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JAPANESE FIRM COMMITS TO WRC RETURN P16

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THE UNKNOWN THREAT IN 2015

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ON COURSE FOR ANOTHER TITLE

NISSAN
GETS RADICAL

BACK TO LE MANS... WITH A FRONT-ENGINE RACER!



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HISTORIC
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FIVE-WAY BATTLE GOES DOWN TO THE WIRE



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MERCEDES
HAMILTON



Merc: new engine is a step forward

Mercedes High Performance Powertrains managing director Andy Cowell says the firm's second generation power unit will be a step forward.

With Ferrari and Renault both utilising the majority of their development tokens over the winter, Mercedes has been forced to push to retain its edge. "The biggest focus has been on combustion efficiency and frictional losses," said Cowell. "It's a case of evolution not revolution. Where last year it was a case of 'can we do it?' this year it's 'how do we improve it?'"

"We'll gather the information from testing and see if we have opportunities to gain later in the season."



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Still looking like the car to beat. MN only got to see the first two days of running at Jerez before our print deadline, but by then Merc had already racked up 248 laps – double anyone else's tally. The consistency seems good with Hamilton doing long runs. Only hiccup was a water system leak that forced Hamilton to miss the rainy Monday afternoon. Didn't go fastest, but they didn't during last year's test either...
Fastest lap: 1m 22.490s (Hamilton, day two)

McLAREN HONDA

McLaren's no-compromise approach

Honda motorsport head Yasuhisa Arai says that no compromises have been made in the development of McLaren's new MP4-30 charger in the effort to make it the most stable base for the firm's return to F1. McLaren-Honda kicked off its new era with the unveiling of its co-developed MP4-30 machine, the first McLaren to be powered by the Japanese firm since 1992. The last time the two firms worked together McLaren won 44 grands prix and eight world titles between 1988-1992. The car features a sloped nose design and a new compact rear end assembly to accommodate the new Honda RA615H power unit.

McLaren and Honda began development of the MP4-30 mid-2014 with an engineering sub-team using a modified version of last year's chassis to conduct early installation and development work. While that development car suffered electrical teething issues when it ran in public late last year, both parties believe the problems have been solved. Arai is pleased with the finished product and is hopeful the car will represent the first step in returning McLaren-Honda to the winner's circle regularly. "Technology and regulations have changed a lot since we last worked so successfully with McLaren in the 1980s," said Arai.

"But we have dedicated ourselves as one team with McLaren to creating a new generation car with no compromises on anything. McLaren and Honda have a mutual passion for racing and we share a mutual goal, which is to win. We've made much progress on the power unit over the winter, and we'll keep evolving it around the clock until the very last minute to make sure we are in the right position to fight at the start of the season." Arai also praised the FIA's decision to allow Honda an amount of development tokens, meaning it can make technical changes to its engine during the season. "Honda



HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: Mercedes AMG, McLaren-Honda, LAT

F1 2015 LAUNCH SPECIAL



TARGETS THIRD TITLE

By Rob Ladbrook

Reigning champion Lewis Hamilton believes he is well set to challenge for a third Formula 1 world title this season after getting his first taste of the new Mercedes F1 W06 Hybrid this week.

The Brackley-based team unveiled its new challenger just before the start of pre-season testing at Jerez this week.

German Nico Rosberg drove on day one with Hamilton taking over as *MN* closed for press on Monday.

The F1 W06 has been largely tipped to be the car to beat this season as it follows an evolutionary development path from its all-conquering predecessor the W05. Mercedes lifted both the drivers' and constructors' world titles and won all but three races with the W05 last season.

Hamilton, who took his second crown after beating Rosberg in a tense intra-team battle last year, said he was happy with the starting point for his title defence: "Just because you've had success before it doesn't make it easy to carry that on. You hear about people achieving a lot and then lose their focus and you

wonder; at what point does it start to fade off? That competitive fire is still in me. I think subconsciously the taste of success spurs me on – I like that feeling of winning and I want to feel it again and again.

"I can't say I don't feel like I've won two world championships, but I'm a racer. I love winning races and it feels so much better when you have to fight for it so I'm grateful for the battles I had last year with Nico.

"We've probably made it harder for ourselves this year because of the way things went last season. It isn't easy to improve on something that was so strong when the rules haven't changed much. I've seen the

guys in the factory pushing like crazy and it just goes to show that you can't ever be comfortable and stand still in F1. We'll be keeping an eye out for our rivals and have to take things one step at a time, and hope at the end of those 20 steps this year we're still ahead."

Subtle changes

The F1 W06 broke cover for the first time for a testing day at Silverstone just prior to travelling to Jerez. From the first day of running the team racked up comfortably the most mileage of any team, doubling the laps of any other squad.

The W06 features a redesigned nose section, tweaked airbox and new sculpted bodywork in front of the rear wheels to boost rear aero efficiency.

Team technical director Paddy Lowe said the largest changes are under the skin: "The key factor for us is to avoid complacency because expectations are high and there's an assumption of our performance. We may be over some of the hurdles of the new hybrid era with this second generation car but one of the risks

of car development is that attempting a forward step can easily turn into rearward steps. It's an evolution process and we've had to manage the risk of our changes carefully in order to make this car better."

Drivers to fight

Team head Toto Wolff said he was pleased to retain both Hamilton and Rosberg for a third season, despite the friction between the pair last term.

"It would be dangerous to rest on our laurels and we have no sense that this year will be easy," he said. "F1 is the most brutally honest sport if you get things wrong as the stopwatch never lies.

"At this point every team is on zero points. The only thing we know for sure is we have consistency with our drivers and we know what's expected of them. We're looking forward to seeing them push each other and the team forwards as they fight for wins."

Rosberg added: "This year will be a rematch for me against Lewis. I'm ready to go maximum attack for this season and I'm massively motivated."

DRIVERS

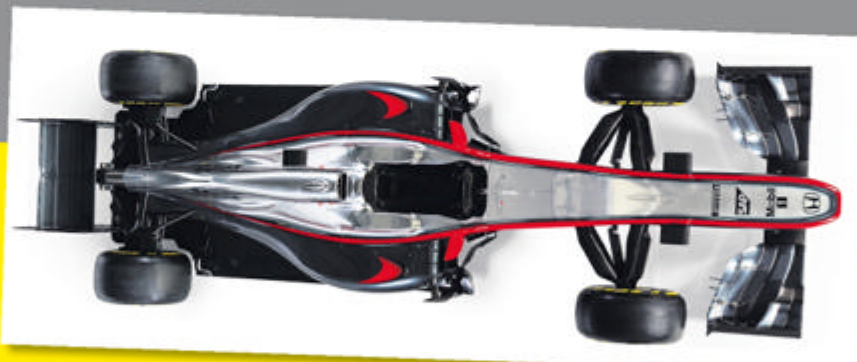
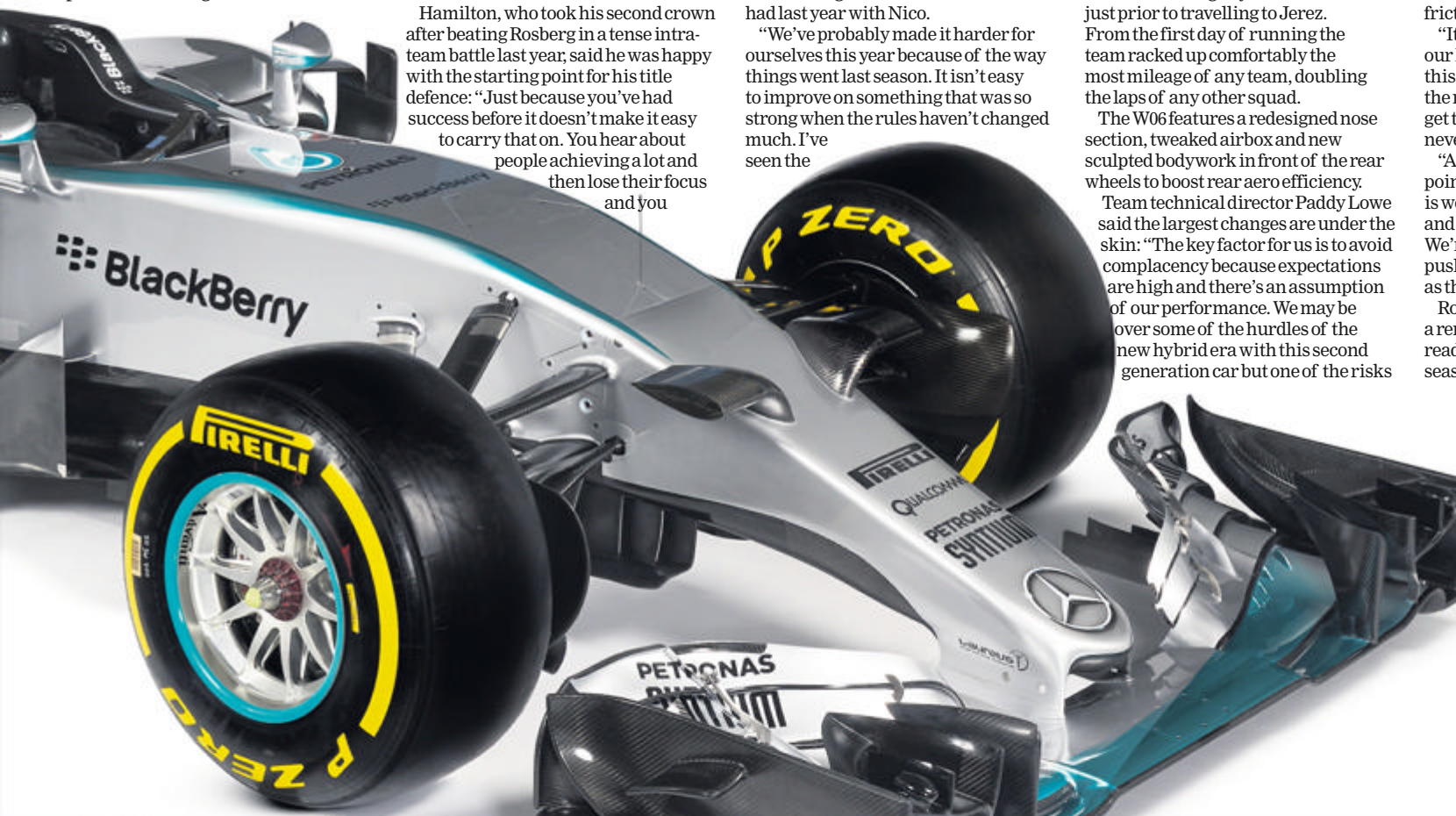


Lewis Hamilton

Age: 30 From: Tewin, GBR
Races: 148 Wins: 33
Podiums: 70 Points: 1486

Nico Rosberg

Age: 29
From: Wiesbaden, GER
Races: 166 Wins: 8
Podiums: 26 Points: 887.5



joins the new regulations a year later than the other manufacturers," he added. "We don't see that as a benefit because we don't have the physical track running our opponents do. We just want to be on a fair footing."

The Woking team has also made changes to its technical staff and structure, with sporting director Sam Michael leaving the team and former Red Bull aero head Peter Prodromou joining to lead design.

McLaren had formerly adopted an approach of generating maximum downforce from a car, but has struggled to convert those figures into reality on the track, leading to recent cars being inconsistent or having a narrow working window. The MP4-30 has instead been

designed to meet a maximum 'usable' downforce figure without sacrificing other elements, such as ride and driver comfort.

Team head Eric Boullier said: "This concept of driver-friendly is maybe new, but it is part of our new philosophy. We are trying to make sure our drivers have the ability to exploit the car to the limits. If you have a well-performing car but the driver cannot drive it to the maximum it is a waste. We want to make sure our drivers can take the MP4-30 to the limit.

"Some people on the shop floor happily say this is one of the most exciting and best built cars from McLaren. But we have to stay grounded and see what will happen when we get testing."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Not the smoothest start. Electrical and control problems limited Alonso to just six laps on day one and Button didn't fare much better. He only got five laps in on Monday before a recurrent hardware problem began affecting the engine performance. Cue a long stint back in the garage and more head scratching. Button was unable to set a representative time. Team was confident it was solved for Tuesday though. **Fastest lap:** 1m 40.738 (Alonso, day one)

DRIVERS



Fernando Alonso

Age: 33
From: Oviedo, ESP
Races: 234
Wins: 32
Podiums: 97
Points: 1767

Jenson Button

Age: 35
From: Frome, GBR
Races: 266
Wins: 15
Podiums: 50
Points: 1198

RACING NEWS

F1 2015 LAUNCH SPECIAL

FERRARI



WE MUST WIN RACES AGAIN

Team boss sets high targets to pull Italian giants from performance slump

By Rob Ladbrook

New Ferrari team boss Maurizio Arrivabene says his team is committed to winning races this season as the Scuderia looks to bounce back from a difficult 2014.

Ferrari is under pressure to perform, having been relegated down the pecking order during the first season of F1's new V6 hybrid era. The Italian squad was fourth in the Constructors' points, its lowest place since 2009, and failed to win a race for the first time since 1993.

Ferrari has carried out a heavy restructuring process to correct the slump, with several key members of its technical team being shuffled out – including Stefano Domenicali, Pat Fry, engine head Luca Marmorini and company president

Luca di Montezemolo. Arrivabene leads the team, with Briton James Allison taking charge of the new SF15-T's development.

Arrivabene said a repeat of a winless campaign would be a failure: "Last year we had an ugly car and didn't win races, hopefully this car goes as good as it looks. The work that we have done was designed to recover and enhance the team spirit and passion that has gone missing in recent years. We are all working together now towards a common goal, which is to win as much as possible again.

"Nobody has the magic to suddenly change something that is unchangeable. But we had this car ready in December and had the time to go back and make extra modifications, which we think will prove interesting.

"I'm not going to say we will win the world championship this year, but we are committed to winning at least two races. That is our target."

The new SF15-T features a dramatic reworking of the rear assembly. Ferrari has redesigned its cooling system and fitted smaller, more efficient radiators and created a much tighter bodywork package. The car does retain the pullrod suspension design all round, which Allison believes will bring stability.

"Last year we had an unacceptably large gap in performance across varying track conditions," he explained. "We took all the faults from last year's car and feel we've addressed them here. We've done a lot of windtunnel and component design work to pull the rear assembly tighter to the chassis

and we've made the whole package more efficient. We've kept the pullrod suspension as we didn't see it as a problem area last year, so we've decided to focus our efforts on other areas that need it more. The pullrod has pros and cons, it's harder to make the assembly light and stiff but it's better for producing aero performance.

"Last year our power delivery wasn't right and we struggled to harvest enough electrical energy from the turbo to be able to generate a competitive amount of power. We've worked hard to address that and found more from the hybrid system and a better balance from the architecture of the internal combustion engine, meaning we now get the maximum power from the fuel allowance."

Four-time world champion

Sebastian Vettel joins the squad this year to replace Fernando Alonso. He said he had modest expectations for his new career with Ferrari: "It's a change in colour for me and there are differences. Things like the steering wheel and the strategy of the car are different, as is the technical language of the team.

"We have to remember where we came from last year, with one dominant team and Ferrari struggling a bit. It'll be tough to be right there from race one, but we know we can catch up as the season progresses. It would be wrong to expect too much immediately, we have to get into the groove with testing and then we can make quick progress. It will take me some time to settle in, but then I'm confident we can move forwards quickly."

DRIVERS



Sebastian Vettel

Age: 27
From: Heppenheim, GER
Races: 139
Wins: 39
Podiums: 66
Points: 1618

Kimi Raikkonen

Age: 35
From: Espoo, FIN
Races: 212
Wins: 20
Podiums: 77
Points: 1024

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Strong start from The Scuderia's new machine. Vettel topped the times on the first two days by a clear margin and did 149 laps. Car looks consistent and better to drive than last year's (mind you we've not seen Kimi drive it yet...). However, it's worth noting that Vettel's best times were on short runs (and probably low fuel too), so pace may be smoke-and-mirrors at this very early stage.

Fastest lap: 1m 20.984s (Vettel, day two)

SAUBER



Sauber's new C34 racer has learned from the mistakes that led to the team's first ever pointless F1 season last year, according to boss Monisha Kaltenborn.

The Swiss outfit will run an interim version of the new car, which will carry the blue and yellow colours of new driver Felipe Nasr's long-term sponsor Banco do Brasil, at this week's first test in Jerez. That car will feature carry-over components from the C33 before being replaced by the full new car for the second test in Barcelona.

Sauber has concentrated on fixing the weaknesses of the C33 for this year, so has focused development on reducing the car's weight, improving braking and finding extra grip in slow turns.

The Ferrari-powered C34 features slimmer sidepods, revised cooling and tighter rear bodywork. It also features a larger and wider snout design to meet the new nose regulations.

Brazilian Nasr will partner former Caterham driver Marcus Ericsson at the team, with Ferrari protege Raffaele Marciello signed as third driver.

"We have to be able to fight for points," said Kaltenborn. "We learned our lessons from last year and we're now starting again and confident.

"I'm delighted with our driver line-up as they bring a breath of fresh air to the team and are both young, talented and highly motivated."

Nasr, who was test driver at Williams last term, added: "It's my rookie season so I have a lot to learn, especially as I haven't driven many of the circuits on the calendar before.

"But I'm ready for the challenge. I drove the Williams a few times last year and I've built my understanding of how an F1 car works so I'm looking forward to bringing my experience from Williams here."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Sauber has made a definite step forwards over last year's car already. Ericsson was P2 on Sunday after a soft tyre run and praised the ride and the stability under braking (a real weakness in the C33). He did 73 laps in total. Nasr racked up plenty of miles on day two without major issue.

Fastest lap: 1m 21.867s (Nasr, day two)

DRIVERS



Felipe Nasr

Age: 22
From: Brasilia, BRA
Races: 0
Wins: N/A
Podiums: N/A
Points: N/A

Marcus Ericsson

Age: 24
From: Orebro, SWE
Races: 16
Wins: 0
Podiums: 0
Points: 0

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"We've turned the rulebook on its head"
Nissan's radical LMP1 car, p13



RED BULL



RED BULL AIMS FOR GAINS

Red Bull Racing boss Christian Horner hopes that a closer relationship with engine supplier Renault will lead to vast improvements from the team's new RB11.

The RB11 hit the track for the first day of running in Jerez, in a camouflage livery that Red Bull intends to keep for all three tests. The car is an evolution of last year's race-winning RB10, but has been redesigned at the rear in accordance with closer work with Renault. It has redesigned its power unit and cooling systems, meaning a tighter rear assembly was

possible for the RB11. With Lotus switching to Mercedes, Red Bull and Toro Rosso are the sole squads running Renault engines, making Red Bull, in essence, Renault's works team.

"It's been the most testing winter we've had in terms of build and development time," said Horner. "The relationship with Renault is much closer now as we're now the only partner. The focus from Renault and involvement of our design team is yielding good results and a better integration between chassis and power unit."

Despite designer Adrian

Newey cutting his F1 work, he has still had an influence on the shape of this year's car. Horner estimates Newey will dedicate "50 per cent" of his time to F1. Newey said: "The design of the RB11 is about taking the lessons from RB10. We've optimised the power unit packaging."

Chief engineering officer Rob Marshall added: "There aren't many alterations to the naked eye – aside from the changes to the nose and front of the car – but there's been plenty of work on the bits that are hidden."

Red Bull's 2015 chances, p6

DRIVERS

Daniel Ricciardo

Age: 25
From: Perth, AUS
Races: 69
Wins: 3
Podiums: 8
Points: 268



Daniil Kvyat

Age: 20
From: Ufa, RUS
Races: 19
Wins: 0
Podiums: 0
Points: 8



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Car was very late in passing FIA crash tests and hit a few battery/overheating issues on day one as a result of the late build process. Once up and running though it looked good. Ricciardo got 35 laps near the sharp end and was P2 to Vettel for much of day one, but said there were a few 'drivability' improvements to be made. An error from Kvyat broke his only front wing on Monday morning and he struggled through with a bare nose as a spare was sent from base.

Fastest lap: 1m 23.338s (Ricciardo, day one)

TORO ROSSO



Toro Rosso team chief Franz Tost has urged his team to push for a top five finish in this season's Constructors' Championship.

The Faenza-based outfit finished a distant seventh last season, 125 points adrift of nearest rival, Force India. But Tost said a series of aggressive developments made to the STR10 over the winter made him confident the team can reach his target, despite fielding rookies Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz Jr.

"The drivers must be permanently in the points," Tost said. "The team is getting better and better – we are building up quite a big infrastructure in Faenza. In the last two or three years we've built up a strong technical team under technical director James [Key] and this year we will make a big jump forward."

Key said the team was closer to Force India and McLaren last year than the points suggested: "We weren't that distant, we just didn't make the most of it."

DRIVERS



Carlos Sainz Jr

Age: 20 From: Madrid, ESP
Races: 0 Wins: N/A
Podiums: N/A Points: N/A

Max Verstappen

Age: 17 From: Hasselt, BEL (NED licence)
Races: 0 Wins: N/A
Podiums: N/A Points: N/A

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Rookies, rookies everywhere – but they haven't done badly. Sainz Jr completed a total of 46 laps on Sunday, although they were broken up by small installation issues.

Verstappen was in the top five on day two and got solid mileage, even in the wet.

Fastest lap: 1m 24.167s (Verstappen, day two)



Photos: LAT

Lotus missed Sunday entirely as it was transporting the E23 to Jerez. Pastor Maldonado drove on Monday afternoon when the car was complete and mostly did installation laps before a few short runs. Did 41 laps. Better than last year! Fastest lap: 1m 25.802s



Williams appears to have taken a step forwards too. Bottas drove for the first two days and said the new car was a big improvement through the corners. Lost some time with installation issues on day one but still got 134 laps in total. Fastest lap: 1m 22.319s (day two)

MN'S EYES IN THE F1 PADDOCK

TONY DODGINS

"You are able to read between the lines a little"



Jerez has signalled the end of that two-month period when the cars don't run and F1 fans feel there's something missing in their lives.

As the new machinery started to break cover with a vengeance last week, there was no surprise to see a subtle evolution of the dominant Mercedes F1 W05 when the wraps came off the W06. As technical chief Paddy Lowe said, any development is a risk and they didn't want to be throwing any babies out with the bath water. The car was innovative in so many ways last year that it will still represent the standard the others have to aim at. As if to confirm it, Nico Rosberg's 157 laps on the opening day of the season's first test showed just how tricky a target that is.

You can never draw firm conclusions from the first day of testing but you can read between the lines a little. The Williams performance was one of the most heartening aspects of 2014, but the team admitted there was still room for improvement.

The highly experienced Pat Symonds explained last year that the 100kg fuel limitation had been a serious concern and hence the slippery FW36 designed to minimise drag and maximise consumption. With a Mercedes power unit the top speeds were the most impressive but the trade-off was corner downforce that, in early season particularly, meant the car lost out in the twiddly bits and suffered higher tyre degradation. The team got more on top of that as the year developed, tweaking suspension setup to eke out tyre life, but there is only so much you can do.

Which is why it was interesting to hear Valtteri Bottas's comments after just a single day behind the wheel of the new FW37.

"The car behaved really consistently," the talented Finn explained. "I could do really consistent times on the long runs. Immediately I had a good feel about the car. The aerodynamics are more consistent through the corners and that gives you more trust." Which should be music to the ears of the design team.

And although it meant nothing, Sebastian Vettel finished the Jerez opening day at the top of the timesheets aboard Ferrari's new SF15-T. While I'm not expecting championship-contending performance from Ferrari in 2015, I do think they could be closer than expected.

Let's face it, 2014 was a disaster on all fronts for Maranello. Their power unit was compromised for aerodynamic gains that were never realised. But technical chief James Allison, an aviation enthusiast, comes highly regarded. As one long-term colleague of his put it: "If they let James get on with it, he'll sort it. If they don't, he'll go off and play with his aeroplanes."

That, plus the scope to make some engine upgrades, could bear fruit later in the year.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RED BULL 2015



Ricciardo starred in last year's troubled RB10 machine

RED BULL'S

The Vettel years are over and Red Bull has a new team



Ricciardo is relishing his chance to lead Red Bull Racing team

DANIEL RICCIARDO

Daniel Ricciardo is a driver with a lot to prove this year. Seems funny to be saying that about the man that finished third in the world championship last season and was the only driver to beat a works Mercedes to a race win during 2014, a feat he achieved three times. That's impressive in itself, but when you consider he did all of that with one of F1's most successful drivers as his team-mate in a world-beating team he was new to, it becomes pretty phenomenal. Ricciardo was the standout talent to emerge in 2014. He soundly thrashed four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel in his first season at Red Bull's top table. So what more does he have to prove? This season Ricciardo faces pressure. Following Vettel's defection to Ferrari, the 25-year-old Aussie finds himself head of that top table. Last year he came into the team as the rookie, there was minimal pressure to achieve against Vettel, in Vettel's team. Ricciardo's performances last season made many people sit up and take notice, and they'll still be sitting up when the lights go out in Melbourne in a month's time. Weight of expectation brings pressure, as does stepping up to

lead the most successful F1 squad in recent years.

Ricciardo has swapped roles within Red Bull Racing. Russian teenager Daniil Kvyat has been brought in to fill his seat, while he's taken Vettel's. "Things are different this year and in a way we start from zero again," says Ricciardo. "Last year I was the young kid coming in, up against Seb – the champion. But this year there's a new version of me, a new young kid, and I'm going to be doing Seb's job. I learned a lot from racing against Seb last year, but now he's gone. I need to keep getting better and learning, find new ways to improve.

"Last season went really well for me, not just in terms of results, but personally too. I was really happy with my balance last year – my driving, the way I worked with the team and my life in general. I got into a very good place and I think that reflected in the results I got. I want to do the same again this year. I don't want to try and do too differently, just keep learning new things and developing areas I have experience in. I learned a lot from Seb and all of the experience he brought. But Daniil brings a new young dimension with him and I'm sure I'll learn things from him too. I have to take what I can and use it to my advantage to perfect all of those little things that make a good F1

driver a great F1 driver."

Ricciardo's role within the team will change. He'll become the main man for feedback when engineers are looking at developments, and he'll be the driver expected to lead the line in terms of results too. "There will be different things this year, but I don't see my approach changing," he says. "The difference will be the way other people see me. People know what I'm capable of so if I come out at Melbourne and do well less people will be surprised, now

"I'm not the young kid anymore"
RICCIARDO



it's pretty much expected.

"I've always been modest in my expectations, and I'm not changing that. I expect to be quick, and that's about it. I won't let other people's expectations affect me by pushing too hard and messing up. The expectation does add pressure, but I have to turn it around and use it as motivation. Pressure shouldn't change the way you drive a car. Ultimately you're still driving in the same way and competing against your team-mate and other drivers. If you're smart enough pressure shouldn't change the way you do things when you're in the car."

Ricciardo is hopeful of starting this year on a much more stable footing than the last. Red Bull was beset by reliability issues early in the campaign and also struggled with a down-on-power Renault engine. The French firm is adamant many of its issues have been solved for 2015 (see right). Ricciardo hopes that technical tweaks with his new RB11 can be the key to leading Red Bull's charge to get back to the top of the world championship.

"Last year we won three races by being perfect – and we pretty much were perfect most of the year – and putting ourselves in a position to make the most of a situation if Mercedes weren't perfect. This season we have to keep that pressure on and stay with them. If we can even halve the

performance gap it will be a good start. I hope it'll translate into a proper title fight for me; I feel I can handle it.

"The [engine] development rule for this year will also help us. You'd like to think that Mercedes' window for development is smaller than ours, due to the fact they got so much out of their package in year one. I hope I'm right and they don't find another 50 per cent, but I do feel that both we and Ferrari have great scope to close the gap. Mercedes is the hunted now and we want to go and get them.

"But then it's not just Mercedes we need to worry about. Williams was quick last year and Ferrari will be stronger this year. The big question mark will be McLaren-Honda and I'm excited to see how they do. They're the team with the most unknowns at the moment. McLaren has potential to make a massive step up from 2014 with Honda's resources behind it."

A flying start for Renault will be important in the title fight, and Ricciardo has unfinished business at his home grand prix. He was second last year, only to be stripped of the place due to a fuel irregularity post-race. "It hurt last year, so I really want to do well in Melbourne," he adds. "Mostly because of what happened last year, but also because every driver has that dream to win at home. We have to come out fighting in Melbourne."

NEW ERA

leader, but with the same aim. By **Rob Ladbrook**

Photos: LAT, Red Bull



Horner (c) is expecting big things from both his drivers

DANIIL KVYAT

Daniil Kvyat knows the chink in his armour this year could well be his lack of experience.

After just 19 grands prix, the 20-year-old Russian finds himself in one of the sport's plum seats. It's a daunting situation for any young driver, but Kvyat has faced a similar sort of test before.

Many questions were asked when Red Bull opted to throw him into an F1 seat with Toro Rosso in the first place. He'd just lifted the GP3 title, and been a race winner in F3, but there were far more experienced drivers on the Junior Team programme ahead of him. Regardless, Red Bull saw something in Kvyat. And last year he believes he delivered. He became the youngest driver ever to score an F1 point.

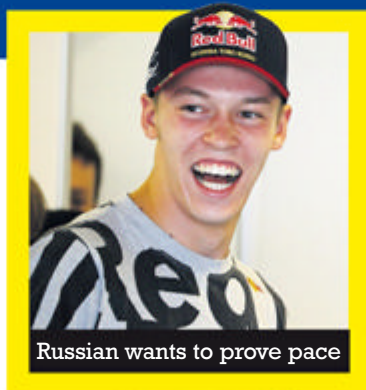
"It's hard to say I don't feel pressure, because I do," he says. "When I came into F1 there was a lot of stupid talk and jokes about me, but all I wanted to do when I heard that was to be as fast as I could be and prove people wrong. I feel I proved I belong in F1 because last year was a good season for me and helped a lot."

Kvyat surprised again when he was picked ahead of the more experienced Jean-Eric Vergne to partner Daniel

Ricciardo in the RB11s this year. Kvyat says he's keen to repay Red Bull's faith.

"I need to work hard to prove them right," he says. "It's hard to talk about the differences between Toro Rosso and Red Bull because I've not done enough work here yet. But each F1 team is like its own small world. I learned a lot from racing with Jean-Eric last year. He's a very tough driver and last year I could see how badly he wanted to beat me. We were racing each other for a place in a bigger team from mid-season so it was tough to retain a strong relationship. Now I'm at the top team and I'm racing for wins and podiums."

Kvyat is quick to recognise the chance he has this year. He could become the first Russian to win a grand prix: "I love representing my country in this way because there's a much larger interest in F1 in Russia than people realise. There is pressure but I try to let it motivate me instead of hold me back. I'm not thinking about being the first Russian to win in F1. I just want to win. Last year was the first where I've not won a race, so it'd be great to put that right. I don't have many specific targets, just to do my best, but my aim is high."



Russian wants to prove pace



Kvyat got points with Toro Rosso

CHRISTIAN HORNER

Red Bull Racing team chief Christian Horner says his team has endured its most testing winter break for a decade, but believes the troubles of last term have helped to motivate the squad to get back to winning ways.

Red Bull finished its new RB11 challenger with just days to spare before the start of testing in Jerez this week, in what Horner called the tightest build schedule his team has ever faced in its decade of F1 competition.

"It's been the shortest production and assembly time we've had in F1," he says. "It's been an unbelievable effort from

all at the factory. But overall this has been a very positive winter for us, far more positive than last year where the first test was just a disaster. We know where the benchmark is this year and what we have to achieve, and the

team continues to evolve and grow. It's probably been the most impressive winter we've had as a team in terms of everyone coming together and hitting their targets.

"As for goals for this season, it's all relative. Last year was a real disappointment, but it wasn't a disaster considering we couldn't run a lap in testing without the car stopping or catching fire, but we ended up second in the Constructors' Championship and winning three races. We want to carry that trajectory into the new car and the new season.

"The big question is how close can we get to Mercedes? We've made significant inroads and

know how far we've come, but we don't know what they've done in the same time. But our objective this year is to give Mercedes as difficult a time as we can. We won races by capitalising on their hiccups in 2014 and we need to put them under pressure to create those scenarios again."

Horner adds that he believes the driving strength of Daniel Ricciardo and new signing Daniil Kvyat can compensate for the loss of Sebastian Vettel to Ferrari.

"It's a new era for us this year," he adds. "It will be different without Sebastian and it's hard

to replace a driver with that level of experience, but at the same time it's exciting to have the young skill set we now have. In Kvyat we've got a really fast, determined and intelligent driver. Sure he's a little rough

around the edges as he's only done 19 grands prix but his commitment, application and speed are excellent. He'll make the odd mistake but that's normal. I believe he can be a surprise of the year in the same way Daniel was.

"On the other hand Daniel is full of confidence. He went up against the best in the world on paper last year and came out on top. He's a really exciting prospect and he'll build on that this year. The expectations will be different for him as he's no longer the underdog - he's a GP winner and a team leader. But I don't see much change in his attitude or approach."

"It's a new start for the team"

HORNER

RENAULT RECOVERY

Renault F1 has heavily revamped its power unit for this season, which company head Cyril Abiteboul reckons will help push Red Bull back to the front.

The French manufacturer endured a torrid start to its 2014 campaign in which its new V6 hybrid engine struggled to match the performance of the dominant Mercedes version. Renault estimated its power deficit against the Mercedes units at 50bhp towards the end of last year.

Renault has left no stone unturned to improve on the lessons it learned the hard way in 2014. It has not confirmed exactly how many of the 32 'development tokens'

[48 per cent of the engine] it has used so far, but did confirm it had utilised the majority, with some in reserve for in-season changes.

Abiteboul says: "We knew what we had to do over the winter and we know what we have achieved. We believe we've made a big step in performance and we will be more reliable. We may not have erased all the gaps, because we don't know where others are, but we're confident we've gone a long way to making up the deficit."

Renault's chief technical officer Rob White adds that virtually no section of

the engine is unchanged this year: "We've upgraded every system and subsystem and made fundamental changes to boost performance, mainly from the internal combustion engine, turbo and battery. The engine has a new combustion chamber, exhaust system concept and variable trumpets. The compressor is more efficient, while the energy recovery systems are able to

deal with more severe usage. The 2014 unit was well placed in its centre of gravity but we've tidied up the package to make it easier to integrate into the chassis. There's very little carry over from the 2014 engine."

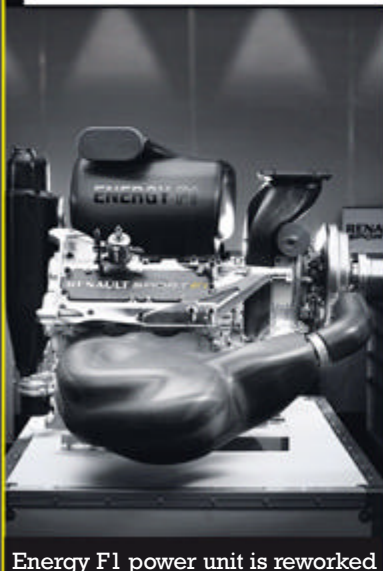
Renault will only supply Red Bull Racing and Toro Rosso this year, having lost Lotus to Mercedes after a dismal 2014 for the Enstone team. RBR boss Christian Horner sees that as a plus. He explains: "Renault is taking an aggressive development path and having just two teams places Renault's focus on Red Bull with no distraction of customer teams. Renault can focus its attention on one group effectively with a single stream of feedback and data.

"Being able to upgrade in-season is also positive. We have to be strategic about what to change and when to get the most out of the new rule."

"There's little carry over"
WHITE



White: mass changes made



Energy F1 power unit is reworked



Ricciardo took his first grand prix win in Canada last year

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F1 RETRO



Photos: LAT archive

Rob Ladbroke looks back at some of the more unusual F1 car launches



LAUNCH PAD



BENETTON B200, 2000

This might have been one of the first live webcast launches, but it still had more than a little amount of theatre about it. Benetton wasn't averse to big splash launches, having revealed cars in Roman amphitheatres and in St Marks' Square, Venice. But the B200 launch took things to new heights. The car was revealed atop a pillar on the Museu Nacional d'Art in the centre of Barcelona. It was mounted to the underside of a revolving trapdoor – topped with a statue of itself – which then flipped over to show off the real thing

Remember when Formula 1 car launches were proper events?

The start of each year marked the start of the grand prix theatre season. Months before the cars turned a wheel in anger, teams would pull out all of the stops to put on a show and shine the spotlight on their new creations.

Sadly the internet has changed things a tad. The ability to reach a worldwide audience in seconds coupled with the time demands that the expanded F1 calendar places on R&D and build schedules mean online and virtual launches are the norm.

Teams now simply mock up a CAD image, chuck it on Twitter and the work is done. It means no fanfare events, little planning and the benefit of an extra few weeks to finish the car. This year only one team – Force India – held an actual launch event, so bonus points for effort there (although points off too for it being held in Mexico and it actually being a show car with just a new livery and nose design).

But remember when pulling the covers off the new generation of F1 racers went hand-in-hand with drama and excitement? Here we look back at some of the maddest, and most unnecessary, new car launches. ■



TYRRELL P34, 1976

It's probably safe to say Tyrrell pulled off one of the biggest shocks in F1 history when it took the covers off its P34, mainly due to the clever way it kept its six-wheeled secret. The team's new design, penned by Derek Gardner, promised to reduce drag by fitting four wheels to the front instead of two larger ones. But to keep the design hidden, Tyrrell placed braces around the front of the car to create the illusion of a traditional four-wheeled shape. The car shot to prominence when Jody Scheckter took it to victory in the Swedish Grand Prix ahead of team-mate Patrick Depailler. Tyre development issues and the heavy front suspension led to it being abandoned for 1978

ARROWS FA1, 1978



Arrows' FA1 launch at Silverstone showcased a perfect way to shroud the finer aspects of the car, by blending the entire chassis into the background. Wheeling out the gloss-white FA1 in a pit lane coated by snow worked wonders for camouflaging the Tony Southgate and Dave Wass design

MIDLAND/JORDAN EJ15, 2005



When Eddie Jordan signed the deeds to sell his team to Russian-owned Midland for 2005, the new owners saw their chance to boost interest in the sport in Russia with a public launch in Moscow's Red Square. Sounds fine, except Russian winter conditions aren't exactly perfect for an outdoor F1 event. The temperature barely peaked at -10 degrees for the unveiling. Drivers Narain Karthikeyan and Tiago Monteiro (both accustomed to far warmer climes) turned up in full Cossack hats and coats for the occasion, which was also marked by a full Russian military band



McLAREN MP4-12, 1997



The mid-1990s were a difficult period for McLaren. Having just lost its long-running Marlboro backing and facing up to renewed competition after its domination of the late '80s, the team wanted to make a statement for new partner West. The team went all-out on perhaps the most extravagant – and expensive – launch event in history. It hired Alexandra Palace in London, invited 4500 VIP guests, recruited Davina McCall to present and then got the world's biggest girl band, The Spice Girls, to play live. David Coulthard and Mika Hakkinen couldn't quite hide their discomfort as the girls debated over the microphones what looked sexier – the car or DC in overalls. Ron Dennis's plan was to banish the memory of Marlboro McLaren and usher in the new era with West and Mercedes. "Tonight was about more than a glitzy show or just showing off the surface of the car," he said. Sauber followed suit a few years later when it recruited the Sugababes to perform in an airline hangar in Austria for the launch of the C23 in 2004

JORDAN EJ10, 2000

Team boss Eddie Jordan got the shock of his life when he launched the EJ10. He'd hired London's Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and arranged for the car to be offloaded live onto the stage. After the unveiling – and Jordan's own rendition of Riverdance alongside unnerved drivers Heinz-Harald Frentzen and Jarno Trulli – Michael Aspel stormed the stage with his famous red book to hand Jordan his *This is Your Life* invitation. After two hours of interviews, Jordan made the trip to Teddington Studios to film the show



RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

MACAU EYES BTCC LINE-UP

Bosses at the circuit sound out the UK tin-top teams about overseas showpiece in 2015



BTCC champ Colin Turkington raced at Macau back in 2009

By Matt James

British Touring Car Championship machines could appear on the streets of Macau if current plans reach fruition.

Bosses of the Oriental street track are looking to replace the World Touring Car Championship, which will move its final round to Qatar instead. Macau chiefs are scouting around for a replacement for the Guia race, and have approached BTCC organisers to ask about the availability of the UK tin-top cars. They have also approached other series' and several classes could run.

The new TC3 Touring Car Championship, founded by former WTCC boss Marcello Lotti, has also been linked with a round on the street circuit, although no decisions have yet been made.

BTCC series director Alan Gow confirmed that contact had been made: "The bosses at Macau have been in touch with TOCA. They are looking at various options, and the BTCC cars are one of those options. They asked me

if teams would be interested so I got in touch with the teams and most of them said yes.

"The reaction has been positive, but I think they will only bring a handful of cars. The organisers haven't had direct contact with the teams so they are just fishing around to see what is available."

Circuit battle

Before the Macau event became a World Touring Car Championship qualifier, the Guia race was run for a selection of race- and production-based saloon cars.

Tim Harvey won the Guia race in 1989 driving a Group A Ford Sierra RS500 and now commentates on the BTCC for ITV Sport.

He said: "It would be fantastic for the British guys, but I don't think it would provide the typical sort of BTCC racing, because of the nature of the circuit means there isn't the opportunity for a lot of side-by-side action. There is close racing at Macau, as we have seen in WTCC, so we know that saloon car racing does work there in terms of providing a good race, but it isn't as wham bam as the BTCC. There would probably be a bit more finesse and that can be a good thing. It is a really nice one to win and have on the CV. I would certainly put my name down to cover it in a commentary role!"

Organisers have approached the teams through TOCA and, as MN understands, have offered to cover the cost of freight and travel to the Far East. The teams are required to come up with the running budget. Team boss David Bartrum, who runs the Motorbase Performance team, said: "As long

as I get paid I would go anywhere and it would be a good way of generating extra budget during the closed season. It is a lovely idea. They approached us and we are keen on the idea. Getting on the new track would be interesting and we could have local drivers in the car – they could put it in the wall just as easily as our regular guys, I am sure. They have given us some idea about what they would help with in terms of costs and it looks very appealing. It is certainly something we are keen on because it is a track we haven't raced at."

Bravery required

BTCC winner Rob Austin contested the Macau F3 Grand Prix in 2003 and 2004. He said the prospect of driving a British touring car around the streets is very appealing.

"It is a real man's circuit that requires bravery, so I would be up for it," he said. "It is quite a compliment to the BTCC that they want our style of cars there. That is something to be proud of."

"It is a punishing circuit and quite narrow in places, but there is a real satisfaction to getting it right. I would jump at the chance to race my Audi A4 around there."

Factory MG driver Andrew Jordan added: "So long as the budget adds up then I would love to do it. It is one of those iconic tracks that you long to race on. The BTCC cars would look and sound really good around there."

Organisers of the Macau event remained tight-lipped about the make up of this year's Guia race and said that they have yet to finalise the complete line-up. The event takes place on November 21/22.

"Reaction has been strong"

Alan Gow



"It is great on your CV"

Tim Harvey



LETTERS: YOUR VIEW ON THIS WEEK'S MOTORSPORT NEWS

PAGE 30

ANGELO R. DRIVE

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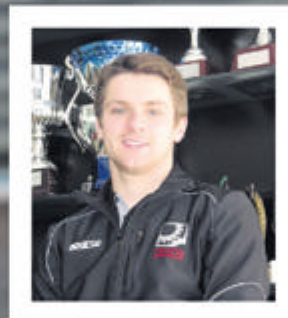
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"I took risks, but I didn't take the big risks"
Phil Keen's Daytona outing, p20



Photos: Jakob Ebrey

EX-BRITISH F3 CHAMP KING MAKES GP2 STEP



King: GP2 car is more rewarding for drivers

Former British F3 champion Jordan King will shun a move into Formula Renault 3.5 this year in favour of a GP2 Series campaign with the Racing Engineering team.

The 20-year-old former McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist, who claimed the British F3 title in 2013, finished seventh in his second season in the FIA European Formula 3 Championship last year. King tested a GP2 machine at

the post-season Abu Dhabi test last year with both Arden and MP Motorsport. He also handled a FR 3.5 car at Jerez.

"The GP2 car has a dual shock damper system on the front of the car, whereas the Renault has monoshock dampers," King said. "That means that the GP2 car is a more interesting machine to drive, it certainly rewards your driving technique more. The fact that GP2 also runs on Pirelli tyres and this

year will have the same Drag Reduction System (DRS) as F1 is worth a lot in my mind. It provides a great learning process for drivers.

"But one of the biggest things in my decision was that this year there looks to be greater competition in GP2 than in FR 3.5. I'd prefer to battle hard to finish second in GP2 rather than ease to the Renault title."

King said the technical knowledge he has gained

from his years in F3 can help him in his switch to GP2.

"F3 is a very technical category and enables you to really develop the car," he added. "The F3's geometry can be changed by 30 different points, for example. That should be beneficial, as I'll know more than I'll need to. The longer feature races in GP2 will be new, but it will be a learning curve. Understanding the tyres will be key to that."

THE VOICE OF NATIONAL RACING

MATT JAMES

"Public inquiry might endorse Welsh circuit"



Building Circuit of Wales was to start this week

The layers of red tape that anyone who wants to perform any development has to go through to get planning approval are extreme, but they are there to protect both the environment and locals who might be affected by any such scheme.

Work was due to start this week on the Circuit of Wales in Ebbw Vale, a 830-acre site that includes some land offered by the local Blaenau Gwent council. But the planning inspectorate has called the application in for a public inquiry so that all aspects of the plan can be scrutinised and all affected parties will get the chance to comment. This isn't necessarily a bad thing.

In my experience, planning inquiries are thorough and don't put impossible obstacles in the way. They are there to serve both the public and the developers.

This is not a stick to beat the plan with, it could well be a resounding endorsement of the scheme, so long as the development company has created a solid and viable plan.

It was not quite the case for one resident in the patch I used to cover for my local newspaper in Tunbridge Wells. A certain gentleman decided to build a mosque in his back garden. The local planning committee were not happy about this, understandably, and asked the man to demolish it. He responded by planting a flag in his back garden and declaring that piece of land as his own personal independent republic. He had lost his marbles, and went on to lose his mosque too.

The Heads of the Valleys Development Company, the firm behind the race track scheme, is confident that this inquiry will be the final hurdle in its £315 million dream. There has been scepticism surrounding the Circuit of Wales from those within the industry, and the Association of Motor Racing Circuit Owners made a fair point when it said that it thought it was unfair that one circuit should benefit from public money whereas all others have to fight for themselves as independent commercial enterprises.

Even including all of that turbulent background, the plans are moving forward. I remember an old hack talking to me about the revamped Anglesey, which opened in 2006. "We should cherish this [the revamped circuit]," he said. "With the environmental issues going on, do you think we will ever see another track built in the UK?"

That might have been him being a grumpy old git but, at the time, it looked like it might well have been true. I am pleased that it appears it isn't.

Champion Webb makes WEC move in LMP2

British racer Oliver Webb will step into the LMP2 class of the FIA World Endurance Championship in 2015 with the new combination of the returning Sard Racing Team and Team Morland.

The 23-year-old, who won the LMP2 division of the European Le Mans Series last year, will team up with Pierre Ragues and a competition winner in one of the team's two Morgan LMP2 Judd-powered machines, while team head Benoit Morand will partner Christian Kliken and Koki Saga in the other entry.

Sard was runner-up in the Le Mans 24 Hours in 1994 with Eddie Irvine, Jeff Krosnoff and Mauro Martini driving a Group



Webb will race a Morgan

C Toyota 94CV. The Sard team has been contesting Japanese Super GT in recent seasons.

Webb said: "This is the best step. After winning the ELMS and coming third at Le Mans I'm ready for the world stage."

Team Hard returns to BTCC with Volvo plan

Team Hard will return to the British Touring Car Championship this season and is looking to reintroduce Volvo into the series in 2016.

The Kent-based outfit, which is operated by Tony Gilham, has taken over one of the United Autosports entries for 2015. Gilham said that the team has signed a first driver and could expand to run a second. Drivers will handle the UA Toyota Avensis machines in the first instance.

Gilham explained: "We are going to be in this for many years. Initially we will run the Avensis, but those cars have been around for a while so we are going to look to build up something new, and a Volvo is top of that list. It has a strong history in the BTCC and would suit the regulations well."



Team has run Insignia

Both the Volvo S60 and S80 models would fit the BTCC NGTC criteria. Team Hard joined the series in 2012 in a privately run Honda Civic before taking over the John Thorne Vauxhall Insignia, and building a second version. It also built the two VW CCs. The squad was taken over by Warren Scott at the end of 2013.

Team Hard will continue to operate 10 VW Golfs in both the Volkswagen Racing Cup and the VAG Trophy.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



The Wayne Taylor Racing Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP has lost its third place at the recent Daytona 24 Hours for exceeding the driving time regulations. Jordan Taylor exceeded the four-hour limit. The car drops to 16th and last in the Prototype class... **Britain Gary Paffett will lead ART Grand Prix's line-up in this year's DTM series. The McLaren F1 tester and former Merc man was part of the German firm's HWA squad but split with the team after McLaren ended its engine deal with Mercedes...**

Paff: ART move



Newsham will tackle the '15 BTCC

Newsham finalises plans for tin-top return

Race winner Dave Newsham has pledged to make a return to the British Touring Car Championship and he is on the verge of announcing his deal.

The 47-year-old, who won two races driving an ES Racing Vauxhall Vectra in 2012, raced the AmD Tuning Ford Focus last season. That drive has been

taken by Renault Clio Cup champion Mike Bushell, and Newsham has now tied up a seat with a yet-to-be revealed team.

"I have made an agreement, all I need to do now is complete the paperwork," he said. "It will be a car with race-winning potential, and I am very excited about getting going."

Wood opts for management over BTCC drive

British Touring Car battler Lea Wood will step down from the drivers' seat this season and move in to a team management role.

Wood, 30, won the Jack Sears Trophy for S2000-spec cars in 2013 before his family-run Housmean Racing team swapped to an NGTC-spec Toyota Avensis.

Wood said that other drivers had

been in touch with the squad about a drive in 2015 and that had prompted him to stand aside. The team was run by Lea's brother Greg, but he will stand down due to business commitments.

Lea Wood said: "Our team needed structure. I've taken the decision to relinquish my drive to better the team's potential."



AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RACING NEWS

Chapman confident on Ginetta Junior return

Ginetta Junior racer Matt Chapman will aim to step up to become a regular frontrunner and podium challenger this season, after remaining with the Total Control Racing squad.

The 15-year-old, who entered the 2014 championship with only two years of karting experience, finished 13th in last season's points with regular top 10 finishes. Following a successful Winter Series, Chapman is now aiming to make a strong impression this season.

"I want to build on the experience I gained last year with TCR, especially from the Winter Series where everything went extremely well initially. We definitely made good improvements over the year. It's fantastic I'm staying with TCR, the team provides a good environment for its drivers and I enjoy working with Lee [Brookes]. His racing experience, as a driver and team principal, is valuable to learn from. It should hopefully be a great season."

Double R signs Masters racer Solomon for F3

Formula Masters China runner-up Matt Solomon will compete with the Double R Racing squad in the FIA European Formula 3 Championship this season.

The 18-year-old claimed five race wins and 12 podiums last year, and also appeared in the Middle East-based MRF Challenge. The British squad will also run German Nicolas Pohler in its two-car attack on the championship.

"I am extremely excited to arrive in Europe and race in the FIA European F3 Championship, there is going to be a lot to learn and understand but it's a great challenge," Solomon said. "There are new tracks for me to learn, a new philosophy and also a new mentality to take with a higher level of racing."



Briton MacLeod scored race win

MacLeod scores big down under in Toyota series

Former British F3 racer Sam MacLeod became the sixth different race winner of the Toyota Racing Series in New Zealand last weekend, claiming the prestigious New Zealand Motor Cup.

The Scot, who plans to tackle the FIA European F3 Championship this season, won the 20-lap feature race at Hampton Downs in Auckland. Despite missing out on pole, MacLeod sprinted away from the field to dominate on a wet-but-drying track. He won from Lance Stroll.

BRDC F4 runner-up Arjun Maini claimed victory in the opening race, which was punctuated by three red flags; the second when Stroll took out Charlie Eastwood at turn one. Maini held off a pursuit from MacLeod until the Scot went wide and broke his suspension. The race was declared following the third red flag after a high impact collision for Brendon Leitch. Brit Callum Iloft was fourth.

"It was a great run through qualifying," Maini said. "It was tough to hold off Sam and three red flags made it difficult."



Photos: BMW Motorsport, Jakob Ebrey, LAT, Veritas

BLOMQVIST BAGS BIG BMW DTM CHANGE

European F3 star gets a call-up to German touring car factory team

By Rob Ladbrook

British racer Tom Blomqvist will join BMW's factory DTM squad this year to handle one of its race-winning M4 machines.

The Anglo-Swedish racer has earned the call-up following a successful test with the factory team at Jerez in Spain late last year. Blomqvist, 21 from Cambridge, finished as runner-up in last year's FIA European Formula 3 Championship having taken six race wins for the Jagonya Ayam with Carlin team. He beat new Toro Rosso Formula 1 racer Max Verstappen in that championship.

Blomqvist takes the seat vacated by American Joey Hand. Blomqvist becomes the fourth British driver to join the DTM for this year behind Mercedes duo Paul di Resta and Gary

Paffett, and Audi's Jamie Green. "I cannot put into words just how delighted I am to have been signed by BMW," said Blomqvist. "After the test in Spain I was able to envisage just how it would feel to be a BMW works driver and regularly push myself to the limit in the M4 DTM. Now I have the opportunity to do that it's just fantastic.

"The team has a great atmosphere and I was immediately impressed with the team spirit here. I've been made to feel so welcome and it brings brilliant career prospects for me"

BMW Motorsport head Jens Marquardt praised Blomqvist's performance during his evaluation session in Spain.

He added: "We're delighted to welcome another promising youngster in the form of Tom to the BMW Motorsport family. Tom was

extremely impressive in Jerez and comes to us with a wealth of experience in F3. I'm confident he has everything he needs to find his feet quickly in the DTM. With his likeable personality he is definitely a great asset to our team.

"We have done well with our rookie choices so far and we will support Tom to the best of our ability to help him be successful from the word go."

BMW's other drivers for 2015 are reigning champion Marco Wittmann, Martin Tomczyk, Maxime Martin, Bruno Spengler, Augusto Farfus, Timo Glock and Antonio Felix da Costa.

Blomqvist's Euro F3 rival Lucas Auer will also join the DTM this year after signing with Mercedes. The 20-year-old Austrian had finished fourth in the Euro F3 points for the last two seasons.

CV

Tom Blomqvist

Age: 21 **From:** Cambridge
2015: DTM with BMW Motorsport
2014: FIA European F3, second with six wins. Third in Macau GP
2013: FIA European F3, seventh
2012: FIA European F3, seventh.
2011: ATS Formel 3 Cup
2010: Formula Renault UK, champion with three wins
2009: Formula Renault 2.0 Sweden, third
2008: Formula Renault 2.0 New Zealand, third place



Euro F3 race winner in '14

The showpiece Silverstone 500 event was a pilot for 'live' TV show



British GT strikes new deal for extra live TV coverage

The British GT Championship has secured a deal to air live television coverage of five of this season's seven meetings live on Motors TV.

A total of five to six hours of live coverage will be broadcast from all but the Oulton Park and Spa events. In recent years, British GT has previously only been featured in highlights form on both Channel 4 and Motors TV, with the exception of last season's showpiece Silverstone 500 event, which was aired 'live' but delayed by an hour.

"The championship has grown significantly over the last five years or so and the final piece in the jigsaw was to add regular live TV coverage," said championship manager Benjamin Franassovici. "It's something we've underwritten at some rounds in the past, but given the level this championship is now at it became clear over the course of last



GTs will be broadcast live in 2015

season that our teams and drivers saw the additional exposure as an important marketing tool.

"It's testament to the strength of British GT that our entry list was full before this announcement. Live TV adds greater commercial value for the sponsors, teams and drivers.

"Motors TV are also the ideal choice for us. We know a lot of their viewers were calling for live British GT."

Highlights will continue to be aired on Channel 4 and Motors TV.

NISSAN'S LMP REVOLUTION

Front-engined, front-wheel-drive machine to lead firm's assault on the Le Mans 24 Hours



Japanese outfit has taken an unusual approach with new Le Mans racer



Nissan believes it can take on LMP1 pacesetters with GT-R LM

By Rob Ladbrook

NISSAN president Shoichi Miyatani believes Nissan's radical new GT-R LM racer has the potential to bring the Japanese firm its best ever Le Mans 24 Hours finish this year.

Nissan unveiled its new front-engined LMP1 challenger last weekend. Two cars will be entered into the full FIA World Endurance Championship, with a third joining the line-up for Le Mans in June. So far the only driver confirmed is Spaniard Marc Gene (*see sidebar*).

The GT-R LM features a revolutionary front-engined drivetrain and will be predominantly front-wheel drive, a first for an LMP1 entry. Nissan has opted for a powerful kinetic energy recovery hybrid system coupled to a twin-turbo three-litre V6 petrol engine. It hopes to run in the highest eight-megajoule hybrid category.

The car represents Nissan's first factory effort in the top tier at La Sarthe since the R391 prototype in 1999. The firm's best Le Mans result was third overall with the preceding R390 GT1 in 1998.

Miyatani believes Nissan and tuning arm NISMO could hit the ground running in an attempt to correct its failings at Le Mans. "Our record at Le Mans is third place overall, so we definitely have unfinished business there," he explained. "We want to win and we have the knowledge to help us do that. We want to win for our customers, our employees and our fans. The competition in LMP1 is exceptionally strong; we're excited by the challenge."

Experience counts

The new project comes off the back of a series of experimental Garage 56 entries from Nissan/NISMO.

Data from both the Delta Wing and last year's petrol/electric ZEOD RC racers has been used in the development of the GT-R LM LMP1. Despite not running a factory entry in any of the top prototype classes in recent years, Nissan has been the dominant engine manufacturer in the LMP2 class for the last two seasons. Miyatani added that Nissan's

experience of Le Mans would be a benefit: "Our LMP2 engine program has powered teams to championship victories and wins at Le Mans and our Garage 56 projects have led us to this point with our own LMP1 and the innovations we have employed. Enormous lessons were learned from this very heavy hybridisation of the ZEOD RC and we've carried those lessons over to this project."

Nissan's global marketing head Roel de Vries said the strength of the LMP1 field, which also includes Audi, Porsche and reigning world champion Toyota, was a big draw for the firm: "We're excited to go head-to-head with the best sportscar companies. LMP1 is a proving ground for technological innovation, especially when it comes to power sources of the future. In 2014 three different manufacturers used three different solutions and won races. If you ever needed proof that LMP1 is the sharp end of motorsport that is it."

"The GT-R LM is the ultimate GT-R and continues a sporting bloodline for Nissan that goes back three decades with NISMO. Le Mans drives innovation so success on the track will lead to greater innovation in road cars. We are the new kids at Le Mans, no doubt, and our opponents are the best in the world, but we will be ready for them."

Against the grain

The GT-R LM was built and assembled in America while NISMO developed the hybrid drivetrain at its base in Omori, Japan. Nissan has not confirmed its US development partner, but Dan Gurney's California-based All American Racers

"We're not afraid to innovate"

Ben Bowlby



TECH SPEC

Nissan GT-R LM

Chassis: Carbonfibre monocoque with carbon body panels. Right-hand drive position. ERS housed beneath driver's feet.

Engine: Nissan VRX 30A NISMO three-litre 60 degree V6 with direct injection twin turbo. Petrol

Transmission: Five-speed sequential gearbox with paddleshift and hydraulic limited slip differential. Tilton 4-plate clutch

Suspension: Penske dampers with four-way adjustment front and rear, hydraulic anti-roll bar

Brakes: Six-piston front and four-piston rear callipers. NISMO brake-by-wire active ERS system.

Wheels: BBS centre-lock 16"x13" front and 16"x9" rear

Dimensions: Length: 4.645m; Width: 1.9m; Height: 1.03m; Minimum weight: 880kg; Fuel tank: 68 litres.

firm is believed to have handled much of the car's composite work.

The car has already started testing at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, but will be relocated to Europe for the start of the FIA WEC campaign.

British designer Ben Bowlby has overseen the project and is the race team manager. He also penned both the Delta Wing and ZEOD RC. "LMP1 cars represent the pinnacle of current racing technology; huge energy recovery systems, super-efficient engines and wild aerodynamics," he said. "That package produces extremely fast cars for their weight and endurance. An LMP1 covers practically the same mileage as an entire F1 season in a 24 hour race. It's a very different challenge."

Bowlby said Nissan's decision to opt for a front-engined layout was as much for balance as it was to stand out. The GT-R LM runs larger tyres at the front than the rear (14 inch wide front, nine inch rear), making it the reverse of the philosophy of the LMP1 crop.

"We've distributed the mass differently within the car," Bowlby said. "We've moved the main mass forwards,

so the weight bias is towards the front to give us traction for the front-wheel drive. We've also moved the aero forwards so we've had to make tyre decisions to manage the weight distribution and load. So the aero centre of pressure, the mass centre of gravity and the tyre capacity are all in harmony.

"The regulations have allowed us to create a significantly different car. Nissan are bold challengers who aren't afraid to innovate to find performance so we've turned the whole concept of a conventional LMP1 car on its head."

NISMO has also put much effort into making its three-litre engine as efficient as possible for the current fuel flow limitations. Bowlby added: "The way the rules are worked out means that the more megajoules [of hybrid power] you have the more total energy you can have and the faster you can go, even though your fuel allowance is cut. Each megajoule is worth an amount of lap time, so an 8MJ car compared to a 2MJ car will be faster over one lap."

"Also the more efficient you make the engine the faster you will be. You are burning the same amount of fuel as your competitors in the same class whether your engine is efficient or inefficient. But an efficient design will give you more power. The KERS system will harvest from the front axle and that energy will then be used to supplement drive out of a corner [via both the front and rear-wheels, creating temporary four-wheel drive]."

High expectations

Despite it being new to the LMP1 arena, Nissan has high hopes for its first year.

NISMO's Darren Cox said: "All I want is to know our team did the best it can this year. What we're aiming for is to do the best of our ability. There's a lot we can't control, for example we don't know where our rivals will be with their new cars until we get to the first race."

"If we've done our best I'll be delighted to see good results come our way. I think we have all the strength and knowledge in this group for that to translate into some great results this year."

Gene targets Le Mans podium with Nissan

Spaniard Marc Gene is the first driver to be confirmed for Nissan's renewed Le Mans attack.

Gene was part of Peugeot's Le Mans-winning line-up in 2009 when he shared a 908 HDi FAP LMP1 with David Brabham and Alexander Wurz.

The 40-year-old, former Ferrari F1 test driver, has recently raced for Audi's factory squad. He finished second at Le Mans last season after being called up to share the number one R18 e-tron quattro with Tom Kristensen and Lucas di Grassi after Loic Duval was ruled out of the race.

"I'm delighted to drive for Nissan, and to be competing with the GT-R LM in the most demanding and prestigious race in the world is something I'm very proud of," he said. "This is a great team already. The mechanics and engineers are all very professional and I bring my experience of Le Mans."

"Having an experienced driver definitely helps a team. From my first laps in the car I felt comfortable, despite it being a new design never used at Le Mans. I could feel the power of the engine and hybrid systems and the efficiency of the aerodynamics."

"Our goal is the podium and ultimately the Le Mans win. But there are no shortcuts to winning Le Mans, especially now that this year will be the most competitive, with four manufacturers."

Gene: impressed with GTR-LM



RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Kellett moves to GT5 Challenge with TCR

Ginetta Junior ace James Kellett will graduate to the Ginetta GT5 Challenge with champion squad Total Control Racing this season.

The 16-year-old, who finished second in last year's Junior Championship and scored five race wins, will lead the team's assault to defend its crown. The squad won the title last year with George Gamble driving.

"I've got my sights set on GT and sportscar racing in the future so this is the perfect next step for us," Kellett said. "I was a bit disappointed not to win the Ginetta Junior title last year, but we're only looking forward."

"The aim is to try and win the championship in my first season and I know TCR will give me a car capable of fighting for the title."

Fonseca aims for F4 title with Lanan

BRDC F4 racer Rodrigo Fonseca will switch to champion squad Lanan Racing for a title assault this season.

The 18-year-old Mexican, who made his championship debut with Douglas Motorsport last year, established himself as a top 10 challenger. His best result was fourth place at Silverstone in August. He finished 13th in the points and then had a breakthrough in the Winter Series when he won twice at Brands Hatch in November.

"I'm really happy to be working with Lanan Racing this year," Fonseca said. "Last year was my first season in single-seaters so it was a learning year, now I have more experience and I'm more prepared for this year."

"The goal for this season is to be champion in F4 and I think together with Lanan Racing we will be able to do it."

MSA FORMULA IN TEST PRAISE

Teams give new Mygale-built chassis positive shakedown reaction



James Pull put in the laps with FFord champion JTR



Speed surprised Oliver Rowland



Lando Norris ran for Carlin's test



By Russell Hayes

MSA Formula teams have responded positively to the championship's Mygale-built racer after it was shaken down in testing for the first time last week.

The first batch of 15 FIA F4-specification cars was delivered to customers last month, with teams beginning to test with the French-built chassis and Ford turbocharged engine. British single-seater powerhouses Carlin and Fortec Motorsports joined reigning

British Formula Ford champion JTR in running its new cars at both Brands Hatch and Rockingham.

Carlin's MSA Formula team manager Martin Knapman said: "From first impressions, Mygale has built a very good car. We spent three days at Rockingham ironing out any early handling issues which the drivers may have had. The car, as you'd expect from a junior single-seater, has a low level of downforce which produces less grip. So the car moves around a bit, which is good for the

category as it allows the drivers to learn significantly."

Top Formula Renault 3.5 racer Oliver Rowland helped the Fortec squad begin its testing schedule, and praised the speed of the car as well as its handling in fast corners.

"I've been quite surprised at just how quick the car is," said Rowland. "It slides through corners, such as Pif-Paf at Rockingham, quite similarly to the old [Tatuus-built] BARC Renault car, without snapping on you like the more modern two-litre

Renault can do. It gave me a good feel of mechanical grip. I was really pleased with the Hankook tyres.

"Mygale and Ford need to work on a couple of early issues which we've encountered, but the car will produce good junior racing, which we've needed in this country."

JTR boss Nick Tandy, who shook down the car at Brands Hatch, said: "The car has a good amount of torque thanks to the turbo. The cars will still be moving around on the limit, which is exactly what we want."



Mowle and Osborne will challenge for GT3 title in BMW Z4

Mowle motivated for Triple Eight British GT title assault after tough opening two campaigns

Triple Eight Racing pairing Lee Mowle and Joe Osborne say that a title challenge in the British GT Championship is essential for them this year.

Mowle and Osborne will return to the championship for a third season running a BMW Z4 GT3 machine. While they have stood on the podium before, they have yet to take an outright race victory in the championship. The team endured a nightmare start to last

season when one of their cars was written off during testing for Oulton Park.

Mowle said the squad, which also operates MG's British Touring Car Championship programme, was retuning more motivated than ever to put the record straight. "This is the first year I've really been up for going in and winning British GT," he said. "My first year I felt out of my depth and didn't know what to expect, and then the terrible

start to last year meant our chances were over before they really started.

"When we raced in Dubai [24 hours] at the start of the year I rediscovered a lot of that enthusiasm and desire that I'd lost. There's a lot of characters on the grid I want to beat this year. This is the most motivated we've been. Having Keith Cheetham [chief GT engineer and ex-Trackspeed boss] has pushed us forwards and made us

more into a GT team rather than perhaps a touring car team running a GT3. The car is nothing like the one we ran last year, it's in a really good place now."

Osborne added: "It's pretty simple, we didn't improve in year two for whatever reason. We need to make that happen this year."

Osborne and Mowle will also contest the full Blancpain Endurance Series with team protege Ryan Ratcliffe being the car's third driver.

TF Sport to field second GT3 Aston

British GT squad TF Sport will field a second Aston Martin Vantage GT3 this season after signing Jody Fannin and Andrew Jarman.

Both Fannin and Jarman bring recent sportscar experience to the team, with Fannin having lifted the British GT4 title in 2012 before moving on to sporadic GT3 outings with Nissan around Europe. Jarman finished second in GT4 last year alongside Devon Modell. Eurostar will sponsor their Vantage GT3.

Fannin, 21, who tested the Aston in Portimao last year, said: "We've worked hard to put this together and it's a great opportunity. Andrew did a good job in GT4 last year so I hope we can run at the sharp end."

Matt Bell and Derek Johnston will handle TF Sport's other Vantage GT3 and the team has a Vantage GT4 car available.

Triple champ Rivett focuses on Clio title

A restructuring of the WDE Motorsport squad has convinced team boss and triple Renault UK Clio Cup champion Paul Rivett that he will be in contention for this year's title.

The 36-year-old last claimed the championship crown in 2011. He dovetailed his racing in the new fourth generation Clio last year with managing the team. Rivett said the experience of racing and managing began to provide results towards the end of the season, and a further restructure will ease the pressure on him.

"Last year was a totally new scenario for me," Rivett said. "We went into round one with zero testing so were immediately on the back foot. I was also having to engineer the car. But we ended with a race win in the final round. "We've brought in new people so I can concentrate on my racing."

RENAULT CHAMPION BARNICOAT RETURNS FOR KARTING ATTACK

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Photos: Jakob Ebrey and LAT

Tarun Reddy for MSA Formula title

Tarun Reddy has targeted race victories from the opening weekend of the season after switching to the inaugural MSA Formula Championship with the Double R Racing squad.

The 17-year-old from Chennai, who was one of three drivers to successfully come through the Force India F1 squad's 'One in a Billion' initiative, claimed podium finishes in last season's Protyre Formula Renault Championship.

"I'm very pleased to sign with a prestigious team like Double R Racing, which has had a tremendous amount of success in F3," said Reddy. "The goal is to win from the get-go and with the experience and resources the team holds, I'm sure this is very possible."

Team principal Anthony Hieatt said: "Tarun is an exceptionally gifted young driver. We kept a close eye on his progress last year in Formula Renault. I've got absolutely no doubts that Tarun will be a serious contender in MSA Formula this year."



Reddy: high target

Century in two-car GT Cup assault

Top Ginetta customer outfit Century Motorsport will field a two-car attack in this year's GT Cup.

Team owner Nathan Freke and fellow racer Ollie Hancock will pair up with track day converts Steve Fresle and Russian driver Ruben Anakhasyan respectively. The G55 machines will run in GT4 specification.

Anakhasyan obtained his race licence in December 2013 and signed up for the Lotus Elise Trophy last season. Fresle stepped into a G55, entering the first event of the Britcar season at Silverstone last year before ending the season in the final Ginetta GT4 Supercup rounds at Brands Hatch in the newly introduced AM class.

"It was a steep learning curve last year," Fresle said. "The GT Cup, with its full grids and exciting mix of cars, is a fantastic championship that I am really looking forward to competing in. For my first full season I am looking to improve over the year and hopefully get my hands on a Pirelli cap."

BRIDGER MAKES FF1600 RETURN



Bridger (r) plans to race one of the team's two Mygales

Ex-British Formula 3 racer Jay Bridger will return to competition this season with his own National Formula Ford 1600 squad.

Bridger won a race at Brands Hatch on his way to fifth in the 2007 British Formula Ford standings before graduating to British F3. He won the National Class in 2008, but hasn't competed regularly since his third year in British F3 with Litespeed.

His Bridger Motorsport concern now plans to run two Mygales in the National FF1600 series, with Bridger driving one of the cars.

"I haven't been racing for a while and I wanted to get back into it," said the 27-year-old. "Because I am lucky enough to have some facilities - we have a family building we can use - it made it easier."

"I've been aiming to have my own team since 2010, I just

needed to get everything together. I wasn't going to race initially, but we got the backing and the team has a lot to learn, so I thought it'd be easier to drive myself."

Bridger, who has already started testing, wants to develop the cars and hopes the team will be able to expand into higher-profile series in future.

"FF1600 is quite competitive at the moment, with good teams and drivers," added

Bridger, whose team will include personnel from his F3 days. "But I want to win and be competitive. We want to be as good as the best team out there. "The idea is to start off at this level and see where we go. I want to build something for the long-term."

Bridger Motorsport also has a Dallara F3 car and Bridger is hoping to run it for Jamie Unwin in Monoposto racing this year.

Stilp wants nothing else but Clio Cup title

Renault UK Clio Cup race winner Jordan Stilp is aiming for the title this season after re-signing with the 20Ten Racing squad.

The 20-year-old claimed three race victories in his maiden season with the team in the championship in 2014, including dominating the mid-season double header at Croft. He finished third in the points.

"I'm going out to win it and nothing else," said Stilp, "no thirds or seconds, just wins. And I feel like I'm going to be the champion. When we roll up for the first two races at Brands Hatch I want to hit the ground running and thrash everyone."

The team has also confirmed it will run a second car for Masters Cup challenger, and former Renault 5 Turbo champion, Mark Howard.

Team principal Simon Hunt said: "Firstly we have continuity in the team which is very important. Jordan wants to win and the way he won at Croft last year was extraordinary. That really was a turning point and he was so strong after that. It lifted everyone's confidence and determination. If his first half of the season had been like his second half he would have been champion and I believe this year will be his year."



Stilp dominated at Croft but finished third in points



Hill claimed ninth place on UK debut at MG Live at Silverstone

MG Trophy switch for Aussie champion Hill

Australian tin-top champion Cody Hill will relocate to the UK this year to compete in the MG Trophy Championship.

Hill will take over the wheel of Chris Bray's race-winning ZR190 machine for this season. Hill travelled across from Australia to contest a one-off round at the MG Live event at Silverstone last year and finished ninth on his debut on UK circuits.

Hill won the Australian equivalent of the MG Trophy in 2014, having bought and shipped Paul Luti's LE500 to Australia. He hopes to gain experience in the club-level class before pushing towards an eventual British

Touring Car seat, following the career path of Jack Goff.

"After Silverstone the chance came up for me to race Chris's Finishline-run ZR190 and I felt the timing was right to make the move," said Hill. "MG racing in Australia has many different models and engine variations so you need a different strategy racing there. But the racing in the UK seems much closer and more competitive."

"I want to treat this year as a stepping stone to higher-profile championships like the Renault Clio Cup, and then maybe towards the BTCC. For now my focus is achieving the best I can this year."

ROUND THE BEND WITH...

MALCOLM SCOTT

Age: 59 Lives: Upminster, Essex
Still racing and defying his daughter...

He went to school

"I was more of a bike rider in my early days before focusing on business for over 20 years. For my 40th birthday though, my wife sent me to the Silverstone Race School for an intensive five-day course. I struggled and wondered why so many people were successful! I was in the same group as Sam Bird, who was starting out. He was blisteringly fast!"

But failed his ARDS

"At the end of the course, I failed my ARDS test! Nobody fails that after the course! I remained at the race school for two to three years but it was becoming too expensive."

Began in a Van Diemen

"I contacted the 750 Motor Club and bought John Moore's Formula Ford Van Diemen RF95 Zetec. I stayed around in the club's Formula 4 category for 10 years, and it took me six years to win the 1800 'E' class title, which I did in an RF00 chassis in 2010."

Inspired family to race

"My daughter, Jennifer, caught the racing bug when she was young and won the 1800 class title the year after me. She met her husband at Mallory Park. During the 2008 Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch, she was hit up the inside by Kevin Magnussen at Graham Hill Bend. It rolled the car four times and wrote it off. It's still spoken about when the F1 comes on the TV now!"

Switched to a Dallara

"I wanted to try something with slicks and wings and so moved to the Monoposto championship, buying a Dallara F398, Formula 3 car. It was a brilliant machine. It was sitting in someone's workshop for many years with very little use. It was good in every way. I won the championship with it in 2012 although I was lucky with my competition."

Aiming for F3 Cup

"I'm going to try a couple of F3 Cup rounds this year, possibly in an overseas F302 car. It's always something I've wanted to do and is the real top level of club racing. I want to prove Jennifer wrong, that I would still be racing by the time I hit the age of 60!"



RALLY NEWS

Photos: Toyota and mcklein-imagedatabase.com

TOYOTA CONFIRMS 2017 WRC RETURN

Positive reception was key to comeback, says company president Akio Toyoda



Yaris WRC will continue to be developed next year

By David Evans

The warm welcome Akio Toyoda received at last year's Rally Finland helped swing Toyota's return to the World Rally Championship.

The world's biggest car maker announced it would be back in the WRC in 2017, 18 years after it walked away from the series as world champion, bound for what would turn out to be an eight-year stay in Formula 1.

Toyota Motor Corporation president Toyoda outlined the firm's WRC plans at TMC's annual motorsport press conference in Tokyo last Friday. And he admitted the reception he received in Jyväskylä surprised him.

Toyoda said: "Many fans asked me when Toyota would return to the WRC. People talked about Toyota's history in the WRC [and] I was filled with surprise and gratitude that so many people still remembered. I started to feel strongly that we must return while people still remember. We are doing this to make

better cars, to make people smile. We decided to return to the WRC and we plan to start competition again in 2017."

Toyoda has always been interested in the public perception of a rally programme. When he appeared on Japanese television commentating on the powerstage at last year's Monte Carlo Rally, he said: "I would like to hear messages that fans want Toyota to challenge the WRC again."

Toyota's independent motorsport company, the Cologne-based Toyota Motorsport GmbH will continue to develop the Yaris WRC and run it from 2017 onwards. Toyoda added that Friday's decision marked the start of a new chapter in the firm's motorsport history.

"Last time we competed in 1999," he said, "that makes me think we are not announcing a return... but perhaps a start. We must begin again from scratch and carefully prepare both team and cars."

The Yaris, which was completed last



Toyoda visited Rally Finland

year, has already run a significant number of test miles on both asphalt and gravel. But that development will be stepped up now with the confirmation that the car will cross the start ramp in Monte Carlo in less than two years.

TMG's technical director Pascal Vasselon admitted that, while there was plenty of rally experience in Cologne, going back to world rallying would still provide a challenge.

"There are three main technical challenges for a World Rally Car," said

Vasselon. "The first is to be at the weight limit. The second is to have a powerful enough engine for these four-wheel-drive cars - they are underpowered - and third is to have efficient suspension. In circuit racing, the conditions are well known and the performance window for the cars is very narrow - but in rallying it is all about being able to perform in any kind of conditions and a good World Rally Car will offer the driver a much wider working performance window."

TMG president Yoshiaki Kinoshita, himself a rally driver since he was 18 years old, is delighted at the news that Cologne will be back at the forefront of the WRC.

"It is a great honour to be asked to bring the Toyota name back to the World Rally Championship," he said. "Toyota did rallies for 25 years and the WRC was Toyota's first global motorsport activity. Rallying is in my blood and when we started to build the Yaris, I went to the workshop every day, I was jumping around the car to see the progress."

Kinoshita added that preparing for and running Toyota's WRC return alongside TMG's existing World Endurance programme would be hard work.

"To run two works motorsport programmes simultaneously is, of course, a challenge," he said. "But, we believe we have the expertise and determination to succeed. There is much to do as we make the journey back to WRC, but to have received the support of Toyota Motor Corporation and our president Akio Toyoda is already very encouraging."

Carlos Sainz was the first driver to win a World Rally Championship for Toyota and the first to do so with a Japanese car maker. Sainz told *MN* he was delighted with the news of his old employer's return.

"It's fantastic news for motorsport and specifically for the WRC," said Sainz. "I had such an incredible relationship with Toyota, it was historic. I have great memories of working with this team. I was very happy to hear this news, Toyota

BRITISH HISTORIC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS OFF

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"This is a fantastic chance on my home event"

World Rally Car run for Raftery, p19



Toyota Team Europe has put mileage on WRC test car

TECH SPEC

Toyota Yaris WRC

Engine capacity: 1600cc
Type: In-line four-cylinder
Direct injection: Up to 200 bar
Turbo pressure: 2.5 bar absolute (maximum)
Air restrictor: 33mm
Power: 300hp (at 6000rpm)
Torque: 420Nm
Max revs: 8500rpm
Transmission: six-speed sequential
Clutch: ZF Sachs
Brakes: 300mm discs on gravel, 355mm on Tarmac
Wheels: 7in x 15in gravel, 8in x 18in Tarmac
Tyres: Michelin
Dimensions: Length 3910mm; width 1820mm

Who will drive for Toyota in the WRC?

Toyota has gone for a curious mix of drivers in its development team. Stephane Sarrazin is, perhaps, the most obvious as he's already on the payroll – driving for the firm's WEC programme.

One-time F1 racer Sarrazin has a decent rallying pedigree, with his best results coming on asphalt. He won the Tour of Corsica in a Ford Fiesta RRC last year, but most famously gave the Subaru World Rally Team a bloody nose on the 2004 Catalunya Rally, when he guided an older Impreza WRC to fourth, 16 seconds ahead of Petter Solberg. Sarrazin was running Michelin rubber, which worked better on the Spanish stages.

He joined SWRT for the next two seasons on a part programme. His rallying activities were curtailed by a full-time return to racing with Peugeot. When and where he could, he competed in a 207 S2000.

Sebastian Lindholm is one of the world's most renowned test drivers, but the success he managed in helping Peugeot's 206 WRC along is balanced by some troubled times with Suzuki's SX4 WRC. Lindholm's pace on gravel, particularly at home in Finland, is impressive. As part of Peugeot's factory effort for Rally Finland in 2004, he was sandwiched between countrymen Harri Rovanpera and Marcus Gronholm as the trio locked out the early podium positions in the 307 WRC.

Eric Camilli, 27, is Toyota's junior driver. He impressed at Toyota's young driver test in November last season. Kevin Abbring was believed to be the first choice, but when he signed for Hyundai, his space was taken by Camilli.

Yaris is already close to the pace, according to sources

When TMG announced it was building an entry-level Toyota Yaris R1A in August 2013, it didn't take long for the World Rally Championship to put two and two together.

Four proved to be the correct answer in December, when Cologne confirmed the existence of its Global Race Engine – which would become the beating heart of its Yaris WRC.

The Yaris began testing for the first time in March last year, when Toyota's World Endurance Championship racer Stephane Sarrazin put

some early miles on the car in Tuscany. Gravel testing continued in France and Sardinia before asphalt settings were dialled into the car for the first time in Italy in August.

While there's been no official confirmation of the car's pace, *MN*'s sources close to the team say the car would be capable of competing close to the front of the field were it to be homologated and used this season.

The car won't be homologated and it won't compete in its current guise.

Instead, TMG will continue to test the Yaris around the world, while evolving it into the all-new technical regulations set to arrive in time for the 2017 season.

TMC president Akio Toyoda drove the car late last year in Hokkaido and, when asked about the car in Tokyo on Friday, he said: "It was like meeting a girlfriend I had missed for 18 years."

The Yaris WRC appeared for the first time in public at Friday's press conference in Tokyo.

is part of myself and I am sure they will do a good job when they come in 2017."

Toyota's return was welcomed all around the service park, with WRC Promoter's Oliver Ciesla pointing to the to series' importance to the global car market. He said: "Toyota brings a fifth manufacturer into WRC, including three of the world's five biggest-selling auto companies. The last season in which so many manufacturers were represented was 2006. There is a clear link between World Rally Cars and the vehicles we drive in the street and that's a powerful marketing tool. It's exciting to see that, in addition to the manufacturers already competing in the championship."

Volkswagen team principal Jost Capito posted a message of support on the internet, saying: "Toyota has a great heritage in the WRC and great success and we are really looking forward to having proper fights and proper competition when you are back. So, thanks for coming back."



Link between WRC and road cars is important

Toyota has a rich history in the World Rally Championship

One man stands at the forefront of Toyota's history in the World Rally Championship, Ove Andersson. It was the Swede's own team – Andersson Motorsport – which first ran cars on behalf of Toyota and, when the curtain came down on Toyota's rally programme in 1999, it brought to an end 25 years of continuous activity in the sport.

While it missed out on the Group B era (the rear-drive Celica TCT was a regular winner in Africa, but no match for its rivals on sprint-style events), Toyota Team Europe – as it became known – hit its purple patch in the early 1990s Group A era.

Successive Celicas won drivers' and manufacturers' titles, but it all went wrong

when the final incarnation of the Celica, the long-nose ST205 was found to have deviated from the rules concerning air intake restrictor: Toyota was disqualified from 1995 and banned for the following year.

When it returned with the Corolla WRC, Carlos Sainz came close to a third drivers' title with Toyota in 1998. The firm bowed out 12 months later.

VIEW FROM THE WORLD STAGE

JERRY WILLIAMS

"Toyota was a huge force for good in WRC"



What brilliant news. After 17 years, Toyota is heading back to the WRC. Just think: if we can keep hold of Citroen we'll have five active teams in 2017... a level not seen since 2006.

In the past, team boss Ove Andersson gave the championship huge support; not least with his total backing for the World Rally Teams Association. The WRTA was formed by the then *MN* rallies editor Mike Greasley, Richard Seth-Smith and others in the mid-1990s.

Andersson saw its value as a first attempt to match the power of motorsport's ruling body. Although eventually riven by internal rivalries, it showed the teams that together they could combat the FIA.

However, Toyota was much more than that. In the UK, it meant the Celica GT-Four, David Llewellyn, Phil Short and the Securicor-backed team run by Phil Collins.

In 1989 and 1990 they steamrolled the British Open Championship. The GT-Four was in a class of its own and Llewellyn, a shimmering young talent. I spent a lot of time around them and it truly was a happy little outfit.

The WRC was, of course, bigger business with soaring highs and deep lows for the Japanese team.

The cars were always good to watch, though. I remember seeing Hannu Mikkola on the 1977 RAC in the original Celica. We were walking in to Ceri, in mid-Wales when Hannu blatted past, all tweaked up, right front wheel cocked over a ditch: mighty impressive. One of the nicest moments was Didier Auriol's well-deserved title in 1994. Auriol always needed his car to work perfectly for him. But that year he totally gelled with the Celica, although on the RAC he was clearly driving for a finish.

Carlos Sainz was Toyota's most successful driver, with 42 podiums, including 15 wins. The team won four drivers' and three makes' titles and in Africa, seven Safaris and three Ivory Coasts. Bjorn Waldegard once told me he reckoned that all told he'd spent three years of his life in Kenya.

And the lows: well, you don't get much worse than the turbo cheating scandal of 1995 but for crushing heartbreak the 1998 RAC can't be beaten.

There were 400 yards to go on the final stage at Margam Park. Then Sainz would be champion. But standing at the stop line we were transfixed to see the Corolla suddenly erupt in a cloud of smoke as its engine blew. Tommi Makinen, who crashed early on, learned at the airport that he was champion.

Overall TTE was a huge force for good over 27 years in the sport.

Here's hoping they hit the ground running second time around.



Celica ST165s ran in 1989



Armin Schwarz in Celica ST205



AGREE/DISAGREE?
 mn.letters@haymarket.com

RALLY NEWS

IN BRIEF

Discounts for Cork

Overseas competitors can take advantage of a 100 euros (£75) voucher if they enter the March 14/15 West Cork Rally. The offer is open to the first 20 overseas crews that sign up. Regulations are available at corkmotorclub.com. The rally will be the second round of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship.

Awards evening

The annual Herefordshire Motor Club awards presentation will take place on Saturday, February 21 at the Three Counties Hotel in Hereford. *MN* columnist Howard Davies will compere the evening. Tickets are available for £25 each, contact Jim Lewis on 07527 653 675 for information.

Spectator bonus

The North West Stages will have a revised spectator special stage this weekend. The rally village opens at 1230hrs on Friday and the special stage, at Preston Riverside, begins at 1939hrs. The action continues through Saturday and finishes at 1800hrs at Norcalympia in Blackpool.

Somerset changes

The Somerset Stages will be based at the YMCA Beach Hotel rather than the Butlins centre as it has been in recent years. The rally will run on Saturday, April 18 and is a round a numerous championships, including the BTRDA Rally Series. A ceremonial start in Minehead is planned to take place on Friday evening.

Hyundai launches second WRC team

Hyundai's second World Rally Championship team will be present on every one of the 12 remaining rounds this year, after Hayden Paddon's programme was confirmed earlier this week.

The Kiwi will be joined in the renamed Hyundai Mobis World Rally Team on at least four events by Kevin Abbring and British co-driver Seb Marshall. No decision has been taken when Abbring will make his debut.

Team principal Michel Nandan said: "The new team will be headed up by Hayden and will run in parallel to the Hyundai Shell World Rally Team. We are also delighted to give our test driver Kevin the chance to take part in some WRC events this year. We currently plan for Kevin to take part in four events during 2015 in a fourth car, with a precise schedule still to be defined. While Thierry [Neuville] and Dani [Sordo] will rally for the Hyundai Shell WRT, as they did in Monte Carlo, the second team will allow some rising stars the chance to showcase their talent on a competitive stage."

DRIVERS STEP IN TO RESCUE MULL

Iconic rally is put on sure financial footing thanks to new deal



The Mull Rally is one of the biggest tests in the sport

By David Evans

Mull Rally competitors Ross and John Marshall have stepped in to safeguard the future of the Scottish island event after reading of its troubled financial future in *Motorsport News*.

Tunnock's backing of the Tobermory-based event ended last season, bringing into question the rally's future without a title sponsor. The Marshall family struck a deal with the event organisers,

which will carry their backing from the October 9-11 rally through until the 50th anniversary rally in 2019.

"We've always wanted to put more back into Scottish motorsport, and the opportunity to become title sponsor of the Mull Rally was one we couldn't ignore," said Ross Marshall, who guided his Ford Escort Mk2 to 23rd place from a 130-car field last year.

Marshall is a director of Beatsons Building Supplies, the new title sponsor of Mull.

Ross's father John added: "Mull's a fantastic place, and the rally ensures it becomes a Mecca for international rally drivers for one week every year. To be associated with it as a company is a privilege, and we look forward to helping the Mull Rally become even bigger and more successful."

Mull clerk of the course Iain Campbell said: "This gives us the financial backing to secure the future of the event. And, significantly for us, the support is coming from a motorsport

family, as both John and Ross Marshall have competed regularly on the event. As a firm they are not only looking after some of the economic worries that come with running such an iconic event, but they want to engage fully with the community through their Bobby Beatsons mascot."

Campbell is planning a revised route for this year, with more competitive mileage but fewer stages through the traditional two nights and one day format.

Internet broadcast set for NW Stages

The North West Stages will be broadcast live this weekend, in what is believed to be a first for club rallying.

Footage of the Blackpool event, run over Friday and Saturday, will be broadcast live on a website. Viewers will have to pay a one-off fee of £5 to watch the action.

"The technology involves an Outside Broadcast Unit linked with a series of stage-side cameras, probably five," said a spokesman.

"Friday's coverage will be the TRAX Stage at Preston whilst Saturday's will be from Fleetwood Waterfront.

"It's not cheap to do this but we wanted to do something different and we have a history of being trendsetters. We were first to have an indoor parc ferme and the first to have a rally village concept."

The rally will be broadcast on amgtv.co.uk.

Rally Poland won't cross the border

This year's Rally Poland will feature a heavily revised route – and won't be crossing the border to Lithuania – following criticism of last year's event.

Last year, drivers were angered at a 250-mile round trip to Druskininkai, Lithuania, which netted just 18 of the intended 55 competitive miles after two stages had to be cancelled because the road surface was too soft.

Clerk of the course Jaroslaw Noworol said: "The schedule is arranged [so] that there are no stages run in the dark. Last year's stages, in most cases, appealed to drivers, fans and media, but we paid attention to their suggestions and opinions.

"This year's rally will be held in Poland solely. The route has undergone big changes and only the super special at the Mikolajki Arena will have the same course as last season. In other cases, we use well-known pieces of special stages, tests run in the opposite direction or sections used many years ago, but not in the World Rally Championship. There will also be completely new special stages, among which there will be the longest one in the rally."

The route for 2015 is 90 per cent new and runs to 206 competitive miles. Friday will provide a tough opener, with 100 competitive miles, more than half of which comes courtesy of a brace of runs at the event's 26-mile longest stage – which is also the longest stage ever run in Polish rally history.



Photo: subaru.com/rally

David Higgins began his Rally America title defence with an emphatic win on last weekend's Sno*Drift Rally in Atlanta. Higgins and co-driver Craig Drew guided their all-new Subaru Impreza WRX to a nine-minute victory over the older version of Nick Roberts

British ace Ingram ready for Latvia ERC

Peugeot UK star Chris Ingram gets his European Rally Championship challenge underway in Latvia this week.

The 20-year-old drives a Peugeot UK-backed 208 R2 on the Rally Liepaja, where he will face up to 15 ERC Junior rivals.

With full backing from the Coventry-based firm, Ingram is determined to make the most out of the year ahead.

He said: "We believe we have a very strong chance of success in the European Junior Rally Championship this year, after gaining valuable experience last year and having the perfect car and team for this year's battle. We are going in to this with the objective of winning it, sure in the knowledge we have a really

good chance, and I am delighted to have Peugeot UK behind me."

Ingram is quick to admit a second outing in Latvia is a different proposition to his home round of the WRC, where he won his class by two minutes.

"It will be a huge challenge in Latvia, we'll be up against many Scandinavian and Baltic snow-driving experts," he said. "However, after the strong result on Rally GB last year, we are confident that we'll give our rivals a run for their money."

Fellow Peugeot driver Craig Breen is chasing his first win in Latvia, having finished on the podium on this event for the last two years. The event includes 12, usually snow covered stages and finishes on Sunday evening.

HISTORIC CHAMP MATTHEW ROBINSON ON HIS R.A.C. WIN

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The Strength of Experience



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**GALWAY
PREVIEW**

'Stokes was unable to stop the charge of Pritchard'
Red Kite historic rallying report, p22

Photos: Roy Dempster and Jakob Ebrey



RAFTERY LANDS DREAM MINI DRIVE ON GALWAY



Raftery will get to grips with a WRC-spec Mini



Raftery: big chance

Billy Coleman Young Driver of the Year Dean Raftery says making his debut in a World Rally Car on this weekend's Galway International Rally will be a key moment in his career.

The 23-year-old campaigned a Ford Fiesta R2 in last year's British Rally Championship and will drive a Mini this

weekend. Five-time Tarmac champion Eugene Donnelly will pilot a second Mini WRC on the rally.

"Eugene is a legend on the Irish roads and I'm sure I can learn a lot from him both before and during the event," said Raftery. "It'll provide a great benchmark to judge my stage

times by, but I will certainly be driving my own event, at least for the first few stages."

Raftery's drive is part of the prize for winning the Motorsport Ireland Young Driver of the Year Award. "This is such a fantastic opportunity on my home event in front of my home crowd," he said.

"What an incredible car to compete in. It will be a unique driving experience compared to the Fiesta but hopefully I can adapt to the power. McGeehan Motorsport is running the car and we should be able to fit a test in so I can get a feel for it."

Raftery will be co-driven on the event by Mark Kane.



Jennings thinks that he will battle at the front

Jennings targets victory despite a lack of Subaru seat time

Former Irish Tarmac Rally champion Garry Jennings believes he will be on the pace for this season's opening round despite having only competed once since August.

The new season begins with the Galway International Rally this weekend. Jennings was second in last year's ITRC and

has only competed on the Turkey Run Rally, in December, since the final round of 2014.

"I'm pretty confident that we'll be on the pace of the guys at the front when things get going," he said. "Last year a mistake [hitting water and spinning on stage eight] cost us victory. Up until that point

there wasn't much separating me or Declan [Boyle]."

Jennings stopped short of committing to the whole series but has lauded the category: "It's hard to get away from doing these rallies. It's hard to beat the Irish Tarmac Championship in my opinion. It's the premier series in Irish rallying."

Route change to help Galway Rally

Organisers of the Galway International Rally will run a varied route in a bid to avoid the flooding problems that hampered the 2014 event.

The rally takes place this weekend and is the opening round of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship.

"Last year will go down in history - much like 1988 did - for being the year of the floods," said clerk of the course Kieran Donohue. "This led to stages being shortened and caused problems for spectators as roads were flooded."

Some parts of the route have been moved to higher ground. "There is always a dry stone wall waiting for a competitor who gets out of line," said spokesman Sean Hassett. "Crews can expect the best roads that County Galway has to offer, meaning a mix of fast, flowing, tight and twisty mountain stages."

Interest in the rally has been strong, with reigning ITRC champion Declan Boyle topping the entries.

Garry Jennings, the 2013 champion, is the number two seed and multiple champion Eugene Donnelly is at number three.

Moffett ready to make Fiesta WRC impact on challenging event

Double Production Class champion Josh Moffett will debut his Ford Fiesta WRC on this weekend's Galway International Rally.

Moffett won back-to-back Production titles in the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship in a Mitsubishi Lancer E9 and has recently purchased the ex-Craig Breen car. He and co-driver John Rowan won the Sligo Stages in a similar car last year in a one-off outing.

"There is only so much you

can find out about a car during a test," said Rowan. "When you're in a rally you cover more miles on a stage where grip levels are changing and the speeds tend to be higher."

Rowan said the quality of the Galway field means they will shift their attention away from setting fastest times: "Galway is the kind of place where things can go wrong so it will be safety first for us. We want to get as much mileage as we can before the Circuit of Ireland in April."



Moffett wants experience

KEEPING AN EYE ON IRELAND

BRIAN PATTERSON

"The Galway has gained a decent entry"



It is all stations go this week for the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship. The opening Galway Rally is this weekend and the details of round two, the Clonakilty-based St Patrick's weekend West Cork Rally, have been released.

There was a fear that West Cork, which has been incorporated into the Irish Tarmac series for the first time, would affect the Galway entry.

This doesn't appear to be the case. Just a few weeks after West Cork, the third round of the Tarmac is the Circuit of Ireland. Not too long after that is the Killarney Rally of the Lakes. Now all these rallies are tough, two-day special stage events, and all Tarmac championship counters.

For a privateer, such as 2013 Tarmac champion Garry Jennings, the budget and time commitment is very high. Some would say too high. Fortunately, this weekend's Galway has received a decent entry, with a great top 10 and over 70 crews, which is something similar to last year. So perhaps the extra round, West Cork, is not having such an effect.

It is particularly good to see Billy Coleman Award winner Dean Raftery getting the opportunity to join five times Tarmac champion Eugene Donnelly in a two car Colm Quinn BMW Mini WRC team in the Galway entry. This will be a massive step up for 23-year-old Galway man Dean. Winning the Billy Coleman Award will not have done any harm in helping him get the drive.

Dean was to go testing the car towards the end of last week, but snow put paid to that. This will certainly be a big step for the R2 British champion, whereas his team-mate Eugene Donnelly has had a fair bit of experience in the car, sometimes not exactly to plan.

Last season Eugene uncharacteristically went off the road - twice. Of course, drivers such as Eugene and Sam Moffett that are in the new breed of 1600cc WRCs have to drive very hard to match the Subarus. That's because their WR Cars have to run with 33mm restrictors.

Just how much of the quality entry in Galway will be carried over to West Cork, we must wait and see. The Cork club is making a big effort to attract crews, with all sorts of vouchers from the Clonakilty Chamber of Commerce to help encourage entries, particularly from overseas crews.

In West Cork's heyday, when it was a round of the MN Championship, the number of competitors from outside Ireland was remarkable. Back in 1981 the late Tony Pond, with Ronan Morgan co-driving, won the rally in a Chevette. Tony won the Manx too.

On watching a Barrie Hinchliffe film of the 1981 Manx Rally recently, it was a reminder of not only how good the coverage was, more like a feature film, but how natural and amusing the interviews with the drivers were. Not like this modern day corporate speak at all. Walter Rohrl was contesting that rally, and he was brilliant. However his Porsche snapped a driveshaft at the Mines cattle grid, within sight of the finish. It was a reminder that 'every force has an equal and opposite force'. But this was one equation the Porsche engineers didn't get right.

The only Porsches we will see on the Galway will be in the Historics. Wouldn't it be great to see a couple of the new 911 R-GTs in the field - and perhaps recapture some of that Hinchliffe magic.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

BRITS AT DAYTONA

THE GREAT AMERICAN ADVENTURE



Several Britons took the chance to sample the Daytona 24 hour challenge. By **Edd St**

PHIL KEEN TEAM: ACTION EXPRESS CAR: COYOTE-CHEVROLET CORVETTE DP
RESULT: 6TH

Phil Keen has been a regular in a variety of sportscar machinery at both domestic and international level over the years. But thanks to winning the Sunoco Whelan Challenge, the 31-year-old had the chance to make his Daytona debut in the Coyote DP run by last year's winner, Action Express Racing. Having earned the prize drive by winning the 2014 Radical SR3 Challenge, he grabbed his opportunity with both hands.

On his first experience of the car

during testing in December, Keen stunned the team with how quickly he got down to a frontrunning race pace. And he continued to make a big impression during the 24 Hours itself.

"It's very much like a big GT car with carbon brakes," says Keen of the Chevrolet Corvette-engined machine. "It doesn't run a lot of aero because they take the diffuser and usual floor off for Daytona. It's got some aero but not as much as it would have. If it had the full aero package, maybe it would

have been a bit more of a learning curve, but I seemed to gel with the car quite easily."

Keen went into the race with a little over 50 laps of experience in the Coyote. He ended up going fourth in the driver rotation, after Max Papis, Eric Curran and Dane Cameron. By that time, the car had lost 17 laps thanks to a change of torsion bar early on. But Keen was the fastest driver on track on multiple laps during his first stint.

The car, with Keen at the wheel,

recovered to seventh by the finish, which became sixth when the third-placed Wayne Taylor Racing machine was penalised. It's no exaggeration to say that Keen, who was a high-profile figure throughout the weekend thanks to the promotion of the Sunoco Whelan Challenge, had ensured his name will be in the minds of any team owner needing a driver in the future.

"Yeah, but there are loads of drivers out there who can do the times," says Keen, being excessively modest about

an outstanding performance. "It's just a case of staying out of trouble, doing a good job and see what happens. Top of the to-do list was not damage the car. You can take risks, but you don't take big risks because we were never going to make up 17 laps. It was one of my favourite races. I can't thank everyone who has helped me get here enough."

As for Action Express, everyone was impressed. One team member mentioned their disappointment Keen wouldn't be there for the rest of 2015...

The entry list for the recent Daytona 24 Hours was littered with British drivers. And they were very much to the fore in the endurance classic.

Not only did Tom Kimber-Smith win the Prototype Challenge class, but Richard Westbrook finished third overall, and Oliver Gavin (GTLM) and Johnny Mowlem (Prototype Challenge) claimed pole positions in their classes. Here's how five of the British drivers fared at Daytona. Their stories range from the triumphant to the disastrous, and everything in between.



le
raw



... grabbed Sunoco prize drive



ANDY MEYRICK TEAM: DELTAWING RACING CAR: DELTAWING-ELAN/MAZDA DWC13 RESULT: 53RD

The distinctive DeltaWing was rapid during pre-event testing and, despite gearbox problems that ruined its practice running prior to qualifying, ex-British F3 racer Andy Meyrick put the car fifth on the grid, just 0.431s off pole. Hopes were high that the lightweight car, in the prototype class despite running outside the regs, could fight for a real result.

But it wasn't to be. Early on, Meyrick overtook the reigning champion Action Express Racing Coyote-Chevrolet DP of Joao Barbosa before challenging Scott Pruett for third place, although a puncture forced a first pit stop earlier than scheduled. Then

the gearbox started to play up. After only 42 laps, he pulled off the track with a terminal gearbox problem that put the car out of the race long before team-mates Katherine Legge, Memo Rojas and Gabby Chaves could get in.

But while the DeltaWing was classified last, there are signs of real progress.

"Last year finished strongly with Petit Le Mans as the pace has always been there, but there was the reliability to get through a 10-hour race," says Meyrick, now in his third year in the car although only slated for occasional drives while he focuses on Bentley GT outings. "There have been a lot of

changes over the winter and the new gearbox should have helped. But Daytona is a tough ask, especially with new parts."

The DeltaWing was spectacular, although it is a far more comfortable car to drive than it once was. "It has a nice feel," says Meyrick. "In the early days, that was one of the negatives in that the work rate inside the car was high. You really had to hustle it to get it to turn-in. And because you didn't have such a big front-tyre contact patch, some drivers struggled with feel when loading up the fronts and turning in. Now, it isn't conventional exactly, but it is predictable and it didn't used to be."



DeltaWing had gearbox trouble



TOM KIMBER-SMITH TEAM: PR1/MATHIASEN CAR: ORECA-CHEVROLET FLM 09 RESULT: 8TH OVERALL, 1ST IN PROTOTYPE CHALLENGE CLASS

"We got taken out on lap one by another car and then lost the oil lines early on. We got the car back, stuck oil in it, fired it up and looked at the data. We saw the engine was bad, but not catastrophic, and thought let's see how far we got and worked our way through the field from there.

"Losing oil pressure might have done something to the power steering, because we got power steering fade early on, then in hour 13 it stopped. But other teams had problems, more severe than ours, so we got back up to

second. I got in 2h 40m from the end and my job was to hunt down leader Colin Braun. I knew bringing it down would put the pressure on and he made a mistake overtaking a DP, which led to him crashing. Ten minutes before, I was there to get second as there was no way I could make up 45 seconds in 20 minutes. It's not nice to see a car on fire, but I'd definitely take it to get the win!

"The Prototype Challenge car [the ORECA-Chevrolet FLM 09 used for Formula Le Mans in Europe] is hard to drive and all the cars in the class are

identical, so the driver can shine. The engine spec changed this year to make us go quicker, but we were actually slower on the straights. To overtake GT cars was impossible, but once you are out of traffic they are challenging to drive even though they are not as sophisticated as an LMP2 car.

"I've got absolutely nothing else planned this year and wasn't supposed to be doing Daytona until the last minute, so it's a good start to the year. Hopefully I can build from there, particularly for Le Mans."



Kimber-Smith climbed up the pack



NICK TANDY TEAM: CORE AUTOSPORT CAR: PORSCHE 911 RSR RESULT: 27TH OVERALL, 5TH IN GTLM CLASS

When Nick Tandy was at school in Bedfordshire, a local racing driver paid a visit to his school and became something of an inspiration. At Daytona this year, they found themselves dicing for the lead.

"Olly [Gavin] came to my school when I was about eight years old, before I'd even started driving," says Tandy. "I wanted to race and because we were from the next villages, with what he has achieved, especially in America with Corvette in GT Racing, he is my hero! I'll quite happily say that.

"It's good to have guys like Olly and Darren Turner who you can relate to that have had a lasting professional career. And people know how the guys

from Britain operate, so you are more accepted when you come over here."

Tandy, of course, has already made a huge name for himself in sportscar racing. He won the GTLM class at Daytona in 2014 and there's every possibility he will be driving an LMP1 Porsche at Le Mans this year after strong performances in testing. It seemed this would be a more low-key race for him after struggling in qualifying with the pace of the Porsche – he was the fastest of them but down in eighth in class with what he reckoned was a strong lap. Meanwhile, Gavin claimed pole, a turnaround in form after the Corvette had been given weight and restrictor rule breaks.

"We came into the weekend thinking we were somewhere in and around the pace, but we didn't think we had the pace to get pole," says Gavin. "I went out of the pits behind Jan [Magnussen, team-mate] and everything seemed to fall into place. I got the perfect tow from him when the tyres were at their peak."

Tandy drove a storming first stint to challenge Gavin, but neither were in contention come the end of the race. While Gavin's Corvette dropped out of the lead battle with damaged bodywork, Tandy's Porsche was collected by the spinning sister machine of Earl Bamber, who had got onto the grass and lost control. Gavin ended up third and Tandy was down in fifth.



Tandy was slowed down by contact



RORY BUTCHER TEAM: GB AUTOSPORT CAR: PORSCHE 911 RESULT: 21ST OVERALL, 7TH IN GT DAYTONA CLASS

Twenty-seven year old Rory Butcher was following the progress of the Porsche he shared with Damien Faulkner, Kuba Giermaziak, Mike Skeen and Michael Avenatti early in the race. "I was watching on the GPS screen and saw the dot as Damien crossed start/finish," says Butcher. "I heard him come past and then I heard screeching and spinning and thought 'oh no'."

Any concerns Butcher, an experienced hand in both British GT and the Porsche Carrera Cup GB and making his Daytona debut, had that his race might be over before it had begun paled in comparison to what Faulkner felt when he spun on fluid deposited by

the failing DeltaWing. The Irishman lost the rear of the 911 at the fast approach to the left-hander that takes the cars from the banking onto the infield, clattering cones and damaging bodywork on his way. "It was the biggest spin I've ever had," said Faulkner. "We were lucky to survive because at 185mph, I put my foot on the brake and the car just went sideways."

The car continued with damage to the door and rear quarter-panel so Butcher did get to take over the 911 later. Not only did his pace stack up well in a line-up featuring several well-respected Porsche specialists, but he even had the chance to lead the GTD class for a time. "The first stint was frantic," he says.

"It was key that I stayed on the lead lap so I had to push on cold tyres. At one point, with the pit stops, we ended up leading, which was really cool."

Any hope of a good result ended when the car later suffered a blowout that damaged the front bumper and radiator, costing 12 laps. But Butcher kept his head down when he took over the delayed car again and showed he could cut it.

"I approached the team at the end of last year and made sure my name was in place if any opportunities came up," he says. "There are only so many chances in Europe and it's good to get my foot in the door in the United States."



A tyre failure cost Butcher time

HISTORIC RALLYING: RED KITE RALLY

Five drivers go head-to-head in a dramatic showdown. By **Paul Lawrence**

IN BRIEF

Rich-ly rewarded

On the driver's first gravel rally for 25 years, Philip Harris and Alan Walker were delighted to get Phil's immaculate Mini Cooper to the finish and claim class B2 spoils. After a similar time away from rallying Malcolm Rich, with co-driver Jonathan Hawkins, had a mighty run in his Ford Anglia to win class B3.

Lotus position

Paul Mankin and Desmond Bell survived to win class B4 in their Lotus Cortina, but a time-consuming first stage off left them no chance to rival Category 1 winner Rikki Proffitt and supersub co-driver Graham Wild (Porsche 911). "Absolutely fantastic," said Proffitt. "We couldn't have gone much quicker this morning without going off."

Fighting finish

Class C2 featured a tremendous battle as Dave Watkins/Thomas Jordan (Ford Escort Mk1) fought to claw back 40s lost to Robin Shuttleworth/Ronnie Roughead on the first stage. Watkins emerged from the final Cao test with a 10s margin. In class C3, Phil Jobson/Arwel Jenkins (Ford Escort Mk1) spent the day struggling to find gears but still managed to win the class.

Ice barrier

First on the road was a tough call in the ice for Chris Skill and Garry Middleton in their Ford Escort Mk2, but they kept it going to win class D2. "It was a lot of fun, but very tricky," said Skill.

Strong performance

One of the drives of the rally came from Pinto-powered Ben Friend and Sean Kennedy in their Ford Escort Mk2. They were an outstanding sixth fastest overall on the opening stage. "The ice was a good power leveller," said the rapid young East Anglian driver.

R.A.C. update

In the concurrent classes for the WWRS R.A.C. Championship, Ian Beveridge and Paul Price had a great run to win Category 1 in Beveridge's venerable Volvo PV544. An inspired call to fit some Russian remould tyres for Crychan reaped dividends. "We just then had to keep our noses clean," said Beveridge.

Cariss returns

R.A.C. victory in Category 2 was more than Stuart and Linda Cariss (Ford Escort Mk1) had hoped for, on what was purely a shakedown for a car rebuilt after a big accident in Greystoke last July. Will Midgley/Geoff Maybank (Toyota Corolla) were sole Category 4 runners, but had a decent day's sport.

First victory

In the R.A.C. Open Category, Phil Burton and Mal Capstick took a first win in their Ford Escort Mk2 after a two-year lay-off from competing. Barry Stevenson-Wheeler/John Pickavance (Escort Mk2) and Layton Waters/Kevin Bowcott (Toyota Starlet) were the closest rivals.

Flying in

Jason Pritchard rushed back from South Africa in time for the Red Kite, having spent the previous week working with the Viking Motorsport team on the Classic Rally South Africa. He landed at Heathrow at 0615hrs on Saturday and was in Llandoverly in time to sign-on later that afternoon. He spent some of the flight watching the in-car DVD of the stage.

LAST-GASP WIN FOR PRITCHARD



Pritchard took win as Stokes (inset) fell to fourth at end

The plot for the opening round of the Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship had drama, tension and a thrilling conclusion as Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke drove an incredible final stage to jump from fourth to first in the space of nine miles.

A stellar entry assembled in Llandoverly for the first round of the championship and the weather threw a massive curveball at the crews as Sunday morning dawned. Crychan forest had frozen hard and a dusting of snow made it even more challenging.

The uphill approach to the second stage, Crychan South, was too much for

the marshals and safety crews, so only Crychan North ran on the first loop. Two visits to the magnificent Cao stage were interspersed by another lap of Crychan, this time taking in a shortened version of Crychan South as conditions improved notably when the sun dragged the ambient temperature above freezing.

The first stage was all about keeping it on the track and road conditions did improve a little as the cars broke through the ice. First to show his hand was Daniel 'Lwni' Jones and co-driver Kevin Lewis as Jones lost his BDG cherry by going an amazing 11s faster than anyone else. Right up there on pace were Meirion Evans/Steffan Evans and David Stokes/Guy Weaver, with Stokes using four decades of experience to very good effect.



Paul Mankin and Desmond Bell took B4 despite a stage one excursion

However, that opening stage was not good to everyone. Nick Elliott/Dave Price had the wrong tyres and dropped a minute, while Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis weren't much happier. "Couldn't get into the swing of it," reported Robinson.

Neither did 15th place and 40 seconds down on the lead after one ice-covered stage seem to be the foundation of a victory for Pritchard. "That was some of the toughest conditions I've ever rallied on," admitted Pritchard after eight miles of dancing on ice.

Meirion Evans set the pace in Cao, where icy patches lurked to catch the inattentive, and took the lead from team-mate Jones. However, neither crew was destined to finish. Jones went out with gearbox problems after an impressive debut at this level and Evans frustratingly slid off in the second run of Crychan North.

The second lap of Crychan offered far better road conditions and set-up an absolute nail-biter of a finish. As crews returned to Llandoverly from Crychan, Stokes' consistently strong pace had put him into a slim five-second lead. But a gaggle of contenders were circling like the Red Kites over the service area as the rally headed back to Cao for a final nine-mile charge.

Despite a spin and stall in Crychan North 2, Richard Hill and Iwan Jones were now second, only 5s down on Stokes. Two seconds behind Hill was another pensioner; this time Terry Brown with Den Golding on the notes. Somehow, despite losing third gear, Brown had fought right into contention

but, in turn, Pritchard had made up 11 places to hold fourth, 5s down on Brown and 12s shy of Stokes. Fifteen down on Pritchard was Robinson, up from 28th place in three stages.

Stokes has been around far too long to crack under pressure, but he knew it was a big ask and, sure enough, it was Pritchard who set Cao alight to make the pace and shoot into a 4s victory over Hill. Brown bumped his old mucker Stokes back to fourth, while Robinson matched Pritchard's Cao time to get within 3s of Stokes. It was one of the most dramatic stages in a decade of historic rallying.

"We got a bit of confidence in the conditions and we were just in the comfort zone," said Pritchard after a perfect start to his BHRC title bid. "Today was all about finishing and getting some points: I think they've all got a screw loose for driving at that pace this morning," he added.

"Ten out of ten to Jason for that performance," said Hill, who was content with a solid start. "Not too bad for an old guy," said Brown with a grin after a fantastic performance against drivers four decades his junior.

Stokes, too, had struck a blow for the more senior drivers as a mere 66 year old. "If it had stayed icy we'd have been okay," he said.

Robinson and Collis were much happier by the finish after a strong second half. They knew how icy it was early on, as Collis got out to check tyre pressures before the first stage and fell over on the ice.

Rounding out the top six was another

'Hill made a solid start to his season'
Runner up is happy, below



Photos: Writtle Photographic



STAGE WINNERS

- SS1, Crychan North**
Daniel Jones/ Kevin Lewis
(Ford Escort Mk2) 10m 09s
- SS2, Crychan South**
Cancelled
- SS3, Cao** Meirion Evans/
Steffan Evans (Escort RS) 9m 28s
- SS4, Crychan North**
Jason Pritchard/ Phil Clarke (Escort Mk2) 8m 45s
- SS5, Crychan South**
Peter Smith/ Patrick Walsh
(Opel Kadett), Neil Williams/
Peter James (Ford Escort RS1800),
Arwel Lloyd-Jones/ Harold
Jones (Escort Mk2) 2m 21s
- SS6, Cao**
Pritchard/ Clarke, Matthew
Robinson/ Sam Collis
(Escort Mk2) 8m 45s

RESULTS

MSA British Historic Rally Championship, round one of nine, Red Kite Stages, Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, February 1

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Jason Pritchard/Phil Clarke	Ford Escort Mk2	40m 39s
2	Richard Hill/Iwan Jones	Ford Escort Mk2	+4s
3	Terry Brown/Den Golding	Ford Escort Mk2	+7s
4	David Stokes/Guy Weaver	Ford Escort Mk1	+12s
5	Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis	Ford Escort Mk2	+15s
6	Rudi Lancaster/George Gwynn	Ford Escort Mk2	+39s
7	Nick Elliott/Dave Price	Ford Escort Mk2	+42s
8	Ben Llewelin/Ross Whittock	Ford Escort Mk2	+51s
9	Rupert Lomax/Rich Jones	Ford Escort Mk1	+52s
10	Peter Smith/Patrick Walsh	Opel Kadett	+1 m 08s

Classes: Philip Harris/Alan Walker (Mini Cooper); Malcolm Rich/Jonathan Hawkins (Ford Anglia); Paul Mankin/Desmond Bell (Lotus Cortina); Rikki Proffitt/Graham Wild (Porsche 911); Dave Watkins/Thomas Jordan (Ford Escort Mk1); Phil Jobson/Arwel Jenkins (Ford Escort Mk1); Stokes/Weaver; Chris Skill/Garry Middleton (Ford Escort Mk2); Ben Friend/Sean Kennedy (Ford Escort Mk2); Hill/Jones; Will Midgley/Geoff Maybank (Toyota Corolla); Pritchard/Clarke; Ian Beveridge/Paul Price (Volvo PV544); Stuart Cariss/Linda Cariss (Ford Escort Mk1); Philip Burton/Mal Capstick (Ford Escort Mk2).

STAR OF THE RALLY



Terry Brown missed overall victory by just seven seconds after a stunning drive that belied his 72 years. Incredibly, he did it without third gear, which went missing on the opening stage. Co-driver Den Golding reckoned that struggling between second and fourth on the long climb in Cao cost them the rally

Impreza win for ace Melvyn Evans

MODERN

The modern Red Kite was an ideal time for a Wydean Stages shakedown and that was true for the top three cars. In the case of winners Melvyn Evans/Mark Glennerster; they were shaking down the Subaru Impreza WRC hire car that Theo Bengry will use in two weeks' time.

This rare four-wheel-drive gravel outing for asphalt ace Evans didn't start so well on the ice of Crychan. "We spun twice and thought about going home at that point," he said. However, once settled down, the pace was bang on and they duly won by 16 seconds over Charlie Payne/Carl Williamson (Ford Fiesta WRC).

On Payne's third rally in the car, he was a bit cautious as he limbered up for the Wydean, while Williamson arrived hot foot from Manchester airport and a flight back from the Classic Rally South Africa.

Russ Thompson and Andy Murphy completed the top three overall in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9, another car being fettled for

the Wydean. Their day soon improved after a spin on the first corner and they finished the rally with 16s in hand over the Subaru Impreza of Dylan Davies/Llion Williams.

Just getting to the rally was an achievement for Australian-based Irishman Pauric Duffy and co-driver Kevin Glynn with their Fiesta R5. When Saturday's Donegal Forest Rally was cancelled, they travelled all night and found the only ferry operating to get to the Red Kite in time for a shakedown run ahead of the Galway Rally. They arrived at the start at 0700hrs Sunday morning and duly took fifth on Duffy's second ever gravel rally.

Best of the two-wheel drives was an impressive performance from Max Utting and co-driver Mike Ainsworth in their Ford Fiesta ST. "Excellent day and a bit of a giant-killing performance," said Utting junior. Things were not so good for his dad Wug, however, who rolled his Subaru Impreza out on the first Crychan stage.



Melvyn Evans won the Red Kite Modern section in rare gravel run



First non-Escort was Peter Smith and Patrick Walsh in their Opel Kadett

quietly impressive performance from returnee Rudi Lancaster and new co-driver George Gwynn. Three spins on the first Crychan stage had not been such a good start, but it all gelled very well as the day progressed. One place and three seconds behind his Peugeot Challenge rival of 20 years ago was Elliott in seventh, ruing a puncture and an off on the first stage. That stage aside, he was right on the money for his first Red Kite finish for three years.

Young Ben Llewelin, co-driven by fellow youngster Ross Whittock, showed commendable restraint in alien conditions to take eighth overall, just one second up on returnee Rupert Lomax and new co-driver Rich Jones. Lomax was back in his Escort Mk1 after two years away and the ice-bound Crychan was not an ideal shakedown.

Rounding out the top 10, and the only non-Escort at the sharp end, were Peter Smith and Patrick Walsh in their Opel Kadett. A spin on the first corner of the rally wasn't a great start, but after that their pace was excellent.

Just outside the top 10, in what is shaping up for the best class C5 battles for many years, John Perrott/Keaton Williams, Ernie and Will Graham and Warren Philliskirk/Nigel Hutchinson were split by just two seconds, with Perrott grabbing the place on the final stage.

Finally, Mark Holmes and Craig Simkiss started their class C5 Escort towards the tail of the field and deserved better than gearbox failure after being second fastest on the opening stage. ■

NEXT RALLY

Can David Stokes bag a win when the BHRC hits Wales?

MID WALES STAGES MARCH 1

MATTHEW ROBINSON

Photos: Paul Lawrence

MK2 MAESTRO



Ford Escort ace Matthew Robinson has taken historic rallying by storm over the past few years

BY PAUL LAWRENCE
HISTORICS EDITOR

In just four seasons, Matthew Robinson has established himself as one of the leading drivers in UK historic rallying.

For the man who won the BTRDA Silver Star title and the Roger Albert Clark Rally in 2014, it has been a meteoric rise to the head of the sport. But unlike many of his rivals, he has not been rallying since he was a teenager. He was a 37-year-old businessman when he took up the sport in 2010.

"I got to know Baz Jordan through work and I knew he did some rallying," says Robinson. "But some of the local guys from Ripon talked me into getting a car and doing the local event."

Typically, he didn't do things in half measures. "We went straight into a 2.5-litre Millington-engined Escort Mk2 on a snowy Riponian Rally in 2010 and, amazingly, I never crashed it! I think I finished about 20th with a two-minute road penalty. I was pretty happy with that. Since then we've tried to get a lot of seat time."

The early seasons were peppered with some hefty accidents, including a car-wrecking roll in Hamsterley in April 2013. But all the time the pace was coming, and being able to do a fair number of events helped accelerate the learning curve for him and co-driver Sam Collis. "We always said we'd never get on Nick Elliott's pace. But then it started coming together and we thought maybe we could," says Robinson. "I'm competitive but I'm not a bad loser. When we compete with Steve Bannister in our neck of the woods, if he wins I'm the first to pat him on the back."

PROFILE

Matthew Robinson

Age: 32 **Lives:** Ripon, North Yorkshire
2014: BTRDA Historic Cup winner; BTRDA Silver Star winner; R.A.C. Rally winner, 21st on Rally GB National in Ford Fiesta RS2000
2013: BTRDA Silver Star winner
2012: BTRDA Silver Star winner
2011: Runs Subaru Impreza, before switching back to Ford Escort Mk2
2010: Makes rally debut in Ford Escort Mk2

The 2013 Roger Albert Clark Rally demonstrated his pace as he chased Bannister until rolling out in Kielder on Saturday afternoon at the same bend that claimed Jason Pritchard.

That made him even more determined and it all came together last season. A first target was the BTRDA Historic Cup and such was his pace that he also dominated the Silver Star category for all two-wheel drives. In fact, mid-season he was at the head of the top-level Gold Star standings against the best of the four-wheel drives before ending the season in sixth place.

The year was wrapped up with victory on the Roger Albert Clark Rally (see sidebar) as Robinson and regular co-driver Collis set a searing pace.

In between the Escort campaigns, Robinson tried his hand with a modern 4WD Fiesta but the jury is still out on future plans for that car. "We're considering options," he admits. "But I want to keep having fun in the Escort."

What is certain is that the first target for 2015 is the MSA British Historic Rally Championship. "I'd really like to be British Historic Rally champion," he says.

With probably the strongest line-up in the history of the BHRC, Robinson could not have picked a tougher season for a serious assault. But that just adds to the appeal: "We're nearly there to give the

boys a proper chase. I don't feel that I'm totally finished yet and I'm still looking for another half a second a mile. I've been watching some DVDs and even on the Roger Albert there could have been some more to come."

He's making a big commitment to the championship and has pledged to spend more time preparing for rallies and watching DVDs of the stages than ever before. "We'll try our hardest," he promises. "It's not my style and I don't normally look at the DVDs. I'd rather have a laminated map through the window as we pull up to the stage start!"

Such is his desire to win the prestigious British title that Robinson will even consider rallying on asphalt for the Harry Flatters and Isle of Man events in the summer. For a man who runs a business ripping up asphalt, he has little experience of sealed surfaces.

"I'm useless on Tarmac," he admits. "I'm not really into Tarmac so much, but if it comes down to it and I have to go to try and score some points, then I'll have to go. You have to do Croft on the R.A.C. and I pretty much understeered all the way round."

"If we could be British champion in the next two years and win the Silver Fern [in New Zealand] as well as the R.A.C. again, I'd settle for that. We're meant to be on for a Fiat 131 and I'd love to take one to the Silver Fern Rally in 2016," he says.

His Escort is built and prepared by Rally Sport Developments, the business behind the Fiat project. However, Robinson says that work must come first as it pays for the rallying. Robinson Road Planning is a full-on operation, with crews often working through the night on major road projects. "The trouble is finding the time to prepare because work is busy 24-7. The phone rings all the way to the rallies. The only time it doesn't ring is when we put it on silent in a bag on the rally."

How Robinson and Collis won the R.A.C. Rally

Last November, Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis won the Roger Albert Clark Rally.

They battled hard with Matt Edwards and Paul Morris and took the win when Edwards was excluded after the event.

"We started on Friday night and wanted to set the pace early on," says Robinson. "But we got stuck behind Nick Elliott in the fog. That spoilt our plans. We'd not got a good track record on the R.A.C., but we knuckled down and we calmed down."

"I don't class myself as being good in the dark, but everything in the daylight on Saturday was pretty good and we beat the bogey through Whitehill. But as soon as it got dark, things started to go pear-shaped. We had a gearbox change before Kershope. The guys did it in 18 minutes on the road section as well as putting the lights on and changing the alternator. The throttle had been sticking as well and I struggled a little bit in Kershope with it. Then we went across the road into Ash Park

and I struggled even more. We finally got to the bottom of it: the linkage was pulling against the carburettor and making the linkage jam. The conditions were tricky again on Saturday night with fog.

"We went past Matt after he'd spun in Kershope, so we thought that was a little bit of payback for the time we lost on Friday night. I was kind of hoping he was going to be in that ditch for a little bit longer. We were slow through the second Shepherdshield with the throttle jamming and I was glad to get out of the night stages and get back to Sunderland."

"Sunday had some of the best stages I've ever done. The set up of what Colin Heppenstall gave us to rally on could not have been any better. It started well in Harwood and then we went and set fastest time on the last three stages. There's one thing for sure: we'll be back next year with more events under our belt. I'd love to get Steve Bannister back out next year."



Victory came after disqualification for rival Edwards

HISTORICS

'Gareth Lloyd will kick off his 2015 season'

Escort man's Galway run, below

Photos: LAT archive, Gary Hawkins



DOWN THE PUB WITH

RUDI LANCASTER

Age: 50 Lives: Woolacombe, Devon
Newcomer to historic rallying

He's had a long break from rallying

"It's a mid-life crisis. I was away for 20 years, since Rally GB in 1994. I stopped to concentrate on family and business but now my youngest son is 13. I went and watched the Mid Wales Stages last year and heard it was pretty competitive. I'm good friends with Ricky Evans who is a good friend of Paul Dyas at Mr Tyre, who encouraged me to come back."

He started last autumn

"The Ford Escort Mk2 was first built by Mark Solloway but it had never been finished. So Phil Ireland and I completed it last summer and my first event was the Cambrian in October. It was the most nerve-racking experience I'd had since the kids were born."

Things clicked on the R.A.C. Rally

"We really bedded in on the Roger Albert Clark and now it feels like my car. I think the night stages helped us to really focus on the job in hand and the time then came very easily. We were in the top times pretty regularly by the last day. I'm just hoping we can hit that groove again this year."

He's tackling the BHRC

"The plan is to try and win the British Historic Rally Championship, but I don't want to sound over-confident, because I'm not. But I think it is a terrific challenge to go out and compete with any of the top 10 runners in the championship."

He'll compete against old rivals

"I competed against Nick Elliott and Julian Reynolds a long time ago. Nick was doing one of the first events I ever did and I bought my Peugeot 205 from him. Julian was always about as well. I've noticed with the age group of the drivers in historics that when you get to the stage starts, they're all out of the cars having a wee!"

It's a North Devon operation

"I've got a new co-driver in George Gwynn, who has a lot of experience and also comes from North Devon. We run Woolacombe Bay Holiday Parks and we'll be busy. We've had a couple of great sunny summers and it's looking good again for this year, but that shouldn't get in the way of a campaign in the BHRC!"



Lancaster: historic newbie



Elsmore took his third win on the Wyedean in 1977

ELSMORE TO RETURN FOR WYEDEAN EVENT

Former winner back to tackle rally 40 years after his first victory

By Paul Lawrence

Forest of Dean rallying hero Graham Elsmore will come out of retirement to contest the Wyedean Stages in 10 days time in a freshly built historic Ford Escort Mk2, 40 years on from his victory on the first Wyedean.

Elsmore, now 63, and 1970s co-driver Stuart Harrold were

invited to drive the car owned by Rob Weir and built up by RSR Historic Engineering.

"I did the Wyedean in 2008 in Terry Brown's Escort Mk2 and I thought that was my last rally," said Elsmore, who had a recent test at Walters Arena. "I've known Rob Weir for 40 years and he rang me up. I'm absolutely thrilled with the whole idea of competing

again. It is a golden opportunity and the car was absolutely brilliant; I was really impressed with the car and the engine."

Coleford-based Elsmore, who lives less than 300 metres from the Sallowallets stage, spent a decade managing the rallying career of his son Nik after calling time on his own rallying in the late 1980s.

This will be only his second rally in 25 years.

"This is a brand new car and it feels as good as any works car I drove," said Elsmore, who took a hat trick of wins on the first three Wyedeans. "We hope to go out and be competitive and we'll certainly enjoy ourselves. I can't thank the Weir family enough for trusting me with the car."

Heartbreak for Brit crew in South Africa

Andrew Siddall and Carl Williamson were denied victory on the final day of the Classic Rally South Africa when they suffered suspension failure on the fifth and final day.

The Escort Mk1 crew had an eight-minute lead but the bottom arm pin sheared and sent them off the road less than three miles into the final stage. They dropped to third. Local driver Johnny Gemmell went on to take the win in his Porsche 911.

"All we had to do was coast through the last day and then the unthinkable happened," said Williamson.



Needell will drive the Peter Mallet-owned Rover in March

Needell to handle Rover Vitesse at Goodwood

TV presenter and ex-Formula 1 racer Tiff Needell is the latest star name confirmed for the Gerry Marshall Trophy for pre-1983 Group 1 touring cars at the Goodwood 73rd Members' Meeting on March 21/22.

Needell will again race the Rover Vitesse of Peter Mallet in *Daily Express* colours, while

sportscar legend and grand prix winner Jochen Mass will pilot a similar car in Sanyo livery.

Le Mans winner Emanuele Pirro will drive Philip Perryman's UFO Jeans-liveried BMW 530i as the car makes its Goodwood debut. Sportscar racer Nicolas Minassian will share Duncan McKay's three-litre Ford Capri.

Oulton Park set for VSCC Hawthorn date

After a gap of five years, the Vintage Sports-Car Club will return to Oulton Park for its Hawthorn Memorial Trophies meeting on Saturday July 18.

As well as the usual mix of VSCC scratch and handicap races, the meeting will include the Hawthorn Memorial and Spanish Trophies for both pre- and post-war cars as well as a pre-war sportscar relay race.

Other attractions will include live period music, a vintage car display and an air display.

Circuit boss Jonathan Palmer said: "We're delighted to welcome the VSCC, its members, and their fabulous cars back to Oulton Park."

Jones turns heads on his debut in the top class of Historic rallying

Daniel 'Lwni' Jones marked himself as a new contender in historic rallying with a dramatic start to the Red Kite Stages.

The road rally ace from West Wales was making his debut in a top class historic Ford Escort

Mk2 and led after the opening stage. A gear selection problem stopped the car on the second run through Crychan North. "It was all going well and I was chuffed to be on the pace," he said.

The car was built by Meirion

Evans and carried Jones' regular number plate 'LWN 178P', which gives him his nickname.

Jones was pleased that the car was undamaged and it should be ready for the next round, the Mid Wales Stages on Sunday March 1.



Jones was a Red Kite star

IN BRIEF

Attard's Goodwood
Reigning British GT champion Marco Attard will start his season at the Goodwood Members' meeting, sharing his Chevrolet Corvette Stingray with regular GT partner Alexander Sims. Also confirmed for the Graham Hill Trophy race is former BTCC champion Tim Harvey, who will co-drive Shaun Lynn's Bizzarini.

Doe's Safari role

Respected UK scrutineer Geoff Doe has been appointed as chief scrutineer for the East African Safari Classic Rally. In his early years, Doe worked on the Chevrolet Camaros raced by Stuart Graham and later won the Welsh Forest Rally Championship in a Talbot Sunbeam. "The Safari is a rally that has always fascinated me and now I am going to be part of it," said Doe.

North Wales regs

Regulations are now available for Rally North Wales on Saturday March 28. The historic element of the rally is a round of the HRCR Old Stager and Welsh Historic Championships, with 40 stage miles and an entry fee of £450. The rally is based on Dolgellau with HQ at Gwyndaf Evans Motors. Regs can be downloaded from wsscc.co.uk.

Lloyd on the Galway

Gareth Lloyd will start his 2015 rally campaign on this weekend's Galway Historic Rally. Lloyd plans to field his ex-Roger Clark Ford Escort Mk2 in at least four rounds of the Irish Historic Championship and will head to Galway with near-neighbour Gwynfor Jones co-driving for the first time. His next scheduled trip to Ireland will be for the West Cork Rally in March.

Platt's Alpine woe

Roger Platt may not be able to rally his Alpine Renault A110 in the UK any more after being unable to fit the latest FIA standard seat in the car and be able to drive competitively. Platt withdrew from last weekend's Red Kite Stages and is unsure if he will be able to rally the car again. It has been the only such car active in UK stage rallying.

Edwards: no funds

Matt Edwards and Paul Morris were forced to withdraw from the Red Kite Stages due to lack of funds for their Ford Escort Mk2. They were expected to be among the pacesetters and Edwards remains hopeful of rejoining the BHRC later in the season ahead of another challenge on the Roger Albert Clark Rally.

R.A.C. broadcast

Coverage of the 2014 Roger Albert Clark Rally will be broadcast on Motors TV this weekend, with the first transmission set for 1645hrs on Saturday. The two-hour programme tells the full story of the November event and will have several repeats on Motors TV.

Pickering's trial

British driver Ryan Pickering shared victory on the demanding Winter Trial with co-driver Alexander Leurs when the regularity rally finished at Sundvollen in Norway on Friday. The Anglo-Dutch pair's Opel Ascona headed the results after six days of competition on ice and snow, having run in the top half dozen for most of the rally.

RALLY REPORT

MANX FALLS TO THE CANNELLS

Mitsubishi Lancer E9 crew avoid sheep to win after Steve Colley drops out and John Cope stumbles

**IMGold Chris Kelly
Memorial Rally**

By Chris Boyle

Organiser: Manx Auto Sport **When:** January 31
Where: Isle of Man **Championships:** Eurocars
Motorsport Manx Rally Stages: eight **Starters:** 42

Father and daughter crew Nigel and Jade Cannell made it back-to-back Isle of Man closed-roads victories on last Saturday's Chris Kelly Memorial Rally.

The Mitsubishi Lancer E9 pair led by 3s after the opening 10.8-mile The Cronk test from Steve Colley and Andrew Cowley's similar E9, with John Cope and Clive Molyneux (Subaru WRC) a further 20s back in third.

Despite thawing snow on high

ground, and high winds, the main issue was the cold temperature. The leading crews opted for slicks, intermediates and even wets in the case of Simon Chapman and Paul McCann (Proton Millington). All were united that their choice was wrong and they couldn't generate heat in the rubber.

First to hit trouble were expected two-wheel drive frontrunners Martyn Jones and Rob Fagg (Vauxhall Nova). They hit a bank near the end of the test and damaged the rear beam.

Colley blazed through the next 11.9-mile Knocksharry stage to grab a 20s lead at first service at Jurby, but then suffered an overshoot on the second run of

The Cronk. The Cannell's moved ahead again, by 4s, despite a turbo hose working loose on SS2. Cope continued to hold third, now happier with his pace, but Chapman's solid fourth was about to disappear after a sixth-gear tyre blowout on the rapid Switchback section of SS4 Knocksharry cost the Proton five minutes.

Colley meanwhile retook the lead as the battle continued, now 3s up. To add to the Cannell's woes they punctured on the road section back to mid-event service and then suffered fuel shortage too, though fortunately made it back without penalty.

A fantastic scrap was also developing for two-wheel-drive

honours. Andy Bird/Plug Pullyen (Vauxhall Chevette) held fourth overall, but were just 5s up on the impressive Dean Quayle/Barrie Ford (Vauxhall Corsa kit car). Both Kex Walker/Danni Matthews (BMW 325) and the recovering Jones/Fagg were within striking distance.

It was about to become a battle for a podium finish as leader Colley hit trouble on SS5, the 12.8-mile St Judes stage. He broke the rear suspension through a high speed compression and crawled out of the test, losing 12 minutes.

It meant Cannell inherited the lead despite concerns the car was bogging down out of junctions, but he still couldn't relax as Cope took 5s out of him to take his first stage win.

Jones upped his pace over both that and the following 6.8-mile Druidale test to move to within 1s of Bird's third place, but it all came to naught when the engine expired on the way back to final service.

Cope suffered late trouble when the Subaru's power steering failed on the road section to the final SS8 on Druidale, allowing the Cannell's winning margin to ease to 1m 17s – despite a close encounter with a sheep on the stage. Colley rejoined and was second fastest on each of the final tests.

Bird maintained third from Walker and Quayle, with Will Heavey/Adam Yates sixth after a day-long battle with Dan Colley/Andrew Dudgeon, both

in BMW E30s, the latter slowed in the afternoon by a cracked sump.

Ian Chadwick/Kevin Horgan (Honda Civic) had a trouble-free run to eighth, ahead of Chapman, with the top 10 rounded out by Manx Young Driver of the Year Dan Shacklock and Abby Corlett (Peugeot 206).

Results

1 Nigel Cannell/Jade Cannell (Mitsubishi E9) 1h 16m 25s; 2 John Cope/Clive Molyneux (Subaru Impreza WRC) +1m 17s; 3 Andy Bird/Plug Pullyen (Vauxhall Chevette); 4 Kex Walker/Danni Matthews (BMW 325); 5 Dean Quayle/Barrie Ford (Vauxhall Corsa); 6 Will Heavey/Adam Yates (BMW E30 M3); 7 Dan Colley/Andrew Dudgeon (BMW E30); 8 Ian Chadwick/Kevin Horgan (Honda Civic); 9 Simon Chapman/Paul McCann (Proton Millington); 10 Dan Shacklock/Abby Corlett (Peugeot 206).
Classes: 1: Ian Kelly/Margaret Kelly (Nissan Micra); 2: Shacklock/Corlett; 3: Quayle/Ford; 4: Walker/Matthews; 5: Chapman/McCann; Historic: Stephen Higgins/Mark Casey (Saab V4).

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KARTING ROUND-UP

"It was chaos in parc ferme at the red flag"
Eight KF racers excluded, below



Photos: Kartpix.net, Jakob Ebrey, GPR and Press.net Images



Barnicoat last kartered in 2013 World KF round at PF International



British ace won last year's FR NEC title

KF regulations delays slammed by top chief

CIK-FIA vice president Kees van de Grint has criticised the amount of time taken for homologation regulations to be drawn up for the new KF engine, which is set to be introduced in 2016.

The new powerplant is planned to be demonstrated at two CIK-FIA events this season, with the European Championship round at PF International pencilled in.

The engine, which is based on the previous KF concept but with significant alternations, will be a multi-manufacturer motor. Alterations include no centrifugal clutch or electric starter with battery.

They have been replaced by a decompression valve on the cylinder head that allows the engine to push start without having to lift the rear wheels.

De Grint said: "Procedures with the new direct-drive engine are too slow. It takes too long to get things done and we're behind schedule. Those who [have] had the chance to drive or see the engine in action have welcomed the work done so far. It is just a matter of the finishing touches and, above all, regulations."

Over 200 drivers at TVKC Winter opener

The opening round of the Trent Valley Kart Club Winter Series began with over 220 drivers at PF International last weekend.

The IAME Cadet grid required an A and B Final with 52 starters taking part. Dexter Patterson fought out a close victory in the A Final ahead of Loran Hanafin and Joseph Taylor.

Euan Wilson scored the Junior X30 win in a competitive full grid that featured 33 starters.

TVKC chairman Nigel Edwards said: "The X30 Junior and Senior grids were very competitive as always with the Juniors packing its grid."

"It was an outstanding number of entries given it was the opening round, and the weather was kind although very cold."

BARNICOAT TO RETURN FOR WINTER CUP ASSAULT

Former European champion will make one-off outing for BirelART team in Italy

By Russell Hayes

Reigning Formula Renault Northern European Cup champion Ben Barnicoat will return to karting to lead the BirelART squad's assault on the 20th Winter Cup at Lonato later this month.

The 18-year-old claimed the CIK-FIA European KF title in 2012. He will return to ART, the team which he raced with in international karting, to compete in the KF class on February 19-22. The Racing Steps Foundation-backed ace will team

up with fellow Brit Jordon Lennox-Lamb who will race in KZ gearbox. Barnicoat had originally planned to accept an offer to race at the Garda track with the newly formed Mad-Croc team, set up by former ART karting boss Armando Filini.

"Since there is a testing ban in place in European Renault until the middle of March, I felt that it would be a good chance to keep sharp," said Barnicoat. "Due to the relationship between RSE, All Road Management which owns ART, and Nicholas Todt, it was felt that I may

need that good connection with the team in the future, so we didn't want to upset anyone. I tested for a couple of days with Mad-Croc at Lonato last week. But once it was decided I was to drive with BirelART, I went back to the track on Monday this week."

Barnicoat said the biggest difference in the sport since he graduated to single-seaters in 2013, has been the switch in tyre suppliers.

"I always drove on the Vega 'white' slick tyre," he added. "The compound allowed you to brake later and harder

and the tyres would bite into the track and give you great grip. But at the Winter Cup, Bridgestone rubber is being used. Those tyres provide much less grip.

"I won't be able to brake as hard and late, meaning I can't corner as quick. I'm adapting to that and the Birel chassis, which I've never driven as it handles differently to the ART. I'll also be racing with an IAME engine, whereas I finished my karting career on a TM. There will be more pressure on me, BirelART has put me there for a reason."



RFM's Casper Andersen (r) lost his podium finish

Eight KF drivers excluded from WSK opener

Bad weather conditions at the WSK Championships Cup at La Conca were a contributing cause for eight drivers being excluded from the opening final of the European KF season.

Following the start of Sunday's KF final in Italy, Dane Nicklas Nielsen sprinted away in dry conditions, until a sudden downpour caused a red flag and drivers forced to switch to wet rubber ahead of a restart. But Nielsen's engine would not perform at full throttle when racing resumed, and he ignored the blue flag with red cross to pit. He was later excluded.

Seven other competitors, including all four Ricky Flynn

Motorsport racers, were also excluded for changes to the tracking during the switch to wet tyres. KF debutant Richard Verschoor took victory.

Flynn said: "With KF Junior drivers lined up in parc ferme at the same time, there were over 70 drivers in there when the red flag came out. It was chaos."

"Officials said only the wet tyres could be mounted on to karts. But the regulations state that, because the wet tyres are wider than slicks, the rear tracking has to be moved so that the rear wheels do not stick outside of the sidepods. They deemed it illegal, but not to alter it is illegal."

Joyner makes karting comeback after World Championship injury

Former world KF champion Tom Joyner has begun to test karting machinery for the first time since his accident at last year's world final at Essay in France.

The 2013 champion was involved in a shunt from behind after the end of September's

race in which Joyner finished ninth. The Zanardi ace was stretched off the circuit and remained in a neck brace for a number of weeks after.

"It's taken a while to be back and the first time I did get in the kart in November, I was quickly

in neck pain again," Joyner said. "But I was out a couple of weeks ago and everything felt fine, so I'm now looking forward to getting going again this year in KF. There maybe some KZ appearances but that hasn't been confirmed just yet."



Joyner: nasty accident



Some drivers and officials clashed during CIK events in 2014

CIK bosses call for greater driver respect

The lack of respect between international officials and drivers is an increasing worry for the CIK-FIA, according to vice president Kees van de Grint.

The Dutch historic karter pointed to the lack of commitment from all parties and, for the second consecutive year, spoke about the unease between the governing body and promoter WSK Promotions.

"Not all went well [last] year, for example it was much too long before the 2015 calendar was finalised," he said. "This

can't happen again. There is still not perfect harmony between WSK Promotion and the CIK. The lack of respect and treatment of officials and competitors is a worry and countermeasures should be taken.

"The lack of commitment from some people, whether they are competitors, constructors or commission members, is not doing the sport any good. Criticising is fine but providing sensible alternatives is better and fulfilling your duty is a matter of good manners."

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SPORTING SCENE

'Dayraut narrowly took sixth title'

Andros Trophy, below left

Photos: Coventry MotoFest, Paul Phelan and Hal Ridge

ROUND-UP

For the second year in a row, local aces Ger O'Connell and Denis O'Donovan won the Lissavard, County Cork round of the **Irish National Navigation** and the **Munster Navigation** championships. They headed a clean sweep of the top three positions for Cork crews. For most of the 85-mile route there were four pairings in contention. They took it in turns to lead, but the final timecard caused problems for three of these, and O'Connell/O'Donovan reached the end with three marks in hand over Forest rally champion Owen Murphy, who was navigated by Daire Hayes. Semi-expert winners Dermot Whelton/Mark McCarthy were third. Defending National champions Colin Duffy and Sam Johnston dropped to fourth spot.

Tony Farrell became the fifth different driver to score a **Sporting Trial** win this year. At Corballis in County Wicklow he opened out a three-mark advantage on the opening lap and held it to the end. Robin Taylor's VW got the best of a three-way battle for second place, just ahead of Craig MacWilliam and Morgan Evans. They were all covered by a single mark. Aidan Kehoe was best in Grade C, with newcomer Tadas Maselskis sharing the winning car to take victory in Grade D. There were 32 entrants.

Jean-Philippe Dayraut won his sixth **Andros Trophy** title by just a single point from grand prix winner Olivier Panis. The season concludes with the non-championship Super Final at the Stade de France in Paris.

Paul Phelan

RESULTS

100 Isles Navigation Trial: Lissavard
1 Ger O'Connell/Denis O'Donovan (Subaru Impreza) 16 marks; 2 Owen Murphy/Daire Hayes (Subaru Forester) +3m; 3 Dermot Whelton/Mark McCarthy (Subaru Impreza); 4 Colin Duffy/Sam Johnston (Subaru Impreza); 5 Joseph Shinnors/Greg Shinnors (Subaru Impreza); 6 David Beamish/Muireann Hayes (Subaru Impreza); 7 Pakie Duffy/Evin Hughes (Subaru Impreza); 8 Derek Butler/Andrew Wedlock (Toyota Starlet); 9 Andrew Whelton/Cyril Maguire (Toyota Avenis); 10 Brian O'Mahony/Amy Galloway (Subaru Impreza); 11 Patrick Murphy/Aaron O'Regan (Subaru Impreza); 12 John Buttmer/James Kingston (Vauxhall Vectra).
Semi-experts: 1 D Whelton/McCarthy; 2 Buttmer/Kingston; 3 Sean Cullinane/Eoghan McCarthy (Subaru Impreza).
Novices: 1 Butler/Wedlock; 2 A Whelton/Maguire; 3 O'Mahony/Galloway.
Beginners: 1 Andrew Beamish/Lisa O'Dowd (Subaru Impreza); 2 Paddy Sherlock/Duin Sherlock (Subaru Impreza); 3 Luke McCarthy/Breda O'Driscoll (Toyota Corolla).

Jenkins Cup Sporting Trial: Corballis
1 Tony Farrell (Erskine-S&S) 5 marks; 2 Robin Taylor (VW) +3m; 3 Craig MacWilliam (Erskine-Yamaha); 4 Morgan Evans (Mog-Honda); 5 Christopher Evans (ETE-Yamaha); 6 Jonathan Ralph (Suzuki); 7 John O'Reilly (Erskine-Kawasaki); 8 James Ralph (Suzuki); 9 Richard Meeke (BD-Opel); 10 Fergil Gregory (Erskine-Yamaha); 11 Percy Pennefather (Erskine-Suzuki); 12 Paul Needham (Erskine-Honda).
Grade winners: Craig MacWilliam; Taylor; Aidan Kehoe (Sheane VW); Tadas Maselskis (Erskine-S&S).
Junior Award: Warren MacWilliam (Erskine-Yamaha).

MOTOFEST HITS 1000

Short oval racers to be a highlight of May's Coventry MotoFest



BriSCA F1 stock cars are set to thrill at MotoFest this year



MotoFest was a hit in '14 and will grow

By James Bolton

The organisers of the Coventry MotoFest say they have almost 1000 cars attending the May 30/31 motoring extravaganza.

The MotoFest ran for the first time last year with a static display in Coventry city centre. This year the event will be significantly larger and a timed sprint course will run around the city's ring road. There will

be other arenas and static displays too.

Organiser Jeremy Heaver: "I can't get over how enthusiastic different divisions of motorsport are - everyone wants to come together and have fun. The only problem is that there's a limit to what we can squeeze in. It's an incredibly busy time for us now because we've done a lot of planning, we've worked very closely with the city council and other

authorities, and now we're implementing everything we've been working on."

Heaver said the Coventry MotoFest would attract a wide array of racing cars: "We've got about 150 to 200 cars in the short oval and drift arena, including all types of short oval cars up to BriSCA F1 stock cars. It's going to be pretty spectacular. There will be 40 drift cars, including the Falken drift team."

Details of the competitive element of the MotoFest have yet to be rubber stamped but the organisers are working with the British Automobile Racing Club to finalise the details. "The motoring industry in this country is a really unique product," added Heaver. "This is about celebrating what makes us great and shouting loud about our motoring and motorsport industry."

IRISH RALLYCROSS REPORT

O'RAFFERTY THE SURVIVOR TAKES SPOILS

Irish Rallycross

By Paul Phelan

Organisers: Carlow Car Club **When:** February 1
Where: Mondello Park, County Kildare
Championships: Round 1 McLoughlin Industrial Flooring Motorsport Ireland National Championship
Starters: 35

Thomas O'Rafferty got his year off to a good start by winning the Super Final at the opening round of the National Rallycross Championship at Mondello Park last Sunday.

His Ford Fiesta was the only one of the three Supercars present to survive the day, with English visitor Mark Watson's Citroen Xsara an early retirement with engine

trouble during the heats, and George Tracey Junior's Citroen C4 going out with transmission problems in a later heat.

O'Rafferty did just enough to stay in front of a terrific duel between Pearse Browne's BMW and the Opel Corsa of Willie Coyne all through the main race, with the BMW beating the Corsa by less than a second at the flag.

This was a repeat of the pair's race-long battle in the Modified A Final, where Browne also triumphed. The gap being just 0.21s on that occasion. George Tohill shared the BMW with Browne to win the Modified B Final from Chris Grimes.

Irish National Formula Ford champion Niall Murray judged his joker lap to perfection in the

Stock Hatch 16-valve Final, leaving it to the last possible moment and rejoining a hair's breadth in front of long-time leader John Ward to just take the flag first. Elder brother Eoin Murray finished third, followed by Declan Nolan.

Ciaran Murphy dominated the 8-valve Final, having already set best time in each of the four heats, leading all the way. Noel O'Brien didn't show his usual winning pace and had to be content with third place this time, behind Peter McGarry.

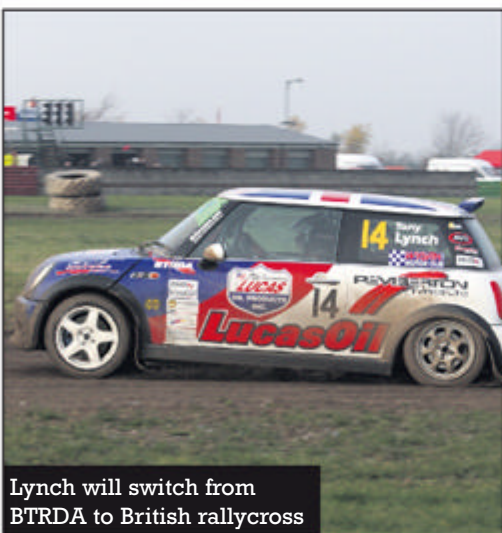
Jake Dooley led from start to finish in the Junior Final, with his Starlet too quick for the Micra of William Kellett. Patrick Donoghue's 205 yet again ran away with the Rally Car Final.



O'Rafferty easily saw off rivals to take the Super Car final

Results

Finals 5 laps, Super Final 6 laps. Super Final: 1 Thomas O'Rafferty (Ford Fiesta) 4m 05.18s; 2 Pearse Browne (BMW Compact) +2.34s; 3 Willie Coyne (Opel Corsa); 4 Patrick Ryan (Vauxhall Nova); 5 Niall Murray (Peugeot 106); 6 Eoin Murray (Peugeot 106). **Supercar A Final:** 1 O'Rafferty 3m 30.09s; no other finishers. **Modified A Final:** 1 Browne 3m 30.95s; 2 Coyne +0.21s; 3 Ryan; 4 Chris Grimes (Vauxhall Nova); 5 Philip Kelly (Toyota MR2); nof. **Stock Hatch 16-valve A Final:** 1 N Murray 3m 39.90s; 2 John Ward (Peugeot 106) +0.92s; 3 E Murray; 4 Declan Nolan (Peugeot 106); 5 Eugene Ward (Peugeot 106); 6 Keith Kernshaawe (Citroen C2). **Stock Hatch 8-valve A Final:** 1 Ciaran Murphy (Peugeot 205) 3m 46.39s; 2 Peter McGarry (Peugeot 205) +3.41s; 3 Noel O'Brien (Peugeot 205); 4 James O'Shea (Peugeot 205); 5 Tom Murphy (Peugeot 205); nof. **Junior A Final:** 1 Jake Dooley (Toyota Starlet) 3m 58.41s; 2 William Kellett (Nissan Micra) +1.50s; nof.



Lynch will switch from BTRDA to British rallycross

Rallycross champion returns to MSA British Championship

Multiple rallycross champion Tony Lynch will return to the British Rallycross series this year.

The Wigan driver will race his supercharged BMW Mini in the Super National category. He used the car to finish third in the Super Modified class in the BTRDA Clubmans series in '14.

"We enjoyed a strong season last year and took huge strides with the development on the car," said Lynch.

"We've now added a limited slip differential and new close ratio gearbox to the car and are working to extract more power from the engine. We know that is an area where we can make improvements.

"Our aim is to show that we can fight against the top boys as the year goes on, and we want to be pushing for wins before the season is over. Our long-term target is a championship challenge in 2016."



Photo: OMSE

The venue for the Swedish round of the World Rallycross Championship, Holjes, will host the first round of the RallyX on Ice winter series this weekend. The four-event series will be run for the OlsbergsMSE-built RX Lites machines, which will be adapted to run using snow wheels and tyres

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MN SAYS...

Good news from Japan

Nissan in the WEC, Toyota in the WRC, Honda in F1

There's been a lot of good news over the last week or two, particularly if you are a fan of Japanese manufacturers. They have a history of entering into international motorsport together, though each is currently on different paths.

That Toyota is coming back to the World Rally Championship is fantastic. Any car maker joining a category is good news, but when it's one that has such history in the sport, it is time to celebrate.

Nissan might not have achieved quite the same level of success in its sportscar past, but it's certainly grabbing enough attention with its radical LMP1 car. I love the fact the rules allow something that different, though the last time a front-engined car won Le Mans was 1962, so Nissan has its work cut out to turn back time...

That's something Honda will want too. The new F1 partnership with McLaren looks troubled so far, but it's hard to completely discount their history, and the driving talent it possesses.

Kevin Turner, Editor (Twitter: @KRT917)



STAR LETTER

Lily-livered machines

Last year I was so disappointed when McLaren launched its new Formula 1 car. It didn't have to bow to Mercedes, it had no significant sponsors, and so it was free to paint the car any way it wished. But the car was a dull silver.

This year I was even more excited... and more disappointed. It's such a missed chance to make a statement and grab loads of headlines. Honda must be furious. And then I saw the other cars. Who designs these liveries? Why aren't they given more than five minutes? Colour schemes are important in any area of the sport and it's strange many teams don't seem to realise this.

The problem extends to other branches of the sport, like the WRC. The Hyundai is grey. In the WEC, Porsche has a livery that spells something, but only when viewed from the top. It's hard to nail an all-time classic livery, but these are terrible.

**Anthony Edmonds
Cirencester**

YOUR PICS



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Historic ace David Stokes exploring the limit in his Ford Escort last weekend. By Will Jones



Malcolm Bayliss gets very sideways in his Escort on the Red Kite, by Lucy Owen-Moczadlo



Clio Cup champion Mike Bushell was caught testing his new Focus BTCC car by Gary Hill

LETTERS

Just stop

In the wake of the appalling Jules Bianchi tragedy, may I ask a leading question through MN, otherwise I shall explode in frustration! Why oh why has the most important point been completely missed?

As an experienced motor racing commentator recently retired, and as an avid fan of Formula 1 along with all types of motor racing, I fear that all the blah blah about speed limits is doing our sport a terrible disservice. The most important point I refer to is, why weren't the terrible lessons of a wet [2003] Brazilian Grand Prix a few years ago well and truly learnt at the time, so that such a disaster could not happen again?

The precise same situation; wet conditions with drivers spinning off all over the place with scarcely any grip available to them. A tractor was dispatched to rescue several stationary cars just off the track itself, when along comes Michael Schumacher's Ferrari, skating helplessly off the road. The Ferrari missed hitting the tractor by only a sliver. Had he collided with it, Michael Schumacher would have been very seriously injured or possibly even lost his life. How it was that the GP was allowed to continue with a rescue tractor within feet of a fast corner is a mystery to me and to many other people. The lesson wasn't learnt that day, I'm so sorry to say.

In my opinion, before any tractor was dispatched to rescue Adrian Sutil's stricken car, the Japanese GP last year should have been stopped. I passionately believe that there's no way in the world such a vehicle should be allowed anywhere near the circuit at the same time as GP cars are circulating, no matter what speed they might be driving. I am aware of

stories that Jules Bianchi was driving too fast under double waved yellow flags but this is not the point at all. All the high-tech talk of the FIA controlling the speeds of cars in these circumstances is just poppycock.

We might have come further than many years ago but just exactly how far have we come? We don't need FIA imposed speed limits; what we need is a race stoppage whenever lives are in peril.
**Andrew Wilkins
Via email**

Ed - In fairness, this issue was raised in the immediate aftermath of the crash, though has been overshadowed since. Shortly after the accident FIA race director Charlie Whiting said: "The next stage up [from yellow flags] is a safety car but, because the car was well away from the track and against the tyres, [yellow flags] is the normal procedure for us to follow under those circumstances. We didn't see any need for a safety car."

Great idea...

I couldn't believe my eyes when I read the article about a category for standard four-wheel-drive cars being considered in British rallying (MN Jan 28, page 16).

What fantastic news. British rallying needs a series like this to help youngsters on the rise and also to help get people into rallying. Having recently decided to achieve the dream and start rallying last year, I fully appreciate the apprehension people have when looking at costs. Even just running a low-spec 1000cc Micra I have teary eyes looking at the bank balance. What a category like this does is get people who are interested in rallying into the seat of a fast car at a fairly cheap price.

I know a number of people interested in rallying who



MN, Jan 28: Ogier wins

can't justify the costs of the bigger cars but don't want to rally about in cheap 2WD standard cars. Every man, woman and child who saw Colin McRae throw a Subaru around has thought 'that looks fun' and this gives them an opportunity to do that.

This is also a great opportunity for up-and-coming drivers to show their speed on a level playing field and without major budget restrictions. The BRC running Group N cars showed some of the young talent this country has, but at over £50,000 apiece it's not easy to get a competitive car.
**Olli Bell
Via email**

...I agree

That is a superb idea regarding the genuinely 'stock' rally class. What an excellent way to 'prime the pump'. This would get motoring enthusiasts rallying again, in Subarus, Audis, Mitsubishis etc.

I think a subsidiary benefit is that meaningful sponsorship could be sought from local specialists and dealers, with the cars that are competing being relevant to the ones in their showrooms.

I guess that there is some work to be done around scrutineering, blue book etc. but a smashing idea.
**David Leyland
Via email**

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WHAT'S ON

LISTINGS

SPORTING SCENE SUNDAY

■ **Wimbledon**
Stadium, Plough Lane, London
Oval Racing:
 national bangers, 1300cc stock cars
Starts: 1730hrs
Admission: adult £15, child £7 **Web:** spedeworth.co.uk
Contact: 01252 322920
 ■ **Penrith, Cumbria**
Sporting Trial:
 Jiggers Jug **Starts:** 0900hrs **Admission:** free **Web:** btrda.com

RALLY FRIDAY/SATURDAY

■ **Norcalympia, Norbreck**
Rally: North West Stages **Starts:** Fri: 1230hrs

Sat: 0900hrs
Admission: Depends on stage **Web:** nwstages.co.uk

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Clayton Hotel, Galway**
Rally: Galway International Rally **Starts:** 1000hrs (both days)
Admission: free **Web:** galwayinternationalrally.com

SUNDAY

■ **Pembrey, Wales**
Rally: Rali Cwm Gwendraeth **Starts:** 0930hrs **Admission:** £10 per car **Web:** gwendraethvalleymotorclub.co.uk

All details correct at time of press but please check with event organisers



Declan Boyle won Galway last year

TV GUIDE



Alan Jones discusses his career on Sky F1

The whole spectrum of rallying is on television this week. A variety of British events are on **Special Stage Extra**, which was a new programme last year and returns (tonight, 2030-2100hrs, Motors TV). It covers single venue rallies and gives coverage to the smaller events that may not otherwise get on to TV.

The **Roger Albert Clark Rally** is an immense challenge for historic crews and when it ran in November it finished with a dollop of controversy too. It's

reviewed tonight (Wednesday) at 2100hrs (Motors TV). It didn't snow for the R.A.C., but it did when the **Arctic Lapland Rally** ran at the end of January. Catch the highlights on Monday (1005hrs, Motors TV).

Racing fans can watch a host of testing. Motors TV has live coverage of the **V8 Supercars** pre-season running in Sydney (2200hrs, Saturday), which culminates in a shoot-out. And there are highlights of the test on Sunday (1855hrs, Motors TV).

For actually racing highlights, tune in to the final points-scoring round of the **Andros Trophy** from Super Besse (Tonight (Wednesday), 2100hrs, Motors TV). Don't forget, the final day of the **F1 test** at Jerez de la Frontera is today (Wednesday). Catch highlights on Sky Sports F1 at 2100hrs, and get Ted Kravtitz's perspective at 2115hrs. For some archive action watch **Legends of F1 - Alan Jones** (Thursday, 1900-2000hrs, Sky Sports F1).

Photos: LAT archive and Roy Dempster

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT



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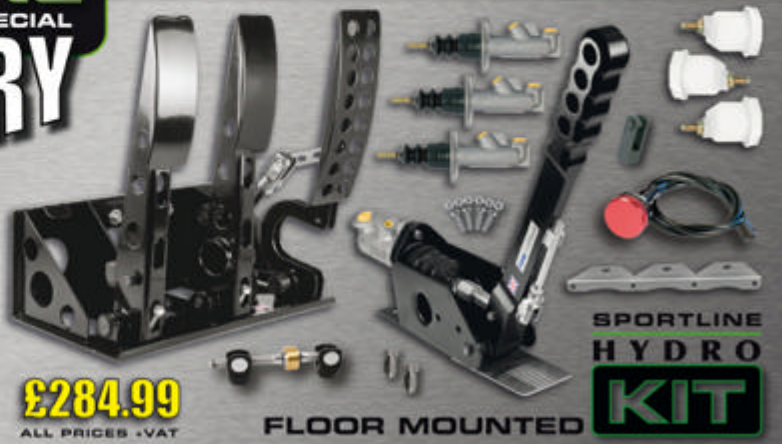
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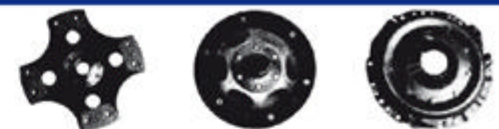
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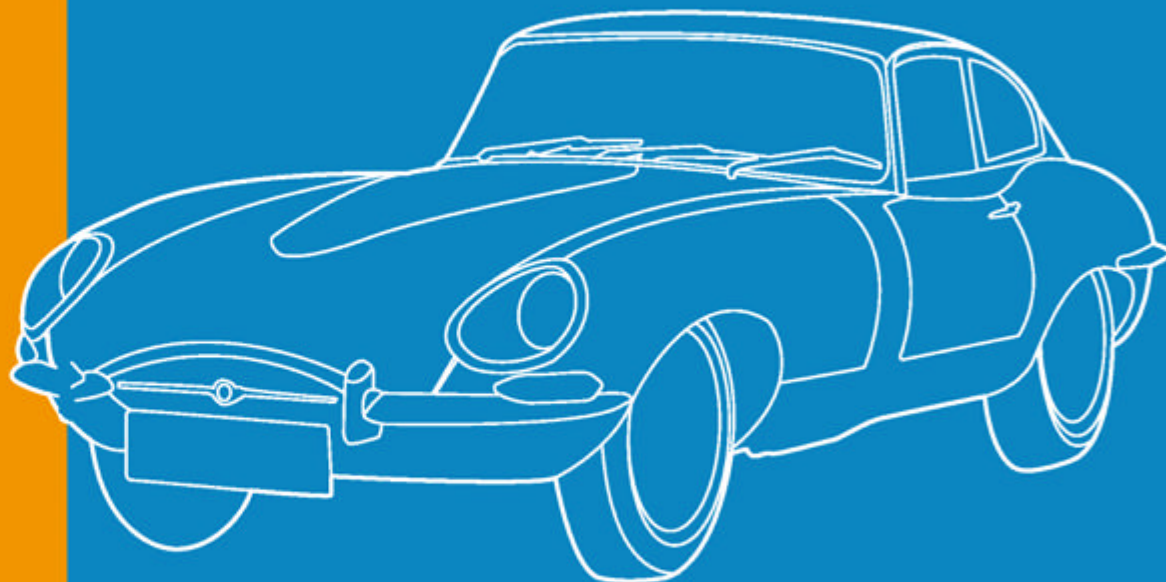
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