The next day after the Malcolm Wilson, Ben Friend will drive the car on the Mid Wales Stages (*MN*, January 23).



Mennell impressed on the Malton Forest Rally with fifth overall

New two-day format for Carlisle Stages

The Carlisle Stages will run a two-day format for 2018 as it hosts the British Historic and BTRDA Rally Championships.

The event starts on Friday night for the historic crews, along with the new Rally2 Championship for two-wheel-drive cars and the Northern Historic Championship.

The Newcastleton- and Kershope-based stages will then play host to the BTRDA, Association of North East and Cumbria Car Clubs Stage Rally Championship, Association of Northern Car Clubs Forest Challenge and MSA English Rally Championship on the following day.

Both days feature 43 miles of



Rally 2WD will visit Carlisle

action, while the event will again be based at the H&H Auction House near Carlisle.

Clerk of the course Nicola Heppenstall said: "We look forward to delivering a first class event with excellent road conditions for all crews."

The event was previously known as the DMACK Carlisle Stages, but has a new sponsor in ATL Transport.

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RALLY NEWS

Photos: ni:media, Jakob Ebrej

IN BRIEF

Tending marshals

Tending Rally Clacton is looking for marshals for the first closed-road stage rally since the government made it easier to run said events in April last year. The event, which features over 40 miles of stages, is already being tipped for a big entry. All marshals will need to be MSA registered and visit chelmsfordmc.co.uk to register interest.

McErlean back to JBRC

Josh McErlean, who received a test in a Hyundai i20 R5 after Ypres last year, will return to the Junior British Rally Championship in 2018. Last year McErlean impressed in his outdated Citroen C2 R2, and switched to a MH Motorsport Ford Fiesta R2T halfway through the year. He'll return with that squad and car for a shot at the championship. Nine drivers have signed up for the series with at least two more expected.

Rally at Goodwood

This weekend is the one chance this year where rally fans can watch competitive rally action at Goodwood, on the South Downs Stages. Paul King/Alicia Miles are car number one in their Ford Escort Mk2. Over 30 miles of stages will take place at the Sussex venue on Saturday.

More SRC prizes

The Scottish Rally Championship continues to reveal new prizes, with the latest being half-priced entries on the next round for the series' two-wheel-drive winners on each event. The SRC Challenger class – for drivers who have achieved no more than one top 10 finish on an MSA event since 2007 – gets the same prize, while the Challengers champion will receive a free entry to the Grizedale Stages at the end of the year. The overall SRC champion will get a Wales Rally GB entry from the Road to Wales scheme.

O'Neill back to rallying

Former British Touring Car racer Paul O'Neill will return to rallying for the second time this season, when he takes on the Lee Holland Rally – a round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship – at Anglesey in a Paul Sheard-run Mazda MX-5. The event takes place on March 18.

BRC announces Hyundai junior prize

Two Hyundai R5 test drives have been announced as prizes for the Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship.

The German-based squad is offering its i20 to whoever is leading the R2-based category after the third round, the Ypres Rally, and whoever wins the championship at season-end for a day-long test session.

"We've been working with Hyundai for quite a while," said championship manager Iain Campbell.

"They came into the championship with a bang last year and left an impression on the stages. They are very supportive and enthusiastic as always to get people out in their car."

Last year's JBRC prize was £30,000 cash awarded to Irishman Callum Devine. Campbell added that the Hyundai announcement isn't the end of the JBRC prizes.

"We are working on other prizes," added Campbell. "There are quite a few irons in the fire and getting them over the line and confirmed is proving time consuming."

CAMBRIAN IN CLOSED-ROAD PUSH FOR 2019 BRC INCLUSION

Welsh event has renewed hopes of joining British Rally Championship



Ilandudno-based Cambrian is a popular rally event

By Jack Benyon

Cambrian Rally bosses have confirmed their intent to use closed roads on the 2019 event as part of a push to become part of the British Rally Championship.

On Friday, February 2, a law was passed in Wales that makes gaining a closed-road permit for events easier. The old process required an Act of Parliament. The new system means the local authority and motorsport's governing body in the United

Kingdom, the MSA, have to approve.

With this change, along with Conway County Borough Council coming onboard as title sponsor for the event, has the Cambrian gearing up to gain a place in the BRC.

"The main objective for us is to become a BRC round next year, and they [Conway Council] see the benefits of the event being a round of the British Rally Championship," said Alyn Edwards, Cambrian clerk of the course. "They see how that can boost the economy at a period of the year

when it is fairly quiet. They're going to be a huge benefit to have fighting our corner to get into the BRC.

"We hope that with their help and backing, we will be able to go ahead and get links [roads] and closed roads, and other things we want to do with the event.

"It should make life an awful lot easier with a proactive council that understand the benefits of what's being done."

MN exclusively reported that bosses of the Cambrian Rally and BRC chiefs

were in communication over a spot on the 2018 calendar in June last year, but a failure to agree between the event, BRC and BTRDA – which also uses the Cambrian as a round – ended the discussions.

BRC championship manager Iain Campbell said: "Our focus at present is on the 2018 BRC that starts next month in Jedburgh. We haven't discussed 2019 with anyone so far, but we remain committed to finding the best events to make up the championship."



Davies had bad luck in 2017 season

BRC Junior class winner Cameron Davies returns with unfinished business

Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship class winner Cameron Davies is set to return to the category in 2018 after entering the season-opening Border Counties Rally.

Davies won the class on the RSAC Scottish Rally last year, but after a stall on the Ypres Rally in Belgium

and engine failure on the Nicky Grist Stages, his chances of a title fight were over.

His Peugeot 208 R2 has undergone repairs on a shoe-string budget and he is positive he will be ready for the Border Counties.

"I'm hoping we'll be ready," said Davies. "The car should be back

from paint on the ninth (February) and the car should be built the week after. We're on track.

"The plan at the minute is to do more BRC. I have looked at ERC, the budget is a bit up in the air at the minute. It's a tricky decision."

Davies will again be joined by Michael Gilbey as co-driver.

Yates switches to Skoda Fabia for 2018

Chesterfield driver Rhys Yates will combine a renewed British Rally Championship bid with World and European Rally Championship events after switching to a Skoda Fabia R5.

Yates scored his first podium in the BRC on the Nicky Grist Stages last year in his third full season of rallying with the Brettex Rally Team, and wants to be a constant threat for podiums in 2018 after switching from his Ford Fiesta R5.

"I want to be fighting for podiums every event and I don't really see why I can't," said Yates, who will be co-driven by Alex Lee. "I believe I can. I would like to have a win, and this year we have to up it a bit more.

"Our pursuit is of the British Rally Championship, that's the title we'll chase. With experience of the rallies and with the new



Yates, 25, is out to score podiums to mount BRC title push

car we should do well this year."

Yates will return to the two WRC events he contested in 2017, and is set to make an ERC debut.

"We'll fill in the gaps between BRC with ERC rounds, there's a gap after Ypres so we'll do ERC Rome. Rally GB is part of the British championship anyway and we'll do Rally Spain as well as that's one of the most

enjoyable rallies I've ever done. I'd like to do another WRC round as well."

Yates, who is testing in Sweden this weekend, will be run by CA1 Sport on the Border Counties Rally on March 10/11, before which he will do the second round of the BTRDA, the Malcolm Wilson Rally as a warm-up.

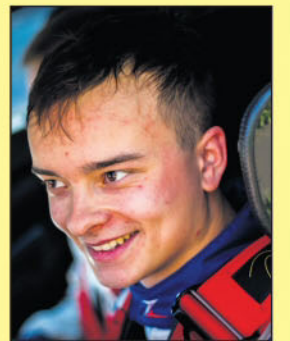
Bilham gets Adam Cup outing

Reigning Fiesta ST Trophy champion Sam Bilham will drive a Vauxhall Adam Cup on Rally North Wales.

Bilham has regularly supported young drivers graduating from the F1000 Championship, and has been helping and co-driving Eddie Lewis. In return, Lewis's father Nigel has offered him the drive in the car.

"This really is a fantastic chance to get acclimatised to something more up to date than the old Fiesta ST and I'm very grateful to Nigel (Lewis) for this amazing offer," said Bilham, 21.

"Ultimately, an R2 car is where I want to be but



ST champion Sam Bilham

we don't have the budget for that at the moment. So I just plan on enjoying the experience and learn as I go."

As part of his prize of winning the ST Trophy, Bilham can drive the championship's Ford Fiesta R2 on three rounds.

INSIGHT: WRC ALL LIVE

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

David Evans investigates the impact of WRC All Live after the Monte Carlo Rally

THE TENTATIVE FIRST TV STEPS OF A BRAVE NEW ERA



Pictures were beamed instantly



The spotlight was on the World Rally Championship in Monaco

Productivity in the offices of rally fans took a hammering last week. Reports weren't filed, accounts delayed, deliveries postponed and jobs put on the line. Welcome to in-the-week WRC All Live.

Did you watch it? Of course you did. It's what you, me, the whole world of rallying has been waiting for. At the turn of the 21st century, David Richards told us watching the World Rally Championship is something we would be doing on our mobile telephones in a matter of years. He didn't mean 18.

No matter. It's taken a while to get here, but we're here now. Launched at Autosport International, WRC All Live was run out for the first time at last week's Monte Carlo Rally. So, a nice simple one to start with then... It's difficult to underplay what the promoter took on with the Monte; it stepped out of a swimming pool after the usual handful of Saturday morning lengths, headed south to Folkestone and shunned the Pride of Kent in favour of the front crawl.

There were, undoubtedly, some sizeable waves beneath the White Cliffs, but by the time Calais came into sight, the strokes were stronger, the swimmer ready for the next challenge.

On Wednesday afternoon, there

were some deeply concerned looks among the WRC shirts in Gap. The surrounding mountains would actually have provided a far better metaphor than the English Channel. There was some serious climbing to do. Shakedown was going to be live, but wasn't. That was the least of the promoter's worries.

Twenty-four hours later, with the All Live revolution ready to kick off, news came through that incoming weather had grounded the camera-carrying helicopter. Deep concern turned to total trepidation. The start of the brave new world was now hanging on cameras and presenters at the start and finish and nothing for the intervening 22.37 miles. Nothing that is, except for onboard shots. Fortunately, the plane bouncing the footage from the cars to the service park was flying above the weather and was able to work. Most of the time.

Trying to track a signal and feed through Thursday night was a nightmare. The mountains that make the Monte the challenge it is came close to toppling All Live just hours after it had started.

To make matters worse, the series' official website went down as well. Understandably, people linked the launch of All Live with the loss of normal service on WRC.com and took to social media to vent their frustrations. But actually, the site would have gone down with or without All Live. MN's sources have confirmed the problem was linked

to new timing supplier RallySafe and its interface with WRC.com. Previous suppliers have pushed the times out to the official website, ensuring the times were available when fans went to the results section. RallySafe's system works the other way, with the data being pulled from its site when a stage time is requested from WRC.com. No sooner had Sisteron started than more than 100,000 requests pinged into the RallySafe system demanding data. The result? Meltdown and the need for an apologetic holding screen on WRC.com.

One source told MN: "There's no excuse for this. It was simply unacceptable and it will not be allowed to happen again. It's a real shame that people saw this and immediately thought it was linked to All Live. It wasn't."

After a night of pure stress, dawn brought a new day and genuine progress. The heli-cam was up and quickly delivering the drama of a Sebastien Ogier spin in the afternoon's middle stage. Like you and I, the teams were all tuned in – but this kind of footage brought both blessing and curse.

"It's a real step forward," says M-Sport's Malcolm Wilson, "but I could have done without seeing Seb drop into that ditch! Obviously he couldn't see from where he was but we could see the ditch from the heli-cam. As soon as I saw the car starting to go forward, I shouted:



Monte Carlo provided the backdrop, but the challenge was huge

"No! Stop!" And then he dropped in. It wasn't the best to be sitting there watching that and seeing the time slip away."

Fortunately, the camera stayed on Ogier and showed the car being pushed out and away.

Having had time to catch his breath, WRC Promoter's Oliver Ciesla looks back with pride on what his team achieved.

"We were all a bit nervous before the start," he says. "It's a tremendous project to produce such a complicated sport live continuously and without interruption for 25 hours throughout the weekend. The onboard were not seamless on Thursday night, but we had a

fallback position and we were able to keep the audio lines open.

"This project involves several million Euros of investment, but it's worth it. We started with the most difficult two stages at the most difficult time and bringing HD quality pictures from different angles: from the car, from the side of the road, the helicopter, it increases considerably the complexity. But we're in a position to do that now and the level of entertainment is so much better than even we expected from Monte Carlo."

The rough edges were there for all to see, but last month the WRC took an enormous step forward. Yes, it was overdue, but that doesn't matter. It's here now. ■

Sitting at home and being able to ride with the World Rally Championship's finest contestants

"They're launching it there? Have they tried to get signal in Sisteron?"

That was a certain UK rally competitor who I discussed the WRC's All Live concept with before he was heading out to the event.

It was a brave undertaking as you've read on this page, but

just how good was All Live?

As a viewer, it was immense.

Never have we been able to ride along live with pacenotes for every single stage of a rally before, and, despite the rightful doubts of the aforementioned competitor about signal, there's no place better to launch something like this. Monte is everything rallying should be;

picturesque, tricky, snowy, arduous and above all else, a place that can trip you up at any time. From the awe-inspiring flat-out sections when it was dry on [parts of] Saturday and Sunday, to watching the cars creep through Sisteron on Thursday evening at 5mph. What an experience.

There were only a few mishaps

with technology, and perhaps at times, a bit of a lack of the bigger picture of the rally from those in the central studio. It's their job to tie up the events of the stage into a bigger picture of the event and that didn't always come across. Although it's unfair to stick the knife in given what was expected and the pressure on during the

weekend. The show itself brought more interviews, more onboard, more general insight than we've probably ever seen in rallying before. And once the bugs are crushed, it will be a fantastic package capable of captivating sporadic viewers and capturing regular rally fans.

Jack Benyon

INSIGHT: BRITISH F4

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Losing its best team is a blow, but the category can still have a bright future without Carlin. By Stephen Lickorish

F4 will be without Carlin this season



WHAT NEXT FOR BRITISH F4?

It is not news that any championship wants to receive: having your best and most successful team pull out. That is what British Formula 4 now faces after Carlin's decision to take a sabbatical after three impressive years. But, while it is undoubtedly a massive blow for the category to lose such a well-respected name, those within the British F4 paddock reckon the series can survive and thrive without the boys in blue.

When what was the MSA Formula Ford Championship of Great Britain became an FIA F4 category for 2015, Carlin was among the single-seater giants that decided to enter. And immediately it hit the ground running, winning the very first race with Lando Norris. The diminutive future McLaren F1 reserve driver went on to win the title that season, and Carlin racers Max Fewtrell and Jamie Caroline have tasted title glory in the following two years.

Carlin now leaves the category unbeaten in terms of titles. And its decision to take a sabbatical makes sense. The team is currently in the process of a major expansion, entering the prestigious IndyCar series for the first time this year, as well as returning to F2, the Formula 1 support series previously known as GP2. To make sure the squad didn't overstretch itself and risk damaging its hard-won reputation as one of the top single-seater outfits in the world, and not just Britain, something had



Teams expect the F4 grid to still be busy, even without Carlin

to give. And as the lowest rung on the ladder, F4 was the logical category to drop from the schedule.

So, on the surface, things may not look good for F4. But there's a lot more to it than that.

A key point to consider when looking at British F4's future is that Carlin was not the only single-seater giant to join the series in 2015. While Carlin may have had some of the best engineers and attracted some of the best drivers, F4 has been far from a one-team championship over the last three seasons. Arden and Fortec both have far-reaching programmes that stretch up to F2 and Double R also has F3 pedigree. Aspiring F1 drivers are not going to miss out on the chance to drive in a quality team in their initial single-seater forays with squads of that ilk still participating. With Carlin out, these other teams have now received a boost and should find it easier to land the top racers – although the challenge of competing against Carlin will be missed.

"It's disappointing not to be racing against Trevor [Carlin]," says Double R boss Anthony Hieatt. "We want his team to be racing in Britain and hopefully he will come back."

Fortec owner Richard Dutton adds: "It's a shame because I think that they are a top team and it's great to have top teams in the championship, so I'm sad they're not in it. But I understand why they are not in it.

"The good thing is there's always a positive when someone like Carlin drops out and that is it helps the likes of the Falcon, Richardson and JHRs of this world that perhaps wouldn't get so many drivers. So it should be the same number of drivers and hopefully new teams will come in."

Dutton is certainly confident about the championship having a successful season ahead.

"You've still got Arden, Double R and ourselves so you've got three top teams," he explains. "I think the championship will actually be stronger this year – there's a lot of

interest, more interest than there was at this point last year."

As Dutton alluded to, smaller teams are likely to gain with Carlin out of the way. It was no coincidence that Carlin won all three titles, the operation oozed performance right from the engineers to the likes of the trainers and dieticians involved.

With the other top teams now taking drivers that may have been with Carlin, it means there should be more that can join the outfits further down the pecking order.

JHR Developments – the squad that actually pushed Carlin closest over its three years in F4 when Sennan Fielding so nearly claimed the title in 2016 – is a good example.

"I don't think it affects the championship as a whole," team boss Steve Hunter says. "Teams move from one championship to another all the time.

"It's been beneficial for all teams and I can only see it as a positive for us."

As for the series organiser, British F4 Championship promoter Sam Roach says it's very much business as usual.

"Obviously they will be missed in the paddock but we fully understand they've got some great new projects going on and we are delighted to see them enter into the top levels of motorsport – particularly with Lando [in F2]," says Roach. "It will give some of the other teams drivers that are on the market, so from that point of view it can be good for the other teams.

"It's a shame but we will continue

without a problem this year."

The other key point is that Carlin has not sold any of its cars, showing that at least currently, it intends to return. Retaining all four cars and planning a full testing programme for this year aren't the actions of a team about to turn its back on the category for good.

But the big question concerns the number of cars that *will* be on the grid in 2018.

Carlin has been the only team to run four cars at every meeting since that was agreed as the new maximum limit at the start of 2016.

The other squads have had spare capacity in recent years and currently there are just four drivers officially confirmed. However, look beyond that and the teams have found no shortage of interested drivers.

Arden, Fortec and Double R are all full and JHR is on the verge of making some signings. Even without Carlin, a grid of around 18 to 20 cars is still looking likely – and that's more than there were last year.

What Carlin's withdrawal does mean is that things are very much wide open ahead of this season – even more so than usual. And it means the perceived Carlin stranglehold on the British junior single-seater category is over. It will be fascinating to see which team takes its place as the F4 squad to beat. There is certainly no shortage of contenders to lead British F4 into a new, and still successful, Carlin-less year. ■

Challenge Cup joins Carlin in the F4 absentees

Carlin isn't the only aspect of British F4 that won't be part of the championship this year. The Challenge Cup is also gone for 2018.

This was introduced last year with the intention of it being for drivers without the budget for a full season. The idea was they would contest seven of the 10 rounds and have a limited number of test days. It may have sounded good on paper, but it was a disappointment with most drivers

still wanting to race in the whole championship – there were only two that did the seven rounds.

"The Challenge Cup was to try and help lower budgets for drivers on the grid, but it didn't really catch on," admits championship promoter Sam Roach. "You've got to try these things. I wouldn't be sad if the Challenge Cup failed because people wanted to do the full championship instead and that was the case."

Now the Rookie Cup is back – and it features some valuable prizes. The winner will receive free entry for 2019 while the first rookie driver to win a race overall will get £5,000. It is no wonder that some of this year's rookies have decided to forego racing in Asia this winter to keep their rookie status intact.

And it should boost grid numbers too, with every driver now needing to do every round again.



Hampus Ericsson was the first, and only, Challenge Cup champion

INSIGHT: GINETTA LMP1

After a year of development, the Yorkshire LMP1 is here. Robert Ladbrook takes a look

HOW GINETTA IS TAKING OFF



The G60-LT-P1 racer finally broke cover last month

Lawrence Tomlinson isn't a man to do things by halves. When he says he's going to make something happen, it pretty much always does. In this case, he gets right to the point. There's a shuffle forward in his seat to add emphasis when he delivers the line: "Look. It's very simple. Our performance target is to be as fast as, or faster, than Toyota. And now Toyota's performance target is to be faster than Ginetta."

The words are stingingly simple, and give a nice snapshot of this year's FIA World Endurance Championship and Le Mans 24 Hours.

This, in Tomlinson's eyes at least, is the car Toyota has to beat. Let's do the numbers.

Toyota is the world's largest automotive manufacturer, churning out over 10 million vehicles per year. Ginetta... well, isn't. It's not even close.

In terms of production numbers it's probably even more mismatched than David and Goliath. But this contest doesn't come down to 10 million cars. It comes down to the best two or three of those 10 million.

When it comes to race cars, Ginetta certainly stands its own ground. The Leeds manufacturer essentially made GT4 and LMP3 happen. It created both cars first, and has enjoyed huge success in both arenas ever since. Racing is its business, first and foremost. In this arena, David has well and truly got his slingshot aimed at Goliath's tender bits. And loaded into it is the G60-LT-P1.

There's a lot riding on the car too. It's

not only hoped to be the silver bullet that beats Toyota across the WEC's superseason, but it's also one of the first of a new generation of non-hybrid LMP1s that has the potential to refresh sportscar racing. Ginetta first set out its LMP1 intentions 13 months ago, but wasn't the only one to do so – there's also a similar project from Dallara/SMP and the Rebellion 'R13' effort with ORECA.

After decades of domination by the likes of Audi, Peugeot, Porsche and Toyota, all but one of those brands is now gone. Cue crisis point for the future of sportscar racing's top tier.

Cue Ginetta stepping forward to lead the revolution.

The G60-LT-P1 – named in honour of the firm's 60th anniversary – has a short backstory, born from ambition. Having created the first LMP3 cars for 2015, Ginetta applied to be one of the four FIA-selected tenders for LMP2. It missed out so turned its attentions to a P1 project, which offered more technical freedom and, crucially with the big boys now all but gone, the shot at overall glory at Le Mans.

The G60-LT-P1 had to break new ground for the company so Ginetta invested heavily in bringing in the right partners to bolster its already hugely successful design and development team. Design legend Adrian Reynard arrived, as did Paolo Catone – the designer of the Le Mans-winning Peugeot 908. Technical partners Mecachrome [engine] and ARS Tech [chassis and composites] were added to the mix, and the whole thing was tested to destruction in cooperation with Williams Advanced Engineering.

It turns out David brought some pretty big friends to the party.

The final product stole the show at the Birmingham NEC when the covers finally came off the first car at Autosport International.

Up close, it's stunning.

"When we first released the CAD images to say we were making a P1, we deliberately left almost all detail off them," says Tomlinson with a grin.

"We were giving nothing away with this car, so I think the final design surprised a few people.

"We've done everything properly, from all angles. We've done a lot of projects before, but this is without doubt the biggest. We knew we could do a 'P car' [prototype] because we designed and developed our LMP3 in a few months, but the step up to LMP1 is big so we needed to bring in some people at the cutting edge of the sport. For this project we've taken more advice around it than we've ever taken before, done deeper technical studies than ever before, and looking at the numbers we've had during development it's difficult to see how this car won't be right up there fighting Toyota."

"It's difficult to see how we can't fight"

Lawrence Tomlinson



Ginetta hopes to build 10 chassis in total, enough to supply three two-car teams as opposed to running the cars as a works operation. Instead they'll run with select partner teams – the first being Manor TRS, run by former Formula 1 team bosses Graeme Lowdon and John Booth.

Ginetta's design boasts many innovative features, including a high-nose concept. This trend, designed to enable more air to flow underneath and through the chassis, was pioneered by Audi, and Ginetta draws a lot from the German firm's un-raced 2017 R18 design. One of its leading design staff – Pete Smith – formerly worked for Audi Sport Team Joest. Another key member, Andy Lewis, joined from Williams, where he is understood to have worked on aero elements for Porsche's 919 Hybrid.

"Andy had already been working on a highly successful LMP1 car, so when he joined we already had a concept of going in the high-nose direction," says Ginetta technical director Ewan Baldry.

"I even spoke to some guys at Toyota who said 'Start with the nose. Get the

front right and the rest of the car follows.' We wanted the high nose to reduce the blockage [in the air] of everything behind it, and therefore improve aerodynamics.

"The knock-on effect of that design though is that you have to place the driver in a slightly compromised position [higher in the chassis].

"We built a replica of the tub in MDF and tested several different drivers of different sizes. When Audi went extreme with the nose of the R18 – that never was for 2017 it also went extremely high and extremely narrow in the cockpit. That's the luxury of being a manufacturer – they can pick their jockeys – but being customer-based we had to be more accessible and I believe we've cracked that. But we still have a higher nose than anything I'm aware of out there."

The G60-LT-P1 is also extremely light. Ginetta set a chassis-only weight target of 770kg, but when the final car was completed it was well south of that. Ginetta had to place around 70kg of ballast into the chassis to get it to the ACO's mandated minimum of 833kg.

TECH SPEC

Ginetta G60-LT-P1

Chassis: Carbonfibre and aluminium honeycomb monocoque with incorporated Zylon panels. Carbon composite bodywork
Engine: Mecachrome V634P1 3.4-litre turbocharged 95degree V6 with direct fuel injection and dry sump, longitudinally mounted
Power: 650bhp@7,000rpm
Torque: 650Nm@6,000rpm

Red line: 9,000rpm
Suspension: Double wishbones, push-rod actuated springs and dampers, anti-roll bars
Brakes: AP Racing carbon ceramic discs
Gearbox: X-trac seven-speed automatic with custom housing and fly-by-wire gearshift and e-clutch by MEGA-Line. BOSCH control electronics
Price: £1.34 million (excluding engine package)



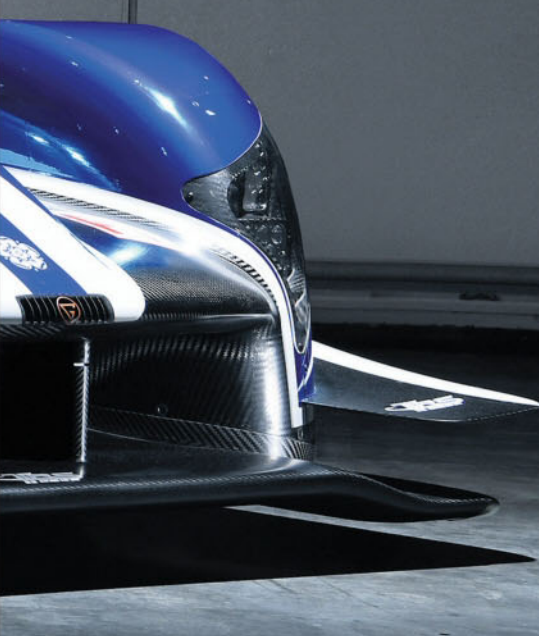
Ginetta's in-house test

Photos: Chris Wallbank Photography, Jakob Ebrey

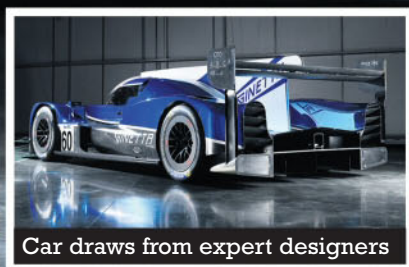
IN THE WORLD



Car underwent first tests recently



Straight-line runs check reliability



Car draws from expert designers



Chassis is very light, and has been designed around the engine and custom-built gearbox

Much of the weight saving has come from chassis design and technology. ARS has developed a method of integrating the mandatory Zylon crash protection panels into the carbon monocoque as a structural device, rather than bonding them on to the tub externally, something Ginetta believes to be a world-first.

Ginetta also spent "a lot of time and a lot of money" on stress analysis of the chassis, working out which areas could be trimmed to save weight.

The bodywork is also a revolutionary form of carbonfibre, offering 30 per cent weight saving over most other materials used outside of aerospace and F1.

The engine design is clever too. Mecachrome's 3.4-litre turbocharged V6 engine sits in a tailor-made space and is mounted to a custom-designed X-trac gearbox casing bolted straight to the block, removing need for a bellhousing.

"The chassis is incredibly light, it's a huge saving over something like an LMP2 car," adds Baldry. "We've chosen our technical partners well so we're using proven technology, but with state

of the art engineering. We've also used the right suppliers – our wishbones and uprights are fabricated by the same company Toyota uses for example.

"It's a huge step technically over a P3 car. The P3 project was massive for us because it was our first carbon car and the first time we'd built a car that needed [FIA] crash-testing [for homologation]. But at the same time the P1 project has been less stressful. There was a lot of nervousness with the P3 as it was the first time I brought the Juno team [Baldry's former company] back together and we worked with Ginetta as one. We failed the P3 crash test a few times and I recall picking up the phone to tell Lawrence 'We've failed it again' and never quite knowing how he'd react. But he's been hugely supportive of these projects from the word go."

Tomlinson says the cost of the G60-LT-P1's development runs into "tens of millions". The final product costs £1.34m per chassis – with a sizable chunk on top if you fancy an engine to power it. Development can also be an extra cost, and can be tailored to each team's needs.

"The costs sound high, but it's cheap when you think that Rebellion Racing spent tens of millions making a car and could have just bought one from us for a fraction of that outlay," says Tomlinson.

"Each team will get a comprehensive support package from Ginetta, Mecachrome and X-trac, but we have provisions to go beyond that also. For example, if a team wants us to develop their car in a certain way we can work on that and lock it in a box for them only. If we spot something that needs changing, such as the rear wing, we'll change it for all the teams. But if one team wants to pursue their own direction we can design and develop alongside them, over and above the generic support package. We could even modify this car to run a hybrid powertrain if a customer wanted to do it. The technical freedom LMP1 offers is fantastic for people who want to go racing."

This year Toyota will be the sole hybrid-powered P1 in the field, and the ACO plans to equalise hybrid and non-hybrid cars using the same 'equivalence of technology' system it

used to make the three different powertrain concepts used by Audi-Porsche-Toyota stack up.

From this year onwards non-hybrid LMP1 cars will benefit from being lighter by around 45kg and having improved fuel flow rates over the hybrids, with the thinking being that the hybrid cars can run longer on a tank of fuel, but ultimately not as fast over a single race lap. Qualifying will likely suit hybrids better, due to their ability to tune their hybrid deployment to do a single lap on full power.

"We know what Toyota could run at Le Mans last year – the 3m14s lap from qualifying was incredible with full hybrid power, but in the race they were running at around 3m17s and broke down," adds Tomlinson.

"We wouldn't have built this car if we didn't believe it could win, and we certainly wouldn't be selling it. We've done the numbers and we know we'll be competitive against Toyota."

"The LMP2s were running about nine seconds slower [per lap] than the P1s at Le Mans. Now, we're 100kg lighter and can put the ballast where we want, we're running a bespoke tyre not a spec one, we have much more open aero and we've got 50-100bhp more. When you stack those things up we should be able to run close to the times Toyota can do. We want to win Le Mans, yes, but we've built this car to win the World Endurance Championship, so it has to be versatile and competitive everywhere we go."

The G60-LT-P1 ran for the first time in straight-line shakedown testing four days after Autosport International, and will now undergo two months of rigorous testing.

"Reliability may be our Achilles heel," says Tomlinson. "This is a brand-new car, so we just don't know. You can engineer reliability so far in a design and we've done that by building very robust systems and a lot of strength and redundancy in the car."

"The entire front and rear bodywork is designed to snap on and off in seconds for changes. As a driver, team boss and manufacturer I see all angles of the equation and I know how frustrating it can be to have to stop if you have a light pop out at the rear or something minor. We've designed many aspects of the car to be fixed in seconds, but we've got two months to dial out any issues."

As for the level of competition this year, Ginetta certainly sounds ready to make the jump onto the world stage.

"This car is elevating Ginetta to a level we've not competed at before," adds Tomlinson. "There's no privateer LMP1 anymore, there's just LMP1 and you choose hybrid or non-hybrid. We believe in what the ACO is saying and reckon they've got the rules spot on to allow us to jump in and take on the big boys."

"We thrive on pressure. We want to go out and win. If you sit there worrying about external perceptions and the pressure of a project, then you're in the wrong game and you need to get out of it. We came to play."

On the subject of pressure – Ginetta doesn't really have any. Whereas, as the sole manufacturer entry, Toyota has it all. I mean, you wouldn't want to be the employee with the unenviable task of trudging into the boardroom in Toyota City to report that your Goliath had fallen to the Yorkshire David. ■



Team worked on new car



The carbon tub is a clever and lightweight design



Car features quick-change bodywork

RETRO: FORMULA JUNIOR

Paul Lawrence looks at the ongoing success story of Formula Junior

THE HISTORIC SINGLE-SEATER CLASS THAT KEEPS ON GIVING



The rejuvenated category can pack out entry lists



John Surtees's first car race was in Formula Junior at Goodwood in 1960

Sixty years on from its creation, Formula Junior is riding high as the most successful category in historic racing. As the only single-seater class below Formula 1 in period, Junior had just six seasons as a contemporary category, yet its legacy is being cherished more strongly than ever.

In 1958 Sir Edmund Hillary reached the South Pole, the Munich air crash decimated the Manchester United football team, Elvis joined the army, Charles de Gaulle became prime minister of France and the first trans-Atlantic passenger flights started between London and New York.

Meanwhile, in Italy, Count Giovanni Lurani came up with the blueprint for a new junior single-seater category.

Lurani was a racer, journalist and automobile engineer. After fighting in the Italo-Abyssinian War in the mid-1930s, he formed Scuderia Ambrosiana with Luigi Villorosi but crashed his Maserati 4CM at Crystal Palace in 1938 and the resultant hip injury halted his single-seater career.

After the Second World War Lurani worked with the FIA and towards the end of the 1950s he recognised that there was a major gap in junior single-seater racing. The 500cc Formula 3 category was popular in some countries, including the UK, but Lurani reasoned that a new global category was needed. His thinking may have been coloured by the lack of Italian presence in the steadily declining 500cc F3, but there is no doubt that his concept for Formula Junior was timely.

Lurani's concept was simple and effective. Purpose-built single-seaters powered by production engines of 1000cc or 1100cc would be an affordable entry-level class and, though largely an Italian national class in its inaugural

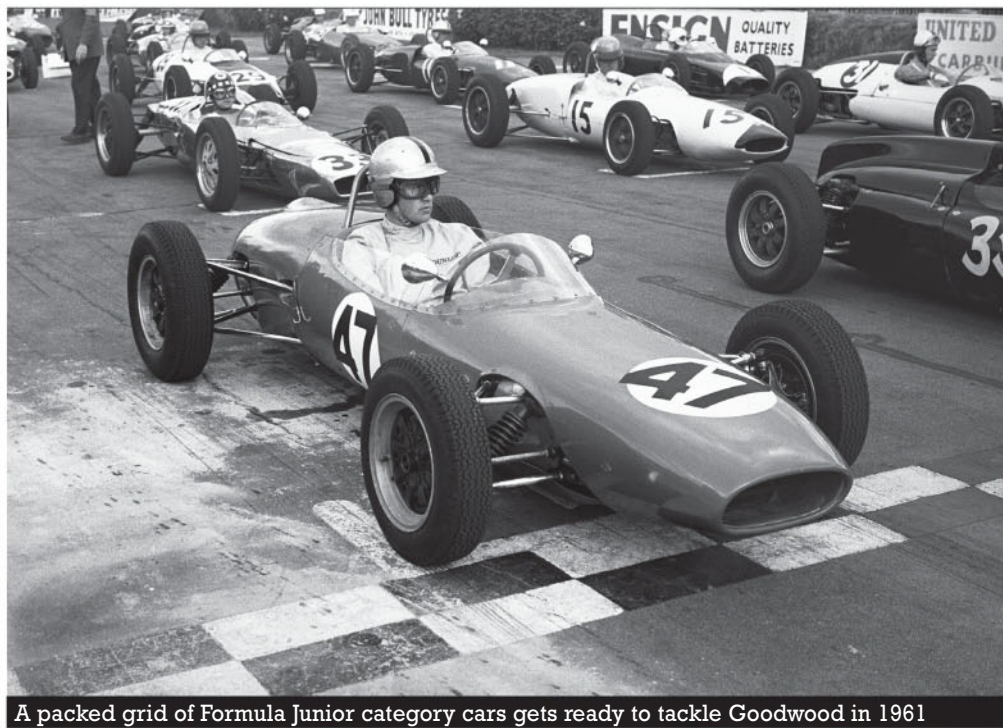
season in 1958, it was adopted by the FIA for 1959. Formula Junior had arrived and its popularity exploded on a global scale.

In Italy, the front-engined Stanguellini set the pace and Swiss racer Michael May used his to win the first international title in 1959. English manufacturers were a little late to the party, but Frank Nicholls soon designed the Elva 100 and was joined by cars from Moorland (later to morph into the Gemini) and Lola, with its first single-seater, the Mk2.

The early engine of choice in Italy was, unsurprisingly, the Fiat 1100cc unit while Saab and DKW engines were also used, albeit with only modest success. In the UK, the 1000cc BMC A



Rear-engined Formula Junior cars are popular among competitors



A packed grid of Formula Junior category cars gets ready to tackle Goodwood in 1961



The grid at Monaco in 1960 included the likes of Jim Clark, Peter Arundell and Trevor Taylor

Series engine quickly gained favour but the 1000cc Ford Anglia engine was coming and Keith Duckworth had plans for it as a Formula Junior powerplant.

The Junior boom showed no sign of faltering into the new decade but the whole face of race car design was changing. Pioneered in grand prix racing by Lotus and Cooper, the engines were moving to the back of the chassis and Junior designs rapidly followed suit. The British manufacturers were quickest off the blocks and the Lotus 18, effectively a scaled-down F1 car, was a stand-out design. Across those early seasons hundreds of marques built cars, some of them constructing a few cars and some only one. But Lotus and Cooper were now the big hitters, while Brabham and Lola had their own down-sized F1 cars.

Ultimately, it was the close link to F1 design and technology that heralded the end of Formula Junior at the close of 1963. Costs were escalating, engine development was running apace and Junior was trying, and failing, to be both an entry-level class and the prime

sub-F1 single-seater category. The technical excellence of cars like the monocoque Lotus 27 simply pushed the category out of reach of most aspiring drivers.

Instead, the FIA announced the return of both Formula 2 and Formula 3 for 1964, thus offering two distinct rungs on the racing ladder with clear space between them. Formula Junior folded at the end of 1963 and some of the later chassis were converted into early F3 cars. Yet the Junior story marked an amazing chapter in single-seater racing. In six short years, racing car design had gone from simple front-engined ladder frames with drum brakes to high-tech, disc-braked rear-engined monocoques. Hundreds, probably thousands, of Formula Juniors had been built.

Across the globe, hopeful young racers had cut their teeth in the class and Formula Junior can claim Jim Clark, John Surtees, Jochen Rindt, Mike Hailwood, Richard Attwood and Peter Revson among its notable graduates.

Wind the clock on just 12 years and Formula Junior became the first

defunct category to be revived as an historic class. Its fortunes ebbed and flowed and it seemed destined for oblivion in the early 1990s with only limited support until Duncan Rabagliati formed the Formula Junior Historic Racing Association and started to turn the fortunes of the category around.

Over the past quarter of a century, Formula Junior has become the best-supported, most global class of historic racing. The cars must be original and continuation cars are simply not an option. Hundreds of cars are active and packed grids are the norm. Rabagliati, now supported by his daughter Sarah, skilfully steers the ship with a graceful charm and unbounded passion for the class.

This year, an incredible Diamond Jubilee World Tour will conclude with more than 100 cars racing at the Silverstone Classic. Over three seasons, the World Tour will have taken in 100 races on four continents, in 13 countries and with well over 300 competitors. For a category that lasted only six seasons, that is an impressive legacy. ■

THE CURRENT DRIVERS

We asked some current leading Formula Junior drivers about the appeal of the category



Benn Tilley
Lotus 22

"For me the appeal is the history and the cars themselves. It was the stepping stone before Formula 1 and more or less every Formula 1 driver from the late 1950s and early 1960s drove Formula Juniors.

"The cars are fantastic and very rewarding. They have a brilliant mix of more power than grip and getting them to work is so much fun."



Andrew Hibberd
Lotus 22

"The real appeal of racing in Formula Junior is the feeling of the Lotus 22's skinny front tyres just hanging on around Farm Curve on the Silverstone GP circuit and trying to hang to the left flat chat in top. There's little grip and just enough grunt but plenty of revs. Or a well-balanced Lola Mk2 drifting through Woodcote at Goodwood with a hint of opposite lock. The cars are great to drive and have a special place in the sport's history."



John Sykes
Merlyn Mk2/
Merlyn Mk5/7

"The appeal today is many things apart from nostalgia: as a self-preparer the cars are easy to maintain and move around, not requiring extra wheels and tyres. I've been fortunate to drive more exotic cars but you don't get a bigger bang for your buck. We are also very lucky to have had the Herculean efforts of Duncan Rabagliati and his daughter Sarah who have made it a truly international series. The paddock camaraderie is second to none."

Westie Mitchell
De Tomaso

"The appeal is competing in original cars on some of the best tracks worldwide, with a really friendly bunch of similarly-minded people, most of whom fettle their own cars and like a beer or two. It's the closest thing to owning a period grand prix car without the running expense and with probably closer racing."

Stuart Roach
Alexis Mk2/Alexis Mk4

"It's the camaraderie and competitiveness along with the places you get to race and the running costs compared to

other single-seaters. It will run a year without you doing anything to it. The sheer diversity of cars is tremendous and the cars really haven't changed since period."

Crispian Besley
Cooper T56/Elva 100

"I'm going into my 20th year of Formula Junior racing and you just can't beat it. It is far and away the most friendly and inclusive category. There is the opportunity to race somewhere in the UK or Europe just about every weekend of the season if you wanted to. It ticks every single box and there is a place for everyone."

Jack Woodhouse
Lotus 20/22

"I love the period of race car design that Formula Junior was created in and ran through. It was an era of innovative engineering with a vast rate of development. The last and most developed front-engined single-seaters were beautifully sculptured. The control inputs of all Formula Juniors are purely mechanical: this makes the communication between car and driver raw, there is no filter between steering wheel, throttle or brake pedal and the driver. There is a purity that comes from knowing you are all that links you to the car."

THE FORMER DRIVERS

Drivers from the original Formula Junior period gathered at Autosport International in January to kick off the category's 60th birthday season. Here are some of their recollections

Jack Pearce
1961

"The drivers took it seriously but you didn't want to damage the car as you had to put it right. Nowadays someone else is there to put it right and they do take a lot more risks than we did. I built the cars and engines and did all the preparation. I built some Lotus chassis because Colin Chapman wanted too much money for them and I could do them cheaper!"

Bill Bradley
1961-1963

"I was a Midland Racing Partnership driver in period with Richard Attwood and started in Formula Junior in 1961 in a Cooper T52. Richard and I persuaded our sponsors, which were our fathers, to support us in Formula Junior. I had a Cooper T59 for the following year and we raced in Ireland quite a lot as



Junior racer Bill Bradley reflects

there was good starting money. In 1963 MRP became a works-supported Lola team when Eric Broadley invited me to race the Formula Junior."

Peter Procter
1960-1963

"I had a Cooper 500 and then bought a Lotus 18 for Formula Junior. The 18 was a fantastic car: very reliable and handled well. I raced the 18 through 1960 and 1961 and went well in '61 against the Lotus 20s. In 1962 we did about eight races with a Gemini then Graham Warner pulled the plug on it. I raced for Ken Tyrrell in 1963 with Timmy Mayer. Ken said to me straight away that his philosophy about contracts

was to give a driver half as much as he asked for and it was twice as much as he was worth. There was no messing around with Ken, but he was a great man."

Jeremy Bouckley
1962-1963

"I had a BSA scooter and when I passed my driving test in January 1962 the scooter was a down payment for a Lola Mk2 along with a loan from Forward Trust. I started racing in July 1962 and did a full season of Formula Junior in 1963. I bought the ex-Charlie Crichton-Stuart Cooper when Formula Junior finished and we put a twin-cam engine in it and did Formula Libre racing."

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RALLY REPORTS

Photo: Martin Walsh



Purcell won despite losing power late on

PURCELL WINS AS IRISH FOREST SERIES BEGINS IN THE DARK

William Loughman Memorial Forest Rally

By Maurice Malone

Organiser: Carrick-on-Suir MC **When:** February 3 **Where:** Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary **Championships:** Irish Forest Rally, South East Stages **Stages:** 9 **Starters:** 80

Andrew Purcell and Mark Wiley took the spoils on the first round of the Irish Forest Rally Championship, despite a late scare in the dark.

Carrick-on-Suir Motor Club is 60 years old this year, and to celebrate, the club decided to do something special for this year's William Loughman Memorial event. Of the nine stages, three were held in the dark, a real sting in the tail for the competing crews, as well as a treat for spectators.

A plethora of Ford Fiesta R5s was led

away by last year's winner Josh Moffett, who blitzed through the first Faugheen test almost 13 seconds quicker than Barry McKenna. However, trouble befell Moffett on the following run through Anner, as an altercation with a rock spell the end of his challenge.

Purcell assumed the lead after the first loop, but it was nip and tuck for the following stages between him and McKenna, both pilots equipped with Fiesta R5s. That was until Purcell pulled out all the stops on the fearsome Gurteen stage just before the evening halt for lamp pods, crossing the flying finish almost 24 seconds quicker than McKenna.

Behind, Stephen McCann was flying in his S2000-specification Ford Fiesta, even setting the quickest time overall on the third stage as he charged back up through the field following an early

overshoot. Ray Breen was enjoying his return to competition in yet another Fiesta, with son Craig's gravel crew maestro Andy Hayes guiding him through the trees.

Craig himself was doing sweeper duties between the two-wheel-drive and all-wheel-drive fields in clerk of the course James Coleman's Ford Escort Mk2, and told *Motorsport News*: "We're just out for a bit of fun, and to give something back to the club. It's a different kettle of fish to what we were at last weekend [Craig finished ninth on Rally Monte Carlo]. I'm looking forward to the night stages now!"

The excitement was palpable in service as lamp pods and light bars were fitted, the weather cold, clear and dry, although the stages themselves were muddy in places. At least dust wouldn't be an issue.

Come the finish, it was Purcell who

held on to win from McKenna, despite losing power steering on the final test, with McCann just edging out Niall Henry (Mitsubishi Lancer E10) to clinch the last podium spot after breaking a driveshaft. Indeed, many competitors suffered issues in the dark with Gerard Lucey losing the lamp pod on his Mitsubishi Lancer E8, and Conor McCourt hitting turbo trouble in another Lancer.

Crews were almost unanimous in their praise for both the rally and the organisers, with the night time element proving a real novelty. Michael Conlon took the two-wheel-drive honours in his distinctive Escort Mk2, rounding out the top 10 after late trouble for Shane McGirr, while James Wilson put in a storming drive in his Peugeot 208 R2 to win the Junior category in 14th overall, both men beating a host of

all-wheel-drive crews. The championship now heads for Limerick on the first weekend of March, and with strong entries throughout the field, including the diminutive flyers in the F1000 category, it looks set to be a very good year in the woods.

Results

1 Andrew Purcell/Mark Wiley (Ford Fiesta R5) 44m43.1s; 2 Barry McKenna/Leon Jordan (Fiesta R5) +19.0s; 3 Stephen McCann/Kaine Treanor (Fiesta R5); 4 Niall Henry/Damien Duffin (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); 5 Niall McCullagh/Ryan McCloskey (Lancer E9); 6 Ray Breen/Andy Hayes (Fiesta R5); 7 Ger Lucey/JJ Cremin (Lancer E8); 8 Conor McCourt/Caolan McKenna (Lancer E9); 9 Michael O'Brien/Liam Brennan (Fiesta RS WR); 10 Michael Conlon/Ciaran McPhillips (Ford Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Barry Hennessy/Steven Scallan (Honda Civic); Martin O'Brien/Brian McCarthy (Citroen C2); McCullagh/McCloskey; Purcell/Wiley; O'Brien/Brennan; Lee Bracken/Francis Kelly (Civic); Mick Garahy/Iarla McCarthy (Escort); Kieran Lynch/Adam Power (Civic); James Dunphy/Shane Gazely (Toyota Corolla); Emmet Cronin/Adam Coffey (Escort); John Gordon/Thomas Wedlock (Escort); Conlon/McPhillips; John Reid/Enda Sheils (Corolla); Wilson/Doherty; Henry/Duffin; Jason Murphy/Matthew Murphy (Peugeot 107).

Fowden kicks off his season in style in Tarmac opener at Pembrey

Rali Cwm Gwendraeth

By Simon Gronow

Organiser: Amman & District MC and Gwendraeth Valley MC **When:** February 4 **Where:** Welsh Motorsports Centre, Pembrey **Championships:** Welsh Tarmacadam; FMP Rally Challenge **Stages:** 5 **Starters:** 38

Bob Fowden got his season off to the best of starts as he took victory on the opening round of this year's Welsh Tarmacadam Championship, the Rali Cwm Gwendraeth.

With son Paul alongside, the pair were fastest on every stage in their Subaru Impreza WRC S11, ending the day with a winning margin of 1m45s.

Rallying newcomer Roger

Thomas got off to a bad start when his MG Metro 6R4 suffered driveshaft problems on SS1, and he and Paul Wakely lost more time with a spin on SS2. Things got better as the day wore on and second fastest time on the final stage moved them into the runner-up spot.

Going into the last stage, Mike Jewell/Dan Johnson had been holding second place but dropped over a minute, which relegated their Subaru Impreza to fourth, behind Terry Clarke/Ronnie Roughead.

Their long trip from the north east was rewarded with third overall and first two-wheel-drive crew

in their Ford Escort Mk2.

Once again Will Mains took the 1400cc honours in his Vauxhall Nova, as he and Arfon Griffiths finished an impressive fifth overall, one place ahead of mixed-crew winners Barry and Seyyan John in an Impreza.

Results

1 Bob Fowden/Paul Fowden (Subaru Impreza WRC S11) 48m59s; 2 Roger Thomas/Paul Wakely (MG Metro 6R4) +1m45s; 3 Terry Clarke/Ronnie Roughead (Ford Escort Mk2); 4 Mike Jewell/Dan Johnson (Subaru Impreza); 5 Will Mains/Arfon Griffiths (Vauxhall Nova); 6 Barry John/Seyyan John (Impreza); 7 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darran T90); 8 Chris Hand/Owen Davies (Escort Mk1); 9 Jonathon Davies/Rhodri Williams (Peugeot 206); 10 Neil Jones/Alan Thomas (Vauxhall Astra GTE). **Class winners:** Mains/Griffiths; Carl Fricker/Theresa Fossey (Vauxhall Nova); Merriman/Curzon; Clarke/Roughead; Thomas/Wakely; Davies/Williams.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Kevin Davies and Michael Gilbey took a second successive victory on the **Rali Mike Darowen Bro Ddyfi**, matching their winning margin from last year exactly.

Once again a Welsh Championship round – this the 2018 season opener – was dominated by Davies' red Ford Escort Mk2; the pair led from the off and no one else came close to matching their pace.

In contrast there was a tight battle for second place; the surprise of the event, Einion Williams/Darren Ikin, led reigning Welsh champions Mark 'GT' Roberts/Dylan Jenkins by just three seconds at Petrol, but managed to extend this to 46 seconds by the Finish. Kevin 'Penclaw' Jones and Alan James continued their good run of results to secure fourth and look likely to take their first overall win at some point during the year.

George Williams/Daniel Stone, broke a shaft early on in the event, Dafydd Evans/Carl Jones retired with a broken gear linkage, while the Ford Escort of Steven John Williams/Dafydd Sion Lloyd succumbed to fuel feed problems.

The **Primrose Rally** was won by Phil Harris/Jake Ramsden.

They made the best of their Subaru Impreza's traction and acceleration to be fastest through the two regularities in the Haldon Forest and then cleaned the rest of the event.

The top two seeds failed to make the first Petrol halt; Brendan Wellman/Daniel Pidgeon were halted by an oil leak in their Peugeot, while James How/Nic Jones withdrew after loosening their sump guard on a heavy landing.

Ian Mills

Results

Rali Mike Darowen Bro Ddyfi
Organiser: Dovey Valley Motor Club **When:** February 3/4 **Where:** Mid Wales **Championships:** WAMC & ANWCC **Route:** 110 miles **Starters:** 68

1 Kevin Davies/Michael Gilbey (Ford Escort Mk2) 6m23s; 2 Einion Williams/Darren Ikin (Escort) +2m33s; 3 Mark 'GT' Roberts/Dylan Jenkins (VW Golf GTI); 4 Kevin 'Penclaw' Jones/Alan James (Toyota Corolla); 5 Craig Judd/Dafydd Evans (Peugeot 306 GTI); 6 Mark Lennox/Ian Beaman (Escort); 7 Andy Davies/Cadog Davies (Subaru Impreza); 8 Sean Crowley/Richard Williams (Mitsubishi Colt Mirage); 9 Paul Morgan/Rhys Griffiths (Honda Civic Type-R); 10 Carwyn Pughe/Lion 'Tractor' Williams (Vauxhall Astra). **Class winners:** Williams/Ikin; Daniel Williams/Shawn Richards (BMW 318ti); Gethin Rhun Price/Tomi Emlyn Williams (Nissan Micra).

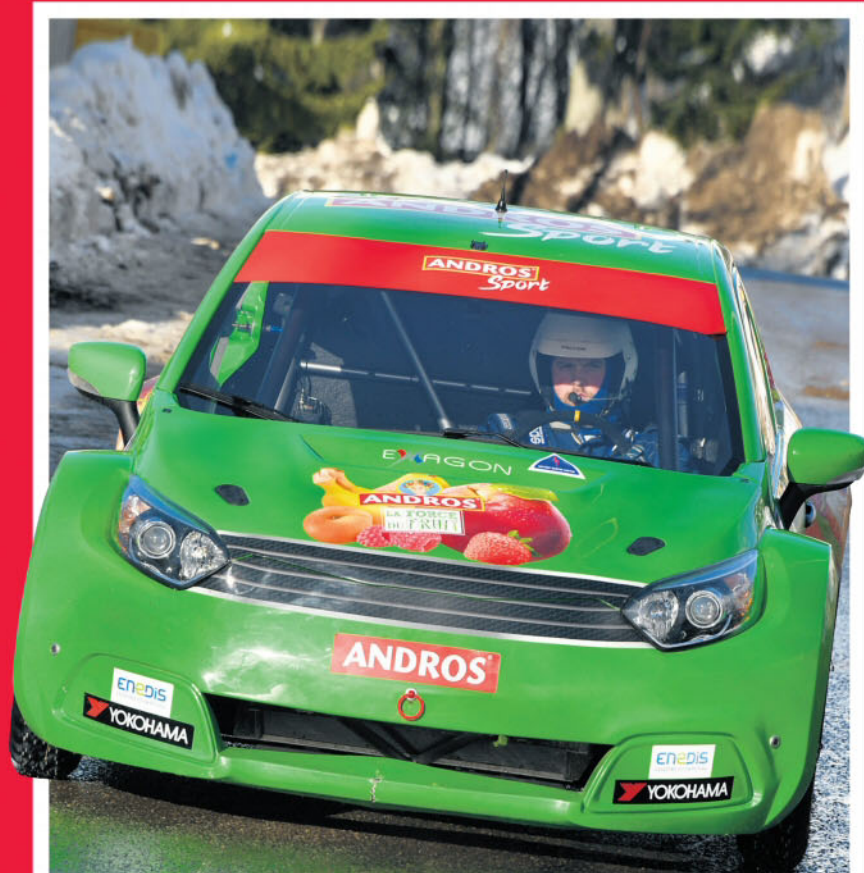
Primrose Rally

Organiser: South Hams MC **When:** February 3/4 **Where:** Devon **Championships:** ASWMC **Route:** 150 miles **Starters:** 23

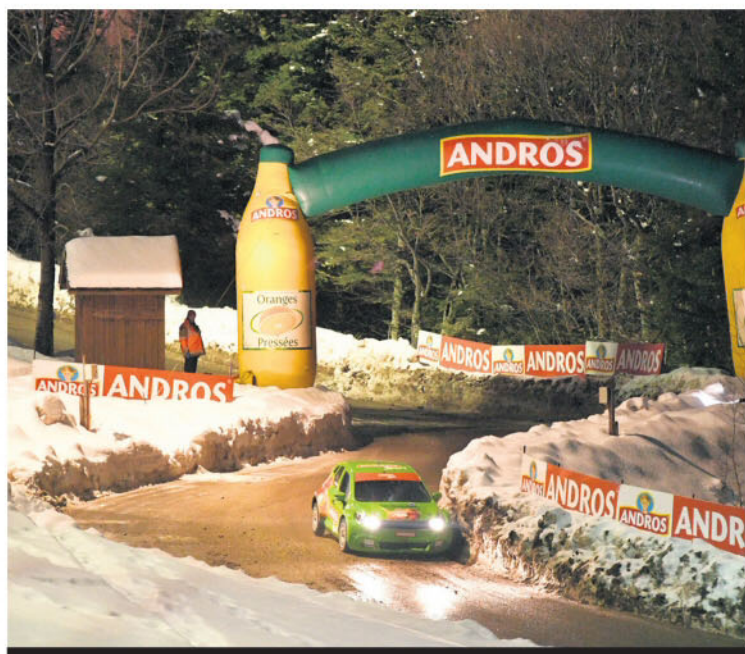
1 Phil Harris/Jake Ramsden (Subaru Impreza) 1m35s; 2 Simon Heywood/Sam Treleaven (Honda Civic) +14m22s; 3 Alan Frame/Shawn Layland (Vauxhall Corsa); 4 David Clifford/Mark Dunkerley (BMW Compact); 5 Paul Watts/Paul Waterton (MG ZR). **Class winners:** Paul Prance/Sophie Louise Buckland (MG ZR); Ben Griffin/Nick Chapman (Peugeot 106); David Roper/Simon Fuidge (Citroen Saxo).

TRACK TEST: ELECTRIC ANDROS

Hal Ridge gets behind the wheel of a revolutionary ice racer



Slushy surface didn't help our man get to grips with new Andros machine



Prost showed the car's potential, but chassis still needs some work



Ridge (right) gives some tips to Prost, including 'don't lock up'

Mention electric motorsport and most will think of Formula E, the single-seater race series that, now in its fourth season, races around the world on street-based city centre circuits.

But, four years prior to Alejandro Agag's series beginning, the Alps-based Andros Trophy introduced a single-make electric category, which it claims to have been the first fully electric racing series in the world.

Now, Andros Trophy is set to become the first high-profile series to convert from the conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) machines to being fully electric, by the time its 2019-2020 season gets underway in December next year. The move marks a significant shift. So far existing electric series have been either standalone classes—like Formula E—or run as a support category to established ICE categories.

Led by Andros Trophy founder Max Mamers, organiser 2MO has introduced the new fully electric car for the Elite Pro category this winter, before it amalgamates it into the class full time to compete against ICE machinery from next season. The following year, electric will be king.

Created by Magny-Cours-based Exagon Engineering, the catchily named ANDROS Sport 01 was revealed last month at Serre Chevalier, where a number of the leading drivers undertook laps in the new car to get a taste of the future.

The following weekend, at the Andros series' 300th anniversary event, the car was given its competition baptism by Formula E and endurance racer Nicolas Prost.

Just hours before Prost would begin a new era of the sport, MN was given the opportunity to try out the new car on the Lans en Vercors circuit. There's always a degree of pressure involved when driving someone else's car, but in this instance it's substantially amplified. Not only is this prototype short on test mileage (it was a clean sheet of paper three months before its debut), but any misdemeanour on my part would embarrassingly end Prost's event before it even began. Mamers reminds me beforehand: "this is very new, we don't have much spare pieces."

Former Formula 1 driver Franck Lagorce—a current Andros frontrunner—has been heavily involved in the development of the new machine and talks me through the car's characteristics.

"I promise it's like nothing you've ever driven," he says. Like all Elite Pro Andros machines, it not only has four-wheel drive, but four-wheel steering too. "Once you have done one or two laps you will have the feeling and you will be able to rotate the car earlier into the corners," he explains.

All well and good, but early rotation requires confidence in the equipment, and the track underneath you. Having been trackside at several Andros events, the pros make sideways or even backwards corner entry look aggressive from the outside (although from onboard it's actually a smooth process), but like any expert, they make the job at hand appear easy. Knowing it isn't, I plan a far more conservative approach.

This car differs from conventional machines in that it has a single forward gear (rather than a sequential

gearbox) and no clutch with which to help transfer the weight of the car or its position at the apex of the tighter corners—in a conventional Elite Pro car, drivers depress the clutch if they are too close to the apex, to let the car drop back.

Stacked against me are the conditions. Using tyres with 250 studs apiece, Andros machines generate grip laterally, the studs digging into the ice, but today, in unseasonably warm conditions, the icy track surface has given way to slushy Tarmac, making it rather suboptimum conditions for studded tyres.

"You need to be really careful with braking," Lagorce says, "it's so easy to lock the wheels. Try and brake in a straight line and really be careful not to lock the brakes, because then you will not be able to stop [the skid]." I've no idea how the brakes will feel under my left foot and I've got to avoid locking them on a mixed surface. Ideal...

I climb aboard the car, which is based on a traditional Andros spaceframe chassis shrouded by a silhouette body.

In this instance, the external aesthetics are of no real relevance; this being a test mule, and based on an older chassis platform, the intention is for the drive system (motors, batteries, inverters etc) to be supplied as a 'plug and play' setup to teams or manufacturers and to continue using existing chassis regulations.

The space where a passenger seat might be located is occupied by the car's 750 V battery, made up of 14 modules of 50v and weighing around 240 kgs. The dual motors, joined by a single shaft, sit just behind the cockpit on the other side of the bulkhead to the driver. The motors drive the wheels via a pair of Sadev differentials.

Exagon's engineer runs me through the controls. Aside from the two pedals, all I really need to use is the D, N and R buttons on the control panel. Simple. Other options include adjustable parameters for power delivery and throttle maps. For my run I'm told that the car, which produces 250 Kw (340 horsepower), the equivalent of the ICE machines, and 1600 Nm torque) has been turned down, a little.

Being a typical racing driver, Prost is far more petit than I, but with my right knee braced under the control panel, I have just enough movement to depress the throttle and rotate the steering wheel through all 360 degrees.

Unsurprisingly, once at the wheel, as with any electric car the instant reaction is of the lack of engine noise, but there is a distinguishable note-change from the motors once drive is engaged before pulling away, and an ever-present whistling from the motors as they increase speed to a maximum of 3600rpm.

My first lap is tentative, braking very early for the first major corner, over a small crest at the end of a long straight into a right-hand hairpin. On exit, I get harder into the throttle, the rear stepping a little to the left, which I correct with a small amount of opposite lock, being careful to not over-correct the steering too aggressively, not wanting the rear wheels to also start turning and embed myself and the new car into the solid ice circuit perimeter walls.

Down through a left-right-left-right sequence under trees that feels like a rally stage, the car dances around on the slushy surface. Senses on overload, I can hear almost every one of the 1000 studs touching the road's surface.

Another long downhill straight and it's into the final right-hand hairpin. I

TECH SPEC

ANDROS Sport 01

Manufacturer: Exagon Engineering
Chassis: Tubular Spaceframe
Bodywork: Composite
Weight: 1000kgs
Suspension: Double wishbones
Motors: Two electric motors connected by single shaft, longitudinally mounted
Max speed: 100mph (limited for ice)
Power: 250Kw (340 horsepower)
 1500 to 3600rpm
Torque: 1600Nm 0 to 2500rpm
Max RPM: 3600
Battery: 14 50v modules, 750v
Battery weight: 240kg
Battery life: 20mins
Charging time: 60mins
Transmission: longitudinal, single-speed with reverse gear
Differentials: Sadev front and rear
Wheels/tyres: 16in Yokohama, 250 studs each

press the brakes harder to see how easy a lock-up would be, and confirm that my instructor wasn't joking.

With two laps of basic running done, crucially without crashing, I stop to speak with Lagorce, who encourages me to brake earlier and turn in harder to get more rotation on entry, before being harder on the power through the apex into the exit. Easy for a pro racer. I'm also advised to carry more speed through the first chicane and to let the car slide more and use the torque of the electric motor to almost silently pull me out of the corners.

Back on track, I attempt earlier rotation but as I'm not Scandinavian (or French!), rotating a car without a handbrake doesn't come so easily. On one occasion I feel I've run way too deep into the first hairpin. Frantically feathering the brake pedal with my left foot, desperate to stop but not lock the tyres, I get slowed down and heave the wheel to the right, the car turning with ease, the rear wheels turning to assist the fronts in impressive form.

By the final lap, although I've far from mastered this unique machine, I'm turning harder to the left before turning right into the right-hand hairpins, letting the rear slide and getting earlier on the power on the exit. The power delivery is incredibly linear, there's no jolt of a gear change or any change in note, the main noises coming from the clonking of the suspension, brakes and the differentials as they scabble for grip, especially as I climb the incline to the finish line for the final time.

Later the same day, Prost set 10th and seventh fastest times of the 13 Elite Pro runners in the two qualifying sessions.

"The power and the torque is quite incredible, it's much more than FE," he says. "I'm very impressed with the car, for sure the chassis needs work, but it's just a short amount of time before it will be much quicker than the other cars. For sure in the hairpins it's not as easy to drive, but that's not really a problem."

To call it a shadow of its former self is unfair, but it's no secret that the Andros Trophy, once flush with manufacturer entries, is now running for largely privateer efforts. Mamers hopes the electric move is the start of a renaissance, and based on the performance of the prototype, that spells an exciting boost for the series. "A few months ago we had no answer [how to attract manufacturers back to Andros] but now with the electric car doors are already opening," he says. "Now makes are interested again." ■

TURNING THE ICE ELECTRIC IN AN ANDROS RACER



Ridge got to sample the Andros Trophy's future with electric test



Power delivery was very linear

Muller leads the way in the record books despite a host of F1 stars trying their hand at the Andros Trophy

The Andros Trophy has a history of attracting high profile motorsport stars to compete in the winter series in what would otherwise be a quieter period of the year for most racing drivers.

The most successful Andros participant is undoubtedly touring car legend Yvan Muller, who claimed the title 10 times in a 11-year period between 1997 and 2007.

Muller's success came at the wheel of first a BMW 318 compact, before driving for Opel and Kia's works outfits.

But, while Muller has the most crowns, Andros specialist Jean-Philippe Dayraut has the most race wins: 59 to Muller's 48. Dayraut is himself a six-time champion. Four-time Formula 1 champion Alain Prost won a trio of titles in 2008, '09 and '13, driving first

for Toyota and then Dacia, and is third in the all-time wins' table, with 38.

This winter, World Rallycross driver Jean-Baptiste Dubourg matched Prost's title tally. The 1996 Monaco Grand Prix winner Oliver Panis has 12 wins to his credit, competing until the end of the 2017 season, while the list of drivers that have claimed at least one victory in the Alps-based series includes 1997 Formula

1 champion Jacques Villeneuve, 13-time Dakar winner Stephane Peterhansel and current Haas F1 driver Romain Grosjean, who has made selected appearances in the series and claimed his most recent victory last winter.

British F1 driver turned television commentator Martin Brundle (2006), 1994 World Rally champion Didier Auriol (2006) and nine-time WRC title

holder Sebastien Loeb (2015) have all made one-off appearances, while 1981 World Rally champion Ari Vatanen raced in the series as recently as 2010.

The series has enjoyed a number of works or works backed efforts since it was formed in 1990, including from Opel, Kia, Dacia, Mazda, Toyota and Skoda. Opel leads the manufacturer wins table with 41 and six titles.

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Photos: FIA World Rallycross, FIA/Quentin Champion

WORLD RALLYCROSS WILL BE ELECTRIFIED IN TIME FOR 2020

Series set to confirm shift away from internal combustion engine in next few years



World RX will go all-electric

By Hal Ridge

The World Rallycross Championship will switch to fully electric cars for the 2020 season, Motorsport News has learned.

MN broke the news last August that the FIA and World RX promoter IMG were working on plans for electric cars to be introduced into the series' structure, but a source has now revealed to MN that electric cars will be the headline act from 2020.

"Electric cars will be the World Championship. They absolutely, categorically, will be the World Championship," the source told MN when asked about where the cars will sit in the series' structure.

"Fifteen cars are required to begin in 2020. Nine different manufacturers have been engaged in the discussions and negotiations so far, but the ability to buy the required components and build a car has to be open to privateer teams if they want to go that way too."

FIA's tender invite

It's understood that the new electric cars will be based on a common carbon monocoque tub and safety structure that will be supplied as part of a chassis kit, expected to also include suspension and braking systems.

The FIA is expected to issue an invite to tender for the chassis kit in the coming weeks, with an additional invite to tender for batteries. It's believed that motors won't be from a single supplier and neither will the composite bodyshells that will sit on top of the carbon chassis, allowing for different models of cars to be used.

Those bodyshells are expected to be marginally wider than existing cars, and could feature larger rear aerodynamic devices. The electric rallycross regulations are being spawned following a number of FIA technical working group meetings over the last 12 months that have included a round table of manufacturers, the FIA and the World RX promoter.

When quizzed about what the future of the existing internal combustion World RX Supercars is from 2020, MN's source said: "Electric World RX cars doesn't mean the current Supercars go away."

"There's absolutely 100 per cent commitment to keeping the current Supercars and not just as a European Championship, as some form of international championship that can also race outside of Europe if the market dictates."

Firms keen on plan

Leading manufacturers Peugeot and Audi have intensified their involvement in World RX for 2018. Peugeot Sport boss Bruno Famin revealed before Christmas that the French marque is using the next two years to learn and develop in rallycross ahead of the electric switch.

At the launch of Mattias Ekstrom and Audi's 2018 World RX plans last week, Audi Sport chief Dieter Gass said: "We're not only looking at this year, we're looking at the overall picture and



Electric RX concept cars already exist, such as the STARD Peugeot

we're interested in E-WRX. If you want to compete there you need to be prepared and to have a very good experience for when it starts. We are keen on electric RX, there is no decision yet on a board level, but it's something that we need to tackle in the upcoming months because for it to happen there needs to be a certain number of participants, which will be defined in the third quarter of the year I think."

Speaking about the make-up of the technical regulations, Gass said that to him it was important for manufacturers to be at liberty to develop some

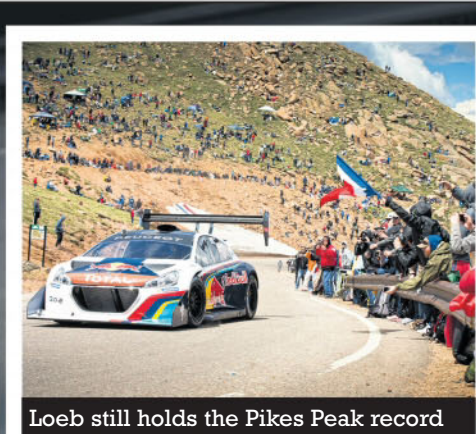
technology in the category, while also keeping costs under control.

He said: "It's the matter of giving the right freedom to develop the car and thus get interest from car manufacturers, but at the same time so the budgets don't explode, so that the return of investment stays at a reasonable level."

Volkswagen has also stated its interest in a possible return to top-flight motorsport in electric rallycross and is focusing on the development of its new electric car for the 2018 Pikes Peak hillclimb event in June.



Faggioli will use special Normas



Loeb still holds the Pikes Peak record

Faggioli aiming to topple Loeb's Pikes Peak record

Ten-time European Hillclimb champion Simone Faggioli has launched an ambitious assault on the USA's historic Pikes Peak International event.

Faggioli and his Swiss team-mate Fabien Bouduban will be gunning for Sebastien Loeb's outright record with a pair of works-supported Norma chassis running Pirelli tyres and powered by twin-turbocharged 3.7-litre engines developing 800bhp.

The 39-year-old Italian, who won his first FIA Hillclimb title in 2005 and has worn the coveted crown for the past nine seasons driving Osella and Norma sports racers, has been preparing the assault for four years with his Faggioli Racing Team.

First run on loose gravel in 1916, the

Pikes Peak course has only featured a fully sealed surface since 2011. Loeb's 8m13.878s in a purpose-built factory Peugeot 208 T16 in 2013 stands as the current record for the 12.42-mile (19.9km) 156-turn ascent to the summit - 14,110ft (4300m) above sea level.

Faggioli is aiming to complete a hat-trick of outright victories for Norbert Santos's France-based Norma marque. Frenchman Romain Dumas won for three of the past four seasons in a less extreme 650bhp Norma M20 RD four-wheel-drive model.

In 2015 the event was won by an electric car for the first time, with New Zealander Rhys Millen - the son of five-time victor of the 1990s Rod Millen - heading a clean sweep for world motorsport's emerging power source.

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Closed road boost for Wales

New legislation opens up a variety of options for Rally GB

These are exciting times for rallying, particularly with the onset of closed-road competition. This year's Wales Rally GB is likely to be revolutionised by the advent of the new legislation, which has now been introduced in the principality as well as in England.

There will be sections of closed roads which will be used to link stages. It will give the organisers lots of options to mix up the route and add an interesting new twist to the event for 2018. It will increase the efficiency of the marshalling and will add more spice for the spectators too.

While there will still be lots of organising to do, and many boxes to tick before these things can happen, this is exactly the sort of thing that the Motor Sports Association had been aiming for when it spent years lobbying the government. It shows that all the effort was worth it.

Last year's Rally GB broke modern day records for fan numbers. With this initiative, the event will grow even stronger.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



ROOM 101

Things MN wants to throw away



How many drivers are professional?

Drivers who think they are better than they are

So you sign autographs? People buy your merchandise? You might even have your own following of loyal fans. You might even have press releases written about your every move. Does that mean you are a professional racing driver? No. There are very few paid racing drivers in UK motorsport, but if you walked into a couple of paddocks in Britain, you'd be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

Some drivers think that they are in the very top echelon of racers in the UK, but it is very clear that they are paying for their rides and they are clearly getting carried away with the adulation. Get real, people.

Mixed up series names

The British Touring Car Championship. It's not complicated, is it? That's because you read *Motorsport News* and you understand the sport. Try to explain it to your mate down the pub who doesn't know motor racing. What is a touring car? Is that an estate-shaped machine?

It changed from the British Saloon Car Championship to the British Touring Car Championship in 1987. It's time to change back (although I will now get a phone call from series director Alan Gow telling me how BTCC is now a recognised brand and it would be foolish to suggest changing it).

Even British GT is at it. How often do people refer to high-performance road cars as GTs? No, that bloke down the pub would call it a supercar. So why isn't it the British Supercar Championship?

The lower rungs of national racing tend to get this right, why can't the rest?

Mixed up points systems

My colleague Stephen Lickorish touched on the problems of dropped scores in his Room 101 (*Motorsport News*, Jan 3), there is a wider issue at hand here.

Why do so many championships in the UK use so many different points scoring systems? It makes it impossible to follow. When you pot a black ball in snooker, you get seven points and that is the same from the pubs and clubs around the country right through to the Crucible in Sheffield. When you win a football match, you get three points whether you are Sunday league or playing at the Bernabeu.

So why should winning a race, or even a rally, merit a differing amount of points depending on which series you chose to race in? They should all be the same, surely?

Matt James

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Bob Sketchley's shot from the Monte Carlo Historique of Donald Carslaw's Saab 96



Richard Hage went to Monaco for the WRC



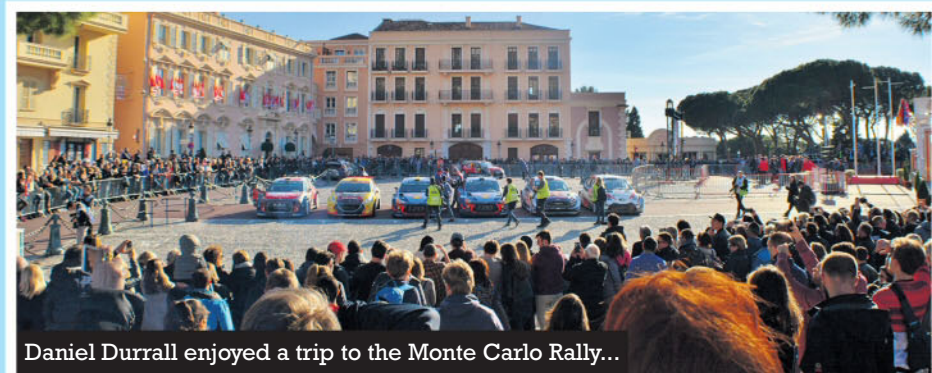
Bob Sketchley's second historic shot



Brands Hatch action, by Robert Clayson



Jamie Matthias's shot of Dani Sordo on Rally GB



Daniel Durrall enjoyed a trip to the Monte Carlo Rally...



...and Darnall got out onto the stages as well

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TV GUIDE

Catch-up with the latest from the other side of the globe with highlights from New Zealand's **Toyota Racing Series** at Hampton Downs (Friday, 0800-0900hrs, BT Sport 3).

Chile was the latest stop for the **Formula E** field. Could Felix Rosenqvist score a hat-trick of wins and would last season's champion, Lucas di Grassi, finally



Bird aims for title

get off the mark and score some points? (Friday, 1500-1600hrs, BT Sport 3).

motorsport.tv

There's plenty to watch on *Motorsport.tv* over the coming days, starting with **The Great History Of The 24 Hours Of Le Mans** series (Thursday, 2045-2100hrs), which looks back at the 1999-running.

For some sideways action there are highlights from round four of the **Motorsport News Circuit Rally**



BMW won at Le Mans

Championship at Brands Hatch (Friday, 1930-2000hrs).

And enjoy racing from the fourth round of the **2017 Super Formula** series from Motegi on Saturday (1030-1230hrs).

LIVE TV

NASCAR: Daytona

■ **Race:** Sunday, 1930-2230hrs, Premier Sports



Champ: Truex Jr

LISTINGS

RALLYING SATURDAY

■ **Goodwood, West Sussex**
Phil Collings Memorial South Downs Stages
Starts 0900hrs
Admission TBC
Web southdowns-stages.co.uk

■ **Inverness, Scottish Highlands**
Snowman Rally

Starts 0845hrs
Admission TBC
Web highlandcarclub.co.uk

■ **Blyton Park, Lincolnshire**
Jack Neal Memorial Rally
Starts 0900hrs
Admission TBC
Web clitheroedmc.co.uk

Details correct at time of press

DVD/BLU-RAY REVIEW FORMULA 1 2017 SEASON

At four hours and 46 minutes in length – plus 26 minutes of bonus features – there is certainly plenty to enjoy with the official review of the **2017 FIA Formula 1 World Championship**.

Sporting the new F1 logo and thankfully without a diabolical title – who can forget the “they did their best” monstrosity from last year – the DVD/Blu-ray is a must-have for all F1 fans.

Fantastic on-track footage, including on-board cameras and some pictures not seen during live broadcasts, are as usual brilliant. Interviews are often mixed in with

track footage relating to an incident, such as the startline crash in Singapore, and radio messages are likewise played at the relevant moment painting a clearer picture of the unfolding drama.

Off-track action, such as London Live or entertainment pre-race, are given their fair share of coverage during the review to reflect the glitz and glamour of F1.

Narrating most of the review is Channel 4 commentator Ben Edwards, who provides the right blend of information and suspense to accompany the pictures.

There are several times when the

voice of former ITV F1 commentator James Allen speaks during “analytical” moments which look back at certain incidents from the previous race – such as how Sebastian Vettel overcame Ferrari team-mate Kimi Raikkonen in Monaco or the friction built up between the Force India drivers over the season. Footage used has often already been played during the race though and been covered off by Edwards, meaning at best it feels unnecessary for what is already a long watch. At worst it feels patronising for the majority of fans who would have been able to work

out what happened but are force-fed basic information.

Perhaps the most interesting bits are the bonus features, including uninterrupted on-board camera action from each round – often putting you in the midst of a fantastic lap-one battle or breathtaking overtake. There are also short films, such as Robert Kubica's return to the cockpit or how Lewis Hamilton beat Ayrton Senna's pole record.

As usual Duke doesn't disappoint and this is a fantastic addition to add to the F1 season review collection.

Stefan Mackley F1 2017 season review is a must-watch



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OUT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

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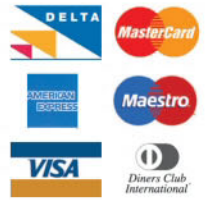
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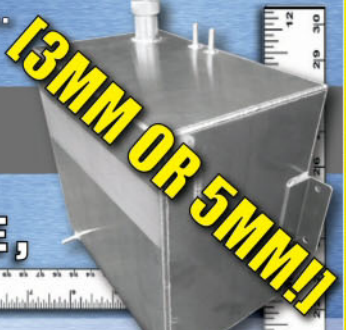
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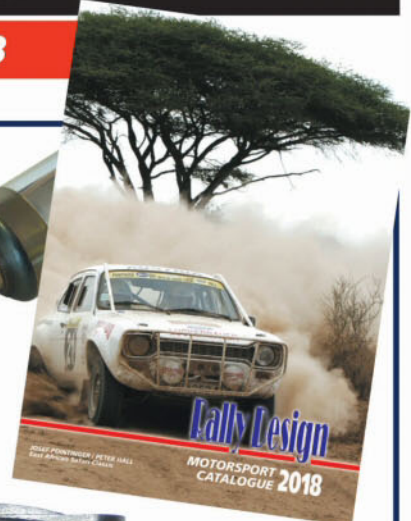
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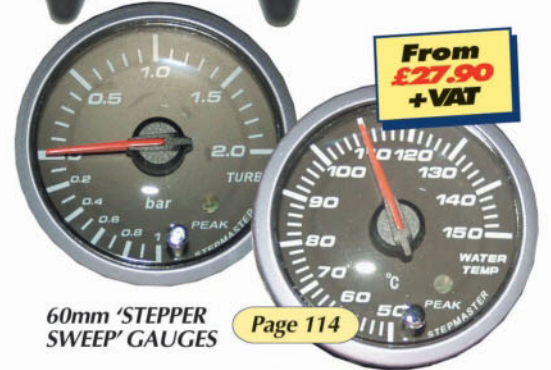
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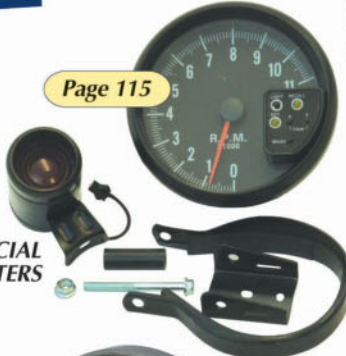
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