



# INGRAM

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# FORTUNE FAVOURS

# FERRARI

GLITCH FORCES LEWIS INTO SECOND PLACE IN MELBOURNE



Vettel: Aussie winner

By Matt James

**Ferrari got off to a flying start to the 2018 F1 season as a Mercedes blunder left Lewis Hamilton trailing home in second place.**

Sebastian Vettel took his second successive victory at Albert Park as a potential computer glitch meant that the Merc bosses on the pitwall didn't cover off the Ferrari's potential of a rapid pitstop under virtual safety car conditions.

Merc chief Toto Wolff says the team will stamp out any such problems in future. "It's very hard to take because we had the pace," added Wolff. "For whatever reason – and we need to find out why – we lost the win."

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**MOTORSPORT NEWS** ISSUE **MJ3122** MARCH 28 2018

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**FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P31**

**German team promises to sharpen up after**

**By Matt James**

**Mercedes bosses say that they will work flat-out to eradicate a computer glitch which it says was responsible for Lewis Hamilton losing the season-opening Australian Grand Prix on Sunday.**

Hamilton dominated the qualifying session to grab pole position and led the early part of the race before his pitstop on lap 19, when he switched from ultrasoft to soft Pirelli tyres. At that point, he had an eight-second gap over eventual winner Sebastian Vettel.

However, a virtual safety car was put in place on lap 25 to recover Romain Grosjean's abandoned Haas, which had halted by the side of the track as it had a loose wheel. The VSC was then replaced by a full safety car.

Vettel then took advantage and was able to stop under the VSC period. He returned to action ahead of Hamilton, whose chance of the win was gone.

Had Mercedes been fully aware of the threat, it could have asked Hamilton to push ahead of any potential safety car period to put him out of reach of the threat from Ferrari.

Wolff said: "I think we have a software issue with the VSC data, a situation that we haven't had yet with a special constellation of cars on track, one going in high speeds and one in slow speeds. The gap that we needed was wrongly calculated by the systems."

"I think we have a bug somewhere that said 15 seconds is what you need. It should have been enough but it wasn't."

"We thought we had about a three-second margin. I don't know what happened to [those seconds], we need to ask the computers. Whether we had a software problem somewhere, we need to fix it."

Despite the blow of losing the race, Wolff and Hamilton were confident that the Mercedes W09 would have the pace to battle at the very front this season.

"It's very hard to take because we had the pace," added Wolff. "For whatever reason, we need to find out, we lost the win."

**Chancing Horse**

Vettel only found himself in a position to get ahead of Hamilton due to the timing of the safety car – otherwise, it was likely that the Ferrari would have finished even in second place.

The German had qualified in third place but was seven tenths of a second away from Hamilton's pole and ran behind his team-mate Kimi Raikkonen in the early stages.

Vettel made up ground despite running longer on the ultrasoft



Vettel's stop helped him to leapfrog leader Hamilton

tyres early on in the race to enable him to jump the earlier-stopping sister Ferrari, and then took advantage of the error by Mercedes to claim his second successive Australian GP victory.

Four-time champion Vettel said he acknowledged that the victory was "lucky".

"If you look at the gaps the whole weekend, we are not yet a true match [for Mercedes]," he said. "This point we know that we are not yet where we want to be, because we want to be fastest. We still had enough pace to stay ahead and make it very difficult for [Lewis Hamilton] to be close and try to do something [during the latter period of the race]. It didn't look like there was a whole train behind us too, so I think we had some decent pace."

Vettel said that Ferrari still needs to do some work back at base to improve the chassis.

"I think the car has huge potential, but I'm still struggling a little bit. I want the car to be spot

on when I hit the brakes and turn in, and in that window I'm not yet happy.

"So, it's always sort of a compromise, because it's our job to drive around the problems that we have. I feel also if we can get on top of that, [I will] feel more confident. It makes a big difference."

**Hamilton dejected**

Reigning title-holder Hamilton said that he was confused why he wasn't given the message to push earlier in the race, and said he would wait for team investigations to try and figure out exactly what had happened.

"They [the team] don't fully understand it still, so they couldn't give me an exact reason as to why it was the way it was," said the Briton. "It's never easy to lose a grand prix but there were so many positives to take from this weekend."

"In the race I had extra tools, I could have been further ahead by

**"This has been hard to take"**

**TOTO WOLFF**



Hamilton loses Australian Grand Prix

# RECEDES!

## STAMP OUT FUTURE ERRORS



Pit blunder stopped Hamilton winning

the first pitstop [if the team had told him he needed to be to cover off any threat]."

"There were so many good things we could have done, but if one thing is telling you one thing, and you think you're doing it to the book, within the limits, then there's nothing you can do."

Hamilton also hit out at the technology used in F1 and said he would rather the decision to push hard or to conserve was the choice of the drivers rather than a computer's.

"I wish it was more in my hands, because I feel like I was driving as good as ever today," said Hamilton.

"Everyone in the team is feeling it, but there's so much great work, there's so much positivity to take forward with us.

"We still got second place today. It feels like a dark cloud, but it's still a positive result. We've got a great car, we are still the world champions, and with a couple of adjustments we can win the next race. I believe that."



Hamilton felt robbed, but was pleased with Merc's speed

### Alonso hails a 'morale-boosting' run from McLaren-Renault

McLaren scored more than one-third of its entire 2017 points total after what Fernando Alonso described as a morale-boosting result in Australia.

Alonso took his Renault-powered MCL33 to fifth place while Belgian team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne was ninth in Melbourne.

After the team's struggles with troublesome Honda powerplants for the past three years, Alonso said he was relieved to be back in the mix fighting with other cars.

"It was a good race and a good start," he said. "It's always much better for team morale to start on a good result. We knew

[on Saturday] that the race pace was probably stronger than the qualifying pace.

"It was great to see both McLarens in the points in the first race and also to be able to fight, wheel-to-wheel, with other cars.

"We are able to defend, we are able to attack,

things that in the last couple of years we were not able [to do], so it's going to be much more fun this year."

While Alonso suggested a top-five finish was a possibility after qualifying, he did admit that his final position was slightly fortuitous.

"Obviously today we got lucky with the two Haas retirements, and Carlos [Sainz Jr] had a problem in Turn 9, and then there was a safety car and we overtook [Max] Verstappen," added Alonso. "So let's say that four or five places were just because the conditions were in our favour. But we did no mistakes, we capitalised on everything, and [it was a] perfect job from the team."

McLaren picked up 12 points for the finishes in Australia and is already in fourth place in the constructors' standings. Last season, the Woking operation collected 30 points in total.



Alonso was encouraged

# AUSTRALIAN GP REPORT

BY JAMES ROBERTS

As a computer glitch spoiled Lewis's hopes in Australia, Ferrari pounced

# VETTEL

## SPOILS HAMILTON'S PARTY



Vettel was ready to celebrate after win



Grosjean's woe caused chaos



Verstappen spun early in the race

**T**he man who was partying on Sunday night in Melbourne was Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel. He had benefited from a moment of good fortune to take the first victory of the season, ahead of his title-rival Lewis Hamilton and team-mate Kimi Räikkönen.

After qualifying, this race should have been comfortably won by Hamilton. The superiority of his Mercedes was evident as a perceived 'party mode' on his engine settings netted him pole – and on Sunday he converted that into an early lead.

But as the race was neutralised by a virtual safety car, Ferrari seized on the opportunity to pit Vettel and reduce the time lost on changing his four tyres. He emerged from the pitlane ahead of a "gutted" Hamilton and held on.

In the Melbourne sunset, the Ferrari man conceded he had been "lucky", while at Mercedes there was a detailed debrief taking place as they tried to understand how they had lost this race.

"We have no explanation yet," said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff shortly after the flag, but added that a software programme had calculated they would still have been in the lead, if Vettel had pitted under the VSC. "An algorithm was wrong," admitted Wolff.

Hunting down Räikkönen at the chequered flag was home favourite Daniel Ricciardo, who had recovered from a frustrating weekend to be within touching distance of the podium. He was ahead of a resurgent Fernando Alonso in his McLaren-Renault (so far, so good) and RBR's Max Verstappen in sixth.

It looks as though three teams are capable of regularly scoring wins in

2018: Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull, but for now, it's a continuation of where we finished '17 – game on between Hamilton and Vettel.

### Qualifying

The 12 minutes of Q3, late on Saturday afternoon, was the moment we had been waiting for since the 2018 cars were unveiled six weeks earlier. Who exactly had the advantage? What was the competitive pecking order? Finally, the stopwatch would prove who had done the best job over the winter.

Hamilton had been quickest on his first run in Q3, with Vettel fractionally behind, followed by the Red Bull of Verstappen. The gap between first and third was just 0.061 seconds – but surely there was more to come from the Mercedes?

Unfortunately, there was only one silver car in contention. The second W09 of Valtteri Bottas was lying on a flat-bed trailer in pieces after he made a mistake and smashed rearwards into the barriers at Turn 1. The Finn had dipped his left-rear wheel onto the wet grass (a legacy of morning rain) picked up a heap of wheelspin and rotated hard into the barriers, bringing out the red flag.

A little later he revealed he was sore from the 27g impact. A dent, not only to his car, but to his confidence too.

With one Mercedes out of the way, it was down to the Ferraris and Red Bulls to take the challenge to Hamilton on the second and final run of Q3. But second time around, there was no stopping the Brit. Up by 0.441s in the first sector, that grew to 0.648s at the second split. The opposition didn't have an answer for his pace: Hamilton had pole by 0.664s from Räikkönen, followed by Vettel and Verstappen.

In the post-qualifying press conference, Hamilton was asked

about a 'party mode' function on his Mercedes – the moment the power unit is cranked up to the maximum – and was that the reason his second run was so much quicker than his first?

"I can assure you, we don't have a party mode," he said. "I use the same mode from Q2 to the end of Q3. There was no extra button."

But Vettel couldn't resist enquiring about the slow pace of his first run: "Then what were you doing before?" asked the Ferrari man of Hamilton.

"I was waiting to put a good lap in," responded the world champ, "to wipe the smile off your face..."

Vettel was then asked for a reply: "I think what goes around comes around. He's free to have a party tonight and then hopefully Kimi and myself will have a party tomorrow."

When Lewis added that Kimi "parties all the time," the stone-faced silence from Kimi was priceless...

Behind the top three, Verstappen was fourth ahead of Ricciardo who was fractionally behind his team-mate. But the local man was demoted three places on the starting grid thanks to an indiscretion in Friday practice.

A piece of timing cable had worked loose on the start-finish line bringing out the red flag. As Ricciardo was driving through the high-speed Turn 11, it was suggested by the stewards that he had failed to slow sufficiently once the red flag had flown. The stewards awarded him two penalty points on his licence and a three-place grid drop. It was a decision he described on Friday as "sh\*thouse" and when he reiterated the line on Saturday, a member of his team suggested he "took a moment to calm down".

### Race

With a late start, there was plenty of time for the Melbourne crowds to enjoy

# ROUND 08

Photos: LAT



Vettel jumped the Merc after the stops

the build-up to the main event. When it finally reached 1610hrs, 20 halo-shod F1 cars formed on the starting grid to commence the 69th edition of the world championship.

As they streaked away off the line, Hamilton retained his position at the head of the field ahead of fellow front-row starter Raikkonen. Under braking for Turn 3, Kimi drew alongside Lewis, but was never in a position to seriously challenge the leader.

Behind them, Vettel had fended off Verstappen at Turn 1 and that enabled the Haas of Kevin Magnussen to overtake the Red Bull around the outside for fourth place.

Verstappen - who like team-mate Ricciardo had started the race on the supersofts - realised that the longer he was stuck behind the Haas the more it would negate his chances of challenging for victory.

As Verstappen could see Hamilton and the two Ferraris pulling away in the distance, he redoubled his efforts to try and overtake the Dane. A couple of times his Red Bull squirmed as he asked more from his supersoft Pirellis and over the radio reported: "The tyres are getting too hot."

On lap six, Verstappen ran wide over the kerbs in the fast Turn 11 and 12 left-right in a bid to get a run in the new, third DRS zone, but team boss Christian Horner revealed after the race, that he'd damaged his diffuser.

"As soon as he was behind the Haas, knowing how tough it is to overtake around here, he absolutely went for it, got a bit wide and that damage created significant imbalance for him," said Horner. "He was getting intermittent loss of rear downforce in mid-corners and that caught him out at Turn 1."

Four laps later, Verstappen lost the rear of his RBR at T1 and pirouetted, losing three places: to Romain

Grosjean in the second Haas, Ricciardo and the Renault of Nico Hulkenberg.

There were now two separate races, the three leaders, then 20 seconds further down the road a queue of cars behind the two Haas machines. When, on lap 18, Raikkonen was the first to stop he was able to return in third, just ahead of the Haas 'train'.

The very next lap, Hamilton also made the switch from the ultrasoft to the soft, which would take him to the end of the race and he continued to stay ahead of Raikkonen. On an alternative strategy, Vettel decided to stay out, particularly as he was still clocking a good pace on his rubber.

Then came a roll of the dice that determined the fate of this grand prix. Magnussen peeled into the pits from fourth, but as he approached Turn 3 after his stop, he slowed to a halt. The wheel nut on the left-rear had been cross-threaded and the mechanic signalled for K-Mag to depart before realising the wheel wasn't correctly fitted. If that was bad luck - worse was to follow.

Grosjean made his stop and this time the left-front was cross-threaded and -unbelievably - a mechanic once again gave the signal that all was good. When he realised it wasn't, it was again too late. Team boss Guenther Steiner said to MN later there had been no fault with the wheelguns or the airlines or any new wheelnut design. It was simply human error, and an error that occurred twice. A despondent Grosjean stopped at Turn 2 and that led to the activation of the virtual safety car - the signal for the field to circulate at a reduced speed for safety reasons.

Pitting during a VSC doesn't cost as much time, as your rivals on-track are not travelling at full racing speed. From entry to exit, a pitstop at Albert Park roughly costs a driver 23s of time,

under the VSC that's reduced to 13s.

Mercedes thought they had correctly calculated that Lewis was safe from Vettel even if he did pit during the VSC - but the software that determines the gap was wrong, Lewis hadn't built enough of a gap in case of that eventuality.

So when Vettel emerged from the pits ahead of the Mercedes, Hamilton was in disbelief. "What happened guys? Was that my mistake?" he asked on his team radio, but his engineer Pete Bonnington was equally surprised. "We thought we were safe," he replied.

Later Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said: "We've been using the same software for the last five years, but today, it gave us the wrong number. We thought we were OK until the TV pictures showed Vettel coming out ahead."


After the safety car had been deployed to remove the stricken Haas (the team was also fined £7,100 for their infractions), Vettel was able to keep his lead until the chequered flag. Towards the end, Hamilton attempted to close the gap, but made a mistake and decided to settle for second late on.

Overtaking proved to be very difficult to achieve on this narrow track. In the closing stages, Ricciardo was hot on Kimi's heels, but had to settle for fourth. They were one place ahead of Alonso who kept Verstappen at bay (his McLaren had also benefitted from the appearance of the VSC). Hulkenberg finished seventh, ahead of Bottas (who required a replacement gearbox and started 15th), Stoffel Vandoorne (McLaren) and Carlos Sainz (Renault) rounded out the top 10.

The man who was in 'party mode' this weekend was Vettel. Just like 12 months ago, he's drawn first blood in the title race, but this year his Ferrari appears second best to the Mercedes. Next party stop, Bahrain in a fortnight.

## RACE FACTS


Results © 2018 Formula One Administration Ltd




**AUSTRALIA**  
**Circuit:** Albert Park, Melbourne **Laps:** 58  
**Race distance:** 191.126 miles **Lap:** 3.295 miles  
**Lap record:** Michael Schumacher 2004, 1m24.125s  
**2017 winner:** Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)

**TYRE CHOICE**


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**ULTRASOFT**

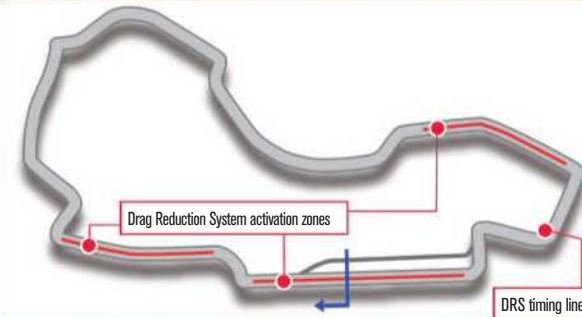


Prime  
**SUPERSOFT**



Option  
**SOFT**





Drag Reduction System activation zones

DRS timing line

## RESULTS

### FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 1/20

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	1h29m33.283s
2	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	+5.036s
3	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	+6.309s
4	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	+7.069s
5	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Renault	+27.886s
6	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	+28.945s
7	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Renault	+32.671s
8	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	+34.339s
9	Stoffel Vandoorne	BEL	McLaren-Renault	+34.921s
10	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Renault	+45.722s
11	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	+46.817s
12	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Force India-Mercedes	+1m00.278s
13	Charles Leclerc	MON	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m15.759s
14	Lance Stroll	CAN	Williams-Mercedes	+1m18.288s
15	Brendon Hartley	NZL	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap
R	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	L24/wheel nut
R	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Haas-Ferrari	L22/wheel nut
R	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Honda	L13/power unit
R	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	L5/hydraulics
R	Sergey Sirotkin	RUS	Williams-Mercedes	L4/brakes

Winner's average speed 128.045mph Lap leaders: Hamilton 1-18; Vettel 19-58

**FASTEST LAP | DANIEL RICCIARDO 1M25.945S**

ON LAP 54 (AVERAGE SPEED: 138.030MPH)

## QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m21.164s	11	Vandoorne	1m23.853s
2	Raikkonen	1m21.828s	12	Perez	1m24.005s
3	Vettel	1m21.838s	13	Stroll	1m24.230s
4	Verstappen	1m21.879s	14	Ocon	1m24.786s
5	Magnussen	1m23.187s	15	Bottas**	
6	Grosjean	1m23.339s	16	Hartley	1m24.532s
7	Hulkenberg	1m23.532s	17	Ericsson	1m24.556s
8	Ricciardo*	1m22.152s	18	Leclerc	1m24.636s
9	Sainz	1m23.577s	19	Sirotkin	1m24.922s
10	Alonso	1m23.692s	20	Gasly	1m25.295s

\*3-place grid penalty for red flag infringement \*\*5-place grid penalty for replacing gearbox



Alonso: happy with fifth spot

## CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

### DRIVERS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Sebastian Vettel	25
2	Lewis Hamilton	18
3	Kimi Raikkonen	15
4	Daniel Ricciardo	12
5	Fernando Alonso	10
6	Max Verstappen	8
7	Nico Hulkenberg	6
8	Valtteri Bottas	4
9	Stoffel Vandoorne	2
10	Carlos Sainz	1

### CONSTRUCTORS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Ferrari	40
2	Mercedes	22
3	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	20
4	McLaren-Renault	12
5	Renault	7
6	Force India-Mercedes	0
7	Sauber-Ferrari	0
8	Williams-Mercedes	0
9	Toro Rosso-Honda	0
-	Haas-Ferrari	0

**NEXT RACE: BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX APRIL 8**

# RACING NEWS

## F1 ROUND-UP

### Plastic bag

Williams driver Sergey Sirotkin has blamed a plastic bag for his retirement from the Australian Grand Prix. The Russian's Formula 1 debut lasted just five laps before he speared down the Turn 13 escape road after suffering a loss of brakes. "You would not believe what happened: it was a plastic sandwich bag, which went into the rear-right brake duct," he claimed. "We still have a piece of the bag in our bodywork. It was a big bag, a big sandwich bag. It was lap three or lap four, and it made [the brakes] overheat massively."

### Bottas reassured

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff spoke out to defend his driver Valtteri Bottas after a qualifying crash caused the second Mercedes driver to start down in 15th place. "This is a moment where you could start to question yourself," said Wolff. "This in race one is not good for the psychology of the drivers. We're trying to give him all the support we can, and obviously it's very early days for our team championship."

### Sick Sainz

Carlos Sainz Jr claimed he "nearly vomited" during the Australian GP after an issue with his Renault's water pump. Despite feeling unwell, the Spaniard was able to hang on to finish 10th. "We had a problem with the water pump and during the first 10 or 15 laps it was squirting water on my face, so I was drinking too much water," Sainz explained. "When the safety car came out I had a lot of water in my stomach and was moving from side to side. I was feeling it a lot in the corners and I wasn't feeling well."

### Pastor back

One-time F1 race winner Pastor Maldonado will move into sportscar racing this season. The 33-year-old Venezuelan will contest the World Endurance Championship's superseason with the DragonSpeed team. Maldonado will share the squad's LMP2 ORECA-Gibson 07 alongside former Champ Car driver Roberto Gonzalez. The 2012 Spanish Grand Prix victor has spent the last two seasons on the sidelines after losing his Renault F1 drive at the end of 2015. Maldonado's only previous sportscar experience came in the International GT Open back in 2008 when he made two appearances in a Scuderia Latorre GT3 Dodge Viper.

# BUTTON TO RACE IN HISTORIC MEETINGS

Ex-F1 champ will race at Le Mans Classic and Goodwood Revival



Jaguar XJR-9 will be raced by Button



Button: F1 2009 champ

### By Stephen Lickorish

Jenson Button will make his historic racing debut this year as he will compete in the Le Mans Classic and Goodwood Revival events.

The 2009 Formula 1 champion will enter JD Classics-run cars in both meetings. At the Le Mans Classic (July 6-8), Button will compete in an ex-Tom Walkinshaw Racing Jaguar XJR-9. He will race chassis

#688, which was the car built to replace the Le Mans-winning model, and it finished second in the 1988 Spa 1000km when driven by Johnny Dumfries, Martin Brundle and Jan Lammers.

It has not yet been revealed what JD Classics car Button will race at the Goodwood Revival in September.

JD Classics founder Derek Hood said: "It's an absolute pleasure for us to have Jenson

racing with us twice this season. I know the talented engineers working in our race shop in Maldon are some of the best in the world so Jenson will have all the technical support he needs. We're proud sponsors of both Le Mans Classic and Goodwood Revival because we believe they deliver some of the best historic motorsport action on the calendar - having Jenson racing at both just goes to show why."

Button is returning to full-time racing this season in the Japanese Super GT series at the wheel of a Honda NSX-GT, following his F1 retirement at the end of 2016.

Last year, besides making his Super GT debut, he also contested the Monaco Grand Prix with McLaren as a stand-in for Fernando Alonso, when the Spaniard was away competing in the Indy 500.

## Twitter spat between Hill and Mercedes

A declaration that Mercedes and Ferrari should break away from Formula 1 has led to a Twitter spat between Damon Hill and F1's reigning champion squad.

The 1996 world champion took to Twitter to urge F1's two big teams to make good on threats to form a breakaway series, complaining that "massive industrial complexes are ruining the sport" and adding that "the FIA have lost grip of F1".

Mercedes responded by suggesting Hill was not complaining when he was winning "with top of the line Renault power", which led to

Hill pointing out that he was driving for a Williams squad considered "disgusting garagiste upstarts".

Hill suggested the threats from Mercedes and Ferrari to walk away from F1 are little more than political posturing, and said the FIA should stand its ground.

"I just think it's a negotiation tactic," he added. "Would they be prepared to compete in a championship where they wouldn't have such favourable conditions? Where they had conditions that were more equal? If they're not prepared to do that, maybe they shouldn't be here."

## Trial beckons for ex-F1 supremo Ecclestone in bribery case

Bernie Ecclestone is facing a civil trial in London connected to the Gerhard Gribkowsky bribery case, following previous actions in the UK and Germany in 2014.

A starting date of October 1 2019 has been set for a high court action launched against Ecclestone by investment concern Bluewaters Communications Holdings LLC. Bluewaters claims its attempt to buy a controlling stake in F1 in 2005 "was derailed by a corrupt agreement reached between Mr Bernard Ecclestone and Dr Gerhard Gribkowsky."

The case revolves around Bluewaters' attempt to buy shares from Bayerische Landesbank (BLB), and the allegation that, with the help of Gribkowsky, Ecclestone was able to block the sale, leading to a subsequent deal with CVC.

In 2012, Gribkowsky admitted to receiving payments from Ecclestone and his family's Bambino trust. Ecclestone subsequently claimed he had been "shaken

down" by Gribkowsky, who threatened he would give information to the UK tax authorities that would cause problems for Ecclestone.

The 2014 action in Germany was suspended when Ecclestone made a payment of \$99m [£70m] to the Bavarian government. In this latest action Bluewaters is seeking damages from Ecclestone, BLB and Bambino.

Civil trial for ex-F1 boss Ecclestone



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*'The BTCC's major characters will attend'*  
Stars at Silverstone Classic, p13



Photos: LAT, Steve Jones, Jakob Ebrej



**ENTRY LIST**

**British F3**

NO.	DRIVER	TEAM
2	Kush Maini	Lanan Racing
3	Ben Hurst	Hillspeed
5	Alexandra Mohnhaupt	Douglas Motorsport
11	Tristan Charpentier	Fortec Motorsports
12	Joshua Mason	Lanan Racing
19	Harry Webb	Chris Dittmann Racing
22	Tom Gamble	Fortec Motorsports
24	Krishnaraaj Mahadik	Double R Racing
26	Linus Lundqvist	Double R Racing
28	Pavan Ravishankar	Double R Racing
31	Jusuf Owega	Hillspeed
33	Manuel Maldonado	Fortec Motorsports
55	Jamie Chadwick	Douglas Motorsport
63	Nicolai Kjaergaard	Carlin
88	Sun Yue Yang	Carlin

**CALENDAR**

**British F3**

DATE	TRACK
March 31/April 2	Oulton Park
April 28/29	Rockingham
May 26/27	Snetterton 300
June 9/10	Silverstone GP
July 21/22	Spa-Francorchamps
August 4/5	Brands Hatch GP
Sept 22/23	Donington Park
Oct 13/14	Silverstone GP

**WHO WILL TAKE BRITISH F3 CROWN?**

The big question on the eve of the BRDC British Formula 3 season this weekend at Oulton Park is whether Billy Monger will be on the grid. It seemed almost inconceivable that the 18-year-old would ever be able to return to the cockpit of a single-seater competitively. But less than 12 months after his horrific British Formula 4 crash at Donington Park last April which led to a double-leg amputation, Monger could be on the verge of doing just that. He's been testing with Carlin and MotorSport Vision, which runs the series, has allowed the team special permission to run a fourth car for Monger. Monger has been on the pace of his team-mates in testing but has made no secret that it is taking time for him to adapt to his hand controls. "I have driven a certain way for 10 or 11 years and for people to expect me to get to the same level with the control system I used before, I feel like we are doing ourselves justice," he said. "There's more room for improvement. It's completely different to how I used to drive before and I've been thrown in at the deep end."

Battling for wins or even the title will not be easy. Nicolai Kjaergaard has joined reigning champions Carlin after a campaign in British F3 last season with Fortec Motorsports and Jamie Chadwick is also returning – this year with Douglas Motorsport – and both should be challenging for wins and the title. Swede Linus Lundqvist graduates from British F4 with Double R Racing having finished fifth in the standings with five wins in 2017, and was also fastest on the only day of testing at Spa-Francorchamps last week. At Lanan Racing, Kush Maini, younger brother of Haas reserve driver Arjun, who finished second in the 2014 BRDC Formula 4 Championship, should also be considered a prospect for the title. The 17-year-old raced in the Italian F4 Championship for two years, finishing ninth in the standings last season. Elsewhere, two British drivers in the shape of reigning Ginetta Junior champion Tom Gamble and former British F4 driver Harry Webb could also prove to be dark horses for Fortec and Chris Dittmann Racing respectively.

**FF1600 experience for Mason**

Joshua Mason took part in four Formula Ford races at two different circuits last weekend, to collect licence signatures before racing in BRDC British F3 with Lanan Racing. The Uckfield teenager competed in a Van Diemen RF79 prepared by series frontrunner Mike Gardner in two races at Oulton Park on Saturday in the Pre '90 Formula Ford 1600 Northern Championship, before making the trip to Silverstone for a further two in Classic FF1600 on Sunday. He took a best result of eighth at Oulton and 11th at Silverstone. Two more race outings are planned at Castle Combe this weekend. Mason's BRDC British F3 deal came about from a chance encounter with a receptionist at the Red Bull Formula 1 team's simulator, who mentioned to Mason her dad – Graham Johnson – ran an F3 team. He has signed with Lanan on a two-year deal.



Mason raced FF1600

**F1 RACING ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

**JAMES ROBERTS**

**"Melbourne gets people talking"**



**T**hroughout the Formula 1 paddock there is constant intrigue. Who is talking to whom and why? The inquisitive – or nosy – think that because someone from Force India is talking to a figure in an FIA shirt, that means a row is about to develop; something controversial must be brewing. But in most cases, they are former colleagues catching up with each other. Their talk is of their happenings over the winter – friends sharing stories, or talking nonsense – after months apart. **Nothing to be suspicious about.**

But then high-level talks are also going on. CEOs of multi-national companies meet team principals to discuss sponsorship deals, promoters are planning their next big event. Media organisations are trying to conduct an interview for that all-important sound bite. But for 10 minutes on both Saturday and Sunday afternoon, all of these conversations stopped. The whole paddock came to a sudden halt. Mechanics stopped washing tyres, engineers came out of airless debrief rooms, journalists stopped eating lunch. The cause of the cessation of activity was the sudden appearance of a fighter jet. An F/A-18 Classic Hornet piloted very low, and very fast by a member of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Few things stop you as robustly as a fighter jet screaming across the sky directly over your head. Within a minute, the whole paddock stood, necks stretched back, to study the plane's trajectory and to try and record the flypast on their phone.

The Australian GP was a weekend that marked a significant amount of change in the series. New activity in digital content, a new range of TV graphics, a trophy for pole position, grid kids, a new logo, new start time, new ideas (a theme tune, no less), procedures and attitude. And of course, the halo. It's a truism that people resist – and usually hate – change but, despite all of the revisions, the opening grand prix of the new season retained all the magic that you'd expect from a typical race weekend.

The spectator numbers were high, there were events happening all around the circuit: live bands, classic car shows, two-seater rides, support races and the aforementioned airshows and fly pasts.

But then someone muttered in one of those many paddock conversations that next season, F1's new owners will continue to push through change and that we might have a new destination for the season opener: Miami in Florida.

The reasoning is that 0700hrs in Europe (0200hrs in the US East Coast) is not the ideal time to encourage people to watch the first race of a new show. It's probably unlikely to happen and perhaps that's one change too far because there is very little to fault about the Melbourne event. It gets people talking...

**QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP**

**Arden driver Maximilian Gunther set the fastest time in the final Formula 2 pre-season test in Bahrain last week. The German set a time on the final day that was just 0.02s quicker than Haas reserve driver Arjun Maini managed for Trident. Renault reserve driver Jack Aitken was the fastest of the British racers...** In F3 testing it was Mick Schumacher that set the fastest lap at the Hungaroring – but by an even smaller margin. The Prema Powerteam driver beat Hitech GP racer Alex Palou to top spot by 0.004s... **Ex-Formula 1**

**drivers Juan Pablo Montoya and Paul di Resta are in the frame for Le Mans 24 Hours drives with the United Autosports LMP2 squad. Team co-owner Richard Dean said: "Yes we're talking to Montoya, and who wouldn't want him? I'm a big fan, and I watched him at the Daytona 24 Hours when we were there. He was awesome through traffic, and he's not lost any of his hunger and aggression. I'd love it to happen, but the honest truth is it's not done." Dean described di Resta as his**

**"number one choice" for one of the drives... The World Endurance Championship will return to Interlagos for a Brazilian round in its 2019/20 season. The circuit last hosted a WEC event in 2014... Scott Pye claimed his first Australian Supercars win last weekend – in the third of four F1 supporting races. It was also the first triumph for the renamed Walkinshaw Andretti United team. Pye was in control of the race until a late rain storm allowed Jamie Whincup to close right in. Scott McLaughlin claimed the**



Pye took Supercar win

**opener, before Whincup won race two and David Reynolds took a first solo win in the finale... Heavy overnight snow forced the NASCAR Cup race at Martinsville, scheduled for last weekend, to be postponed until Monday – after M/N closed for press...**

**WTCR Alfa beckons for ex-F1 driver Morbidelli**

Ex-Formula 1 driver Gianni Morbidelli is the latest star name to commit to the new World Touring Car Cup for this season. The 50-year-old will partner fellow Italian Fabrizio Giovanardi in a Team Mulsanne Alfa Romeo Giulietta. After contesting 70 grands prix between 1990 and '97, Morbidelli moved into tin-tops and competed in the British and World Touring Car championships, as well as becoming a three-time champion in Superstars Italia, before moving to the TCR International Series. "I am happy and honoured to be

back at the top level of world touring car racing, and to do it with an Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR by Romeo Ferraris, sporting the logo of such a prestigious brand," he said. "It will be a championship with many great teams and drivers." ● Tiago Monteiro will be unable to start the season on April 8 in Morocco as he continues to recover from the testing accident he suffered last year. It ruled him out of the final four rounds of 2017 and cost him the chance to claim the title. It is not known when Monteiro will be able to return.



Morbidelli raced in F1, British and World Touring Cars

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# RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Steve Jones



Taylor will race a Pyro Honda Civic

## Kumho BMW class champion joins TCR grid

Reigning Kumho BMW class champion Ollie Taylor will race in TCR UK this year with a Honda Civic run by Team Pyro.

Taylor won the A1 class, the most populated of the Kumho BMW divisions, in an E90 M3, and has been testing a first generation Civic TCR.

"I looked at Ginettas and other championships but we went with TCR," said Taylor. "Testing has been going well and we've been to Castle Combe, Donington and Silverstone."

It is unclear which Civic Taylor will use this season, as there is a new generation machine for 2018. Taylor's Pyro-supported team-mate Finlay Crocker has the new car.

"We'll be able to do some back-to-back work. We're not sure what's going to be the best package after the balance of performance is applied."

"I'd like to be in the new car as it has independent rear suspension whereas the old one has torsion beam."

"Getting to grips with front-wheel drive has been a learning curve. We have a bit of experience in the old shape car now, so we have options either way."

A number of other drivers have also been confirmed for the Silverstone opener this weekend including Stewart Lines in a Maximum SEAT, Swedish sibling Rallycross racers Jessica and Andreas Backman, and Daniel Lloyd for West Coast Racing (VW Golfs), and Finnish squad LMS Racing will run Olli Kangas in another SEAT Leon. Those five are currently signed for the first round.



Price will remain with BMR Subaru

## Price secures last remaining BTCC drive

Josh Price will continue to race for Team BMR in the British Touring Car Championship this season in a third Subaru Levorg, completing the 2018 grid.

Former Clio Cup frontrunner Price joined Warren Scott's BMR outfit for his maiden BTCC campaign last year, taking a best result of ninth.

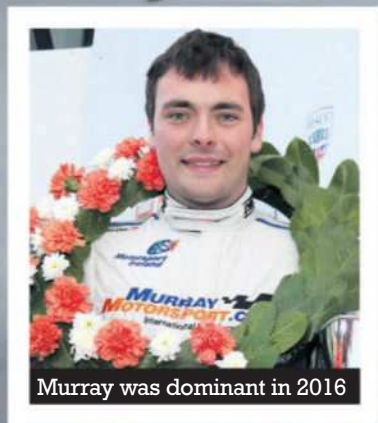
"There's unfinished business this year," said Price. "I'm going to play a strategy game to be always consistently in the top 10."

"We've already been out testing at Snetterton. With Subaru switching to Swindon engines, we'll find out how it runs on media day."

"Last year was always going to be hard not having driven the car. This year, having had the time, you know from what you've learned."

# FF1600 DOMINATOR MURRAY RETURNS

## Murray is back in title-winning car in National FF1600 series



Murray was dominant in 2016



Murray reunited with his RF99

By Stefan Mackley

### Niall Murray will return to the British Racing & Sports Car Club's National Formula Ford 1600 Championship this year aboard his title-winning car from 2016.

The 23-year-old dominated the series two years ago with his Van Diemen RF99, winning the title, Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy.

But after winning the Northern

Ireland FF1600 title last year, as well as occasional outings in British GT and USF2000, Murray has decided to return to the National series full-time with Bernard Dolan's newly-founded eponymous team.

"I've grown up over the last two or three years and the dream of being a professional driver and going to Formula 1 is gone," said Murray. "The percentage that go on and do well, the majority have paid for it."

"It's purely the enjoyment that I have with Formula Ford, driving the car, how rewarding a car it is, the set-up changes. I have done Formula Fords, British GT, USF2000 and none of that compares to the Formula Fords."

Murray believes this year's National series will be strongest since it was reformed just over four years ago.

Joey Foster, a three-time Festival winner, and 2014 National champion Stuart Gough will also return to the series.

"Without doubt it's going to be really tough but I'm looking forward to it. It was tough in 2016 but I can put a bet on that I won't win the same number of races this year," added Murray.

"It's going to be 10-times tougher going for the championship and it's by far the most competitive year there has been for a while."

Joining Murray at Team Dolan this year will be Jack Wolfenden and Matt Round-Garrido.

## Sunoco Whelen Challenge to be open to former winners for anniversary

The Sunoco Whelen Challenge will be open to past winners for the first time ever, in a one-off season to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the prize.

The challenge winner has previously won the chance to race in the Daytona 24 Hours, with last year's winner Stuart Middleton taking second overall in an Action Express Cadillac.

The prize is open to Pro drivers in British GT, BRDC British F3,

UK LMP3 Cup and Radical European Masters.

"As it's the 10th anniversary we thought we'd try and spice it up to get some of the past winners in and see if they can win it again," said Anders Hildebrand, managing director of Anglo American Oils. "Jonny Adam, Phil Keen, Bradley Smith, they can all do it."

"I thought it would be an amazing battle as they know what they have to do to win with fastest laps and

pole positions. It just adds another dimension to it and I thought it would be fun."

Points are awarded for race results, pole positions and fastest laps. In a two-driver team, both drivers get points for race results but the pole position and fastest lap points are given to the driver that gains them. The points are divided between the number of races in a season, to create an average score for each driver.



Adam gets the chance to win another Sunoco drive



Shield (l) was often battling Shepherd during 2017 season

## Shield joins his M3 Cup rival Shepherd on Ginetta GT4 Supercup grid

M3 Cup runner-up Carl Shield will join champion Adam Shepherd in switching to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this year.

Shield finished 24 points behind Shepherd in the 750 Motor Club category last year in just his second season of car racing, having previously competed in bikes. Shield will now step up to the Supercup, running as a privateer. "It's all looking very good," said

Shield. "It's a high-profile series and Adam Shepherd, who I've been battling with, is moving up with Team Hard. I had a look at the cars at the Autosport Show and it seemed more affordable than I thought it ever could be."

"Ginetta put me in a car at Donington Park for a test and I gelled with the car straight away. I had never driven on slicks before or with aero and after 20 minutes

in the car I was on the pace. "I'm doing it on a very tight budget - I just want to go out and have fun. Adam is a great racer, very fair, and it will be nice to carry on battling with him."

"I'd like to thank Ginetta for working so hard getting me in a car, they've been so helpful." Shield won the John Miles Novice Driver award in 2016 after impressing during his debut year.

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# RACING NEWS



Short is reigning MX-5 Cup champion

## MX-5 racer Short to focus on historics and rallying

Reigning MX-5 Cup champion Ben Short will not defend his title this year as he focuses on a multitude of other ventures.

Short will continue to race his Jaguar E-type in the Spa and Le Mans Classic races, as well as the Citroen C1 Challenge and has acquired new cars, including the one-of-a-kind 1956 Lister Maserati.

"We've just bought something really quite special, the Lister Maserati," said Short. "That's got some pedigree that we're hoping to go and do some really cool stuff like the Monaco Historic."

"With all that stuff going on, neither this championship nor BRSCC [MX-5 SuperCup] can I do enough rounds to win the championship. Really from a financial point of view I don't see the point in spending the money unless you've got a chance of winning it."

Short is also currently developing a Mk1 MX-5 rally car, which he ultimately aims to be competing with in Ireland.

"We haven't actually picked [a series] yet, we're still developing the car because everyone told me I'm an idiot, using an MX-5," said Short. "But if you look at it, we're now keeping up with the 1.6-litre Ford Escorts, which was the goal. We just want to get some class wins and some decent overall finishes."

# CLIO JUNIOR GETS JUST FIVE ENTRIES

## Future of the series is unclear after poor turnout



Four Clios: most of Junior field

By Jason Noble

**Fresh question marks have been raised over the Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series after its Silverstone season opener attracted just five cars.**

The series experienced a troubled birth after last year's calendar had to be postponed from its June start because of organisational issues, and ended up being run as a revised four-round calendar from September-November.

Series bosses were buoyed by the way it recovered through the year, with seven drivers mathematically in contention heading to the Brands

Hatch finale last winter, describing the year as a "good foundation" which displayed the series' potential.

But just five drivers made the trip to start the 2018 season in the category.

Westbourne Motorsport entered a single car in the Brands finale in November with an eye to a full year, but has not had any drivers come forward.

James Colburn from the team said: "It's very hard to promote because of the unknown regulations [delays meant they were published late], but we have got cars available if people are interested in it."

"In motorsport it's a budget thing as well – it's building the car

and committing to that car as well."

Nick Reeve, who won both of the Silverstone races said the number of entrants did not impact on his decision to race, and described it as the ideal platform for his ambition to join the senior series next year.

He added: "Whenever you look at any new championship – the Fiesta Juniors had five or six in their first season – and this is their [Clio Juniors] first real season."

"For what the car is it's an amazing championship but it's going to have to take time to grow."

Renault UK was unable to comment before *MN* closed for press.

## IN BRIEF

### Webbs are back

GT Cup stalwarts Tom and James Webb will return for a fourth successive season in 2018. The brothers will once again race a BMW M3 E46 GTR, this time in group GTA having claimed the GTB title back in '16. Despite seven wins, a puncture at the final round at Snetterton cost them the chance to retain their group crown last season, which went the way of Neil Huggins. "We were disappointed to just fall short of catching Neil for the championship last year, but it gives us a reason to come back and try again this time out," said Tom Webb.

### Youhill moves

Fiesta Championship race winner Jack Youhill will switch to the MotorSport Vision Trackday Championship this year. Youhill, who took three wins on his way to third in the 2017 Fiesta Class D points, feels the 45-minute races will suit his style. "I've noticed racing [Fiestas] that I get better towards the end of a race, so I think doing longer races would benefit me," he said. Youhill will initially drive the same Fiesta Zetec S but plans to either upgrade it or switch to a different car that will allow him to also race at Castle Combe Racing Club meetings.

### Glover rolls again

Tim Glover's return to the British Racing & Sports Car Club Fiesta Championship at Brands Hatch last weekend was short-lived. Glover, who spent most of last season on the sidelines after a multiple roll at Cadwell Park in May, crashed his Fiesta ST in the weekend's first race. He was nudged onto the wet grass exiting Druids hairpin, with the car then rolling after hitting the barriers. Glover was uninjured but expects his car's repair bill will force him to miss the championship's next two meetings.

### Mowlem back

Sportscar regular Johnny Mowlem and GT Cup race winner Bonamy Grimes are set for a full LMP3 Cup season with Red River Sport this year. The duo had a one-off outing at Donington Park last season, also winning for AF Corse in GT Cup during the same weekend. Le Mans 24 Hours class podium finisher Mowlem believes the LMP3 car is a strong learning tool for aspiring GT racers. "One of the things I realised quite early on is that the Ligier JS P3 had similarities to a GTE car," said Mowlem.

### Wood's Hyundai run

Ginetta Junior race winner Tom Wood made a one-off appearance in the Hyundai Coupe Cup at Silverstone on Saturday to gain signatures for his licence ahead of a British GT attack. The Derby-based youngster entered as a privateer in the two races on the National circuit, taking a fifth and a sixth. "It's a bit of a difference but they are good fun to drive," he said.

### Morley's defence

Reigning F1 25 Open Superkart champion Liam Morley began his defence with a win at the opening round at Oulton Park last weekend beating Sam Moss. He looked to be heading for another victory in race two but the battery went flat causing a misfire. The race was then red-flagged due to an incident on the exit of Shell. Morley's team changed the battery in the pits before the restart, but this meant he had to start from the back of the grid. At the restart Morley was making up places before a second red flag and the race was declared void. All drivers involved in the incidents were able to walk away.



Wilson has described the Falcon as a "grenade" after his Silverstone outing

## Wilson debuts ex-rally Falcon in Classic Thunder

Andy Wilson debuted his ex-works Ford Falcon in the Classic Thunder race at Silverstone last weekend.

After finishing seventh out of the Classic Thunder runners in the opening race, he only completed two laps in the second as the car was not suited to a damp Silverstone.

"I hadn't driven it before last Friday's test," said Wilson. "But in the damp, greasy conditions it was a real handful.

"It was one of the original Falcon rally cars built for the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally. During 1969/70 Terry Sanger raced it in the British Group 5 Saloons, but after it was outlawed it became one of the original Super Saloons in 1973 and raced in the ICS Series.

"It's got a 6.1-litre Windsor NASCAR engine, but handles really well. It's really brutal though and like a grenade."

## Caterham racers get chance to compete at Laguna Seca

Caterham club racers will get the chance to race at the iconic Laguna Seca track later this year.

The British manufacturer has organised an end-of-season Caterham Challenge Cup event that is open to drivers in all of Caterham's UK championships.

The Motor Sports Association has worked with the Sports Car Club of America and Automobile Competition Committee for the United States to enable UK regulations to be used for the December 1/2 event.

Former Olympic cyclist and sometime

Caterham racer Sir Chris Hoy is the first competitor to sign up.

Simon Lambert, Caterham motorsport director, said: "If we were to put a sporting analogy to the Caterham Challenge Cup, this is our World Cup Final for Caterham Motorsport.

"It will be the pinnacle, the climax to our racing season. It's a huge deal to us and we want it to be for our drivers, too."

Hoy added: "When the race was announced I signed up instantly. What an adventure it will be and what a way to finish off the 2018 racing calendar."



Caterham drivers will be heading Stateside

## Standalone grids for Pre '66 and Pre '83 Classic Touring Cars prove to be a hit

The decision to split the Pre '66 and Pre '83 categories of Classic Touring Cars into separate grids for 2018 has been hailed by drivers – with healthy entry numbers for both classes.

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club previously ran the Pre '66 Classic Saloon and Historic Touring Cars with the Pre '83

Group 1 Touring Cars, but opted to run separate races at the season opener at Silverstone last weekend.

Between 19 and 23 drivers competed in the Pre '66 tourers, while the Pre '83 grid attracted between 17 and 20 drivers across the weekend.

Series sponsor Paul Inch, who runs a Mini

Cooper in the Pre '66 class, said: "I think a split grid has helped [numbers], and we have changed the tyres so you don't have to use the FIA Dunlops which were £200 each.

"A lot of people have come out in memory of Tony Preston [Pre '66 representative and regular winner, who died in 2017] because he was such a sociable chap."



Both series got healthy entry numbers

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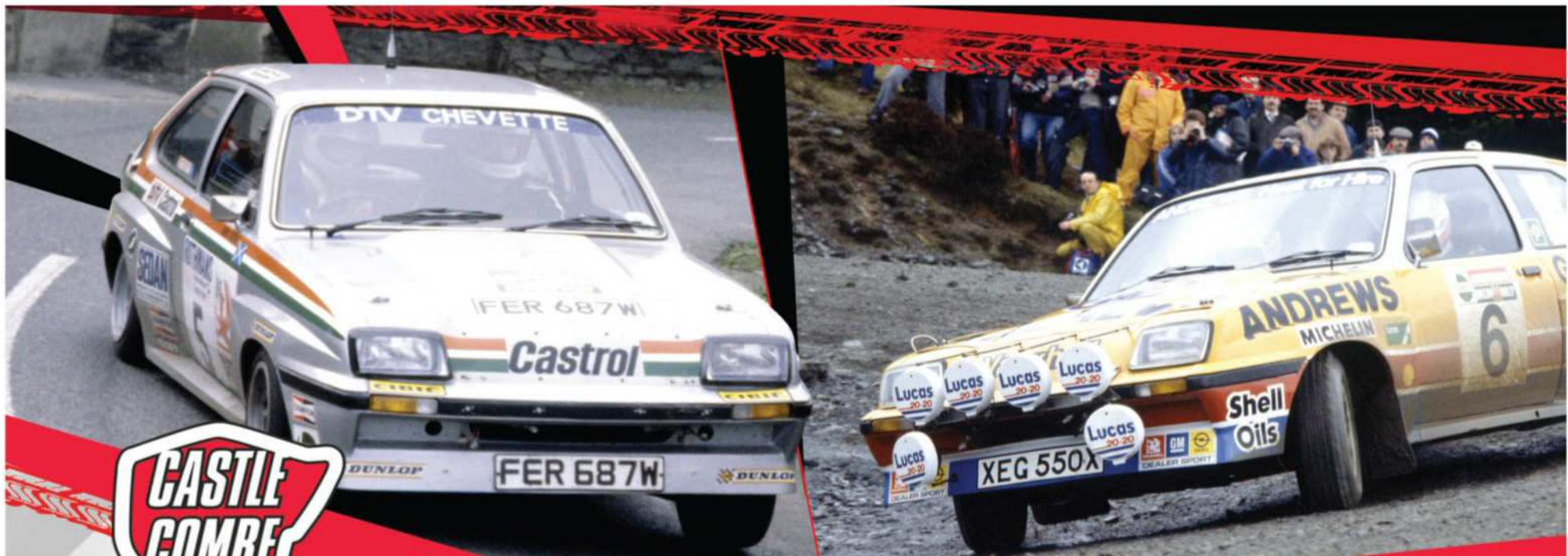
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# HISTORICS

'Patten back after three decades'

Datsun man returns, below

Photos: Paul Lawrence



## DOWN THE PUB WITH

### RICHARD WOOLMER

Age: 22 Lives: Bedford  
Youngster in historics

#### He tried modern racing

"I think I was always going to end up in historics. It was inevitable given the family business is preparing classic racing cars. I worked in modern motorsport as a technician for a few years and I hated every minute of it. It was just so cut throat but historics is lovely with a nice atmosphere and it is just a great environment."

#### He's too tall for single-seaters

"I've not done any modern racing but if the opportunity came up I would. I'm six foot five inches tall so I'm too tall for modern single-seaters but a touring car would be interesting."

#### He won at Goodwood

"We're generally working on cars from the 1950s and 1960s and that's what I aspire to race. When I was 11 years old I watched Emanuele Pirro win the Freddy March Memorial in a Healey 100S and I said to my dad that one day I wanted to win that race. How lucky am I that in 2016, my first Goodwood Revival, I won that race. It was a dream come true. Goodwood is very fast and very challenging and I respect it."

#### They specialise in Healey 100s

"I run the workshop in the family business, Woolmer Classic Engineering, and we're very busy all the time. Healey 100s are our base but a customer with a Healey will come back to us with other cars so we work on all sorts of other cars as well."

#### He'll go to Le Mans Classic

"I raced the ex-Morley brothers Healey 3000 at the Members' Meeting and we'll run in the Equipe GTS pre-'63 series this year. I'll be doing some of those in a Healey 3000 and our little yellow Sebring Sprite. Le Mans Classic is on the cards with Sam Tordoff in his Porsche 356 and we want to do well in our class in that."

#### He has a passion for historics

"I'm very lucky to get the chance to race these cars. I grew up around this type of car and I'm almost as sad as my dad Paul about the heritage of these cars. I hope we can go back to the Goodwood Revival in September and then do the big events like the Silverstone Classic and Donington Festival."



Woolmer: Healey expert

# RALLY 2WD THUMBS UP FROM ENTRANTS

## New format draws widespread praise on Rally North Wales



New Rally 2WD was flooded with entries

By Paul Lawrence

**The historic rallying fraternity gave an overwhelmingly positive response to the new Rally 2WD format as the season opened on Rally North Wales on Saturday.**

The MSA British Historic Rally Championship kicked off with 60 registered contenders, the highest number since the changes to event running order and more than twice the number on the opening round of 2017.

The biggest field of Category 1 (pre-1968) cars for around five years lined up in Dolgellau, including Porsche 911 driver Dessie Nutt, who pulled out of his last gravel rally in 2016 after just two stages due to poor road conditions.

"If gravel rallying is going to be like this, I'll be back," said Nutt despite an early retirement when the Porsche slid off the

road without damage.

Ford Escort Mk2 driver Steve Ward joined the BHRC regulars for the first time. He said: "The stages were amazing and it's right that we support Rally 2WD."

Having only done two rallies in 2017 due to road conditions, Robin Shuttleworth fielded his 1600cc Escort Mk1. "We loved it," he said. "The stages were great. Well done to everyone with the Rally 2WD format."

Guy Weaver, chairman of the event-organising Wolverhampton and South Staffs Car Club, was delighted with a capacity entry of 120 cars and a commercially viable rally. "I believe it was a massive success and justified our decision to go with the Rally 2WD format," said Weaver.

The BHRC continues with round two, the Pirelli Rally (April 28), which also runs the two-wheel-drive cars first over all single-use stages.

## Ford man Barrett beats the clock to impress on Rally North Wales



Barrett was impressive

Northern Irishman Paul Barrett was one of the stars of Rally North Wales in a fresh-build Ford Escort Mk2.

After the briefest of tests on Friday morning in the BDG-powered car, Barrett and Dai Roberts finished as the

third historic crew home and Barrett said there should be more pace to come.

Barrett starred in the 2016 BHRC in a Pinto-engined Mk2, now being used by Josh Browne, and sat out 2017 while building the new and more powerful car. "We started it

about six weeks before Christmas and we had a huge rush last week. I drove it out of the workshops, into the trailer and straight to the ferry in Dublin," said Barrett.

"It's run-in now but we've still got a lot of things to do to it," he said after the rally.

## Rowley in an Escort for anniversary run

Historic single-seater racer and preparer Iain Rowley will race a Group 1 Ford Escort Mk1 RS2000 in the model's 50th anniversary celebration races at Brands Hatch in September.

For Rowley, it will mark a return to his roots as his first experience of on-track driving was in an Escort at the Brands Hatch racing school in 1972.

Rowley, best known for his work on period single-seaters, bought the bare bodyshell about 15 years ago and then stored it at the back of his workshop.

"When the 50th anniversary race was announced I decided to get it out and finish building it," said Rowley. "I tested it at Mallory Park recently and loved it."

## Sumpter and Jordan reunited in a Porsche

Porsche expert Mark Sumpter will renew an old partnership with Mike Jordan in the new 2.0L Cup for classic Porsche 911s this season.

Sumpter and Jordan shared Porsches in the British and FIA GT Championships 20 years ago but will now race a pre-'66 911 in the European one-model series being organised by Peter Auto.

"It is an ex-rally car I bought in



Sumpter and Jordan will race

an auction," said Sumpter of the base car, which has been taken back to its original slate grey colour and is now immaculate. Sumpter gave the car a debut race at the Goodwood Members' Meeting.

## Past and present stars of the British Touring Car Championship for Silverstone Classic

The 60th anniversary of the British Touring Car Championship will be marked by a cavalcade of iconic cars and former champions at the Silverstone Classic on July 22.

The parade on the event's Tin

Top Sunday will include the first and most recent title winners: an Austin Westminster and a Subaru Levorg.

Former BTCC champions will be there and several

could be racing over the weekend, including John Cleland, Jason Plato, Tim Harvey, Matt Neal, Colin Turkington and Andrew Jordan. "We are



delighted that the Silverstone Classic is saluting the BTCC's diamond anniversary with what's going to be a magnificent gathering of stars and cars from the past 60 years," said BTCC series director Alan Gow.

## IN BRIEF

**Patten's back**  
Datsun 240Z driver Graham Patten returned to gravel rallying for the first time in 32 years on Rally North Wales. The Dorset driver's last gravel rally was the Chieftain Rally on Salisbury Plain in 1986 at the wheel of an Audi quattro. He had never driven the Dyfi forest complex before, but was forced to retire at service after the first leg of stages.

#### Drivers drop out

Three of the top 10 historic seeds on Rally North Wales had to withdraw their entries close to the event. Pressure of work commitments forced Matthew Robinson to pull out on the eve of the rally, while late engine issues sidelined Joe Price and Rudi Lancaster. All three drivers hope to kick-start their BHRC campaigns on round two, the Pirelli Rally on April 28.

#### John Lord

**MN is sad to report the death of Formula Junior racer John Lord after a battle against cancer. He raced a Lotus 18 with success, winning class C2 in the Lurani Trophy in 2015 and again in 2017. John also tried his hand at Formula 2 last year with an immaculate Ralt RT1. MN offers sincere condolences to his family and many friends across the sport.**

#### Slaughter on form

Dick Slaughter made a fine return to gravel rallying after a four-year sabbatical to take fourth in class on Rally North Wales. The hugely experienced Kent driver was tempted back into his Ford Escort Mk1 by Rally 2WD and reported a fantastic day in the Welsh forests with Tim Sayer on the notes.

#### New F2 racers

A crop of fresh cars and new drivers are due to race in the HSCC Historic F2 Series this season including Daniel Clayfield, who has recently tested his March 722. It is the ex-John Calvert Formula Atlantic car. Meanwhile, coming from Australia is the March 76B of Peter Brennan, a respected member of the Australian racing fraternity.

#### Rally man is busy

Porsche racer Anthony Galliers-Pratt switched disciplines over the weekend to tackle two rallies in a Porsche 911 from Tuthill Porsche. Co-driven by Peter Lythell, Galliers-Pratt is contesting four rallies in a month to get licence upgrading signatures before taking on some longer events. He took part in both Rally North Wales and the Caerwent Stages at the weekend.

#### Ford Escort fleet

Six cars built and prepared by Graham Standen Motorsport were running on Rally North Wales. Standen, who works solo at his workshop in Kent, was responsible for the major work on the Ford Escorts of James Potter, Chris Browne, Josh Browne, Dick Slaughter, James Slaughter and Paul Holmes on the opening BHRC round.

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Red Bull



Loeb says he feels comfortable on asphalt



## LOEB PREDICTS MORE PACE ON TOUR DE CORSE CHARGE

Frenchman satisfied with pre-rally test ahead of return to WRC action

By David Evans

Sebastien Loeb has told *Motorsport News* his preparations for next week's Tour de Corse were more straightforward than for Rally Mexico earlier this month.

The Frenchman, who returned to the World Rally Championship for the first time in three years in Guanajuato, completed a two-day test of Citroën's C3 WRC in Corsica last week and admitted that acclimatising to the asphalt-specification car had been simpler than his preparations for gravel.

Despite not having competed in the world championship on gravel since

winning the 2013 Rally Argentina, Loeb led Rally Mexico last month before dropping out of the top spot after he stopped to change a puncture on the second day of the Leon-based event.

Loeb last competed in Corsica in 2008 (France's WRC round moved to Alsace from 2010 to 2014, returning to the island in 2015) and admits his lack of familiarity with the route could be one of the areas where he struggles next week – he had knowledge of around 70 per cent of the Rally Mexico route.

Asked what he expected from the Bastia-based event, Loeb told *MN* from his test last week: "It's difficult to

say what's possible. On Tarmac I've always been competitive and I hope that's the case when we come here [to Corsica] for the rally. But on the other side, I know Corsica is completely new for me this year. I will have to discover every stage and that will, for sure, be a disadvantage. It's difficult to know exactly, but I hope to be in the fight."

Loeb's arrival at the test was delayed by team commitments in France, meaning he completed only a day-and-a-half of running – but the four-time Corsica winner was happy with his preparations.

"The test was OK," he said. "It went well. The feeling from the car was quite good, it helped to have driven the car in

Mexico, even if it was on gravel – I was a bit more used to the car than the first gravel test. It's not harder to get used to the car on Tarmac, it's actually easier because I was a little bit used to it.

"There was a bit of understeering for me, we [will] try to work on this, but otherwise the feeling was OK. After the first run I immediately started to work on finding a better set-up and after the third or the fourth run, the feeling was quite good and we then tried to make some little adjustments. I didn't need to make any big changes to the car. I found the set-up quite quickly, but then I tried some other set-ups to check some different feelings from the car and to try

to prepare for different conditions."

Kris Meeke took advantage of Loeb's late arrival at the test to pick up an extra morning's running time in the C3 before handing the car over to his team-mate. Loeb admitted working with the Northern Irishman was simplifying the set-up.

"My settings for the car are close to Kris [Meeke]. The 'diff' is the same, but I am a bit different in rollbar and springs – the rest is quite similar."

Corsica is the second of Loeb's three planned outings for this season, with Spain his third and final start with the team in October.

Loeb won the last four Corsican WRC rounds and his statistics for every Tour

## M-Sport learns lessons by taking WRC car to Ford Performance base in North Carolina

M-Sport's head of rally engineering Chris Williams admitted his team learned from taking the Ford Fiesta WRC to the Ford Performance technical base in North Carolina.

Two M-Sport engineers accompanied Sebastien Ogier's Rally Mexico-winning Fiesta WRC to Charlotte, the home of

Ford's NASCAR programme, where the car went through previously untried test procedures.

"We wanted to get the car out there," said Williams, "but in a week when the [test] car was already in Corsica, it was really busy. We weren't exactly passing, but we were in the vicinity on the

way back from Mexico, so that made sense. And we learned from the trip, which is good. And we validated a lot of what we've already done with Ford in CFD [Computational Fluid Dynamics], so it was very worthwhile.

"We spent time at Windshear [a nearby rolling road windtunnel],

that was the first time this car's been on that and it helped."

Williams added that much of the development work completed was for the longer-term, but admitted there would be shorter-term upgrades coming from the trip as well.

"Windshear was the main thing

we went for," said Williams, "but we've already implemented some stuff, but much of it is longer-term."

The Fiesta WRC is expected to return to Charlotte later this season to continue the use of Ford Performance's development facility.

## PRODRIVE'S NEW RALLYCROSS AMBITIONS

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The Strength of Experience



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## 'Elliott was untouchable on Rally North Wales'

Historic championship thrills, p26



### Powerstage rules under the spotlight

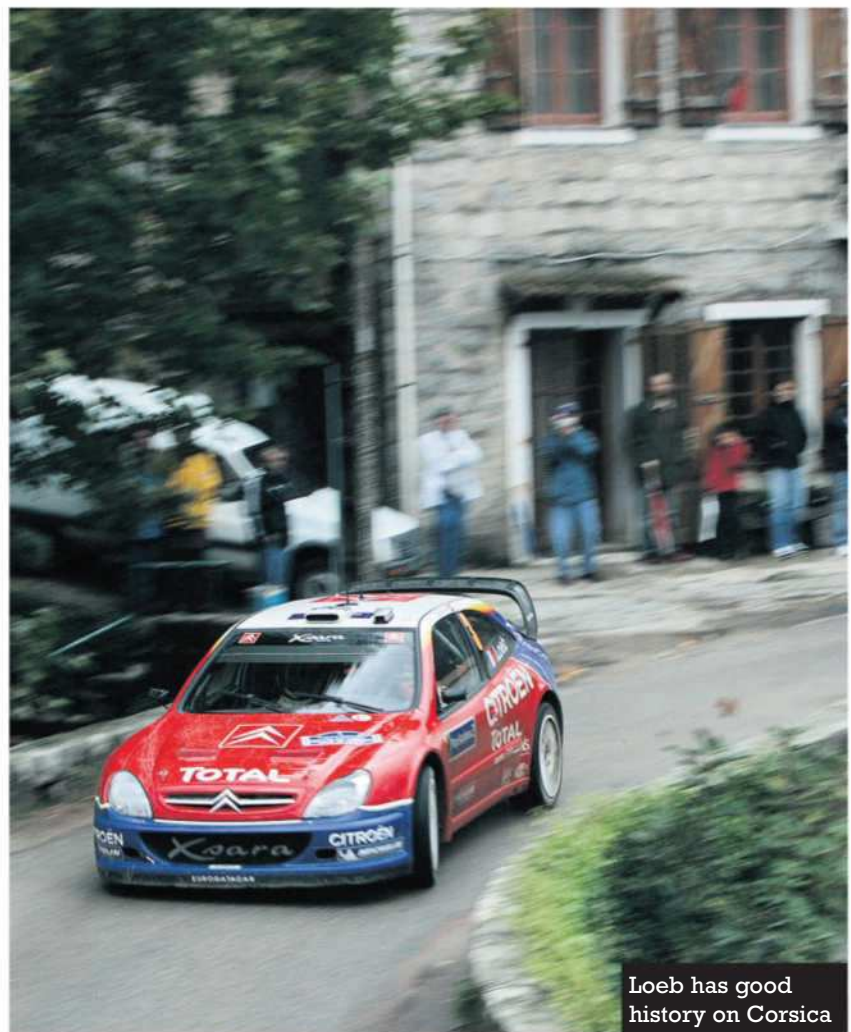
Anybody looking to take a tactical approach to the powerstage running order will find themselves ineligible for points from the final stage of World Rally Championship qualifiers from next week's Tour de Corse onwards.

Drivers took penalties and jockeyed for position on the powerstage in Sweden and Mexico, forcing the FIA to take action. The WRC Commission voted on a rule change last week and that is expected to be rubber-stamped by a World Motor Sport Council e-vote before the start of Corsica on April 6.

Sebastien Ogier checked into the powerstage late to improve his place on the road in Sweden, while Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak followed suit in Leon. That meant the cars weren't in action when they were expected to be on the live television test.

M-Sport managing director Malcolm Wilson said he would welcome the change: "A solution which would mean crews forfeiting their chance to take points would seem the most sensible and straightforward solution and that would get our support. We did it in Sweden, others did it in Mexico and we have absolutely no issue with that whatsoever."

The matter has been brought to the table sooner than expected, with FIA rally director Yves Matton telling *MN* in Mexico a possible regulation change would be debated at the next Commission meeting in May.



Loeb has good history on Corsica

de Corse he's finished in a factory car make for impressive reading.

From 72 stages completed, he was fastest on 46 and held the lead for 55.

"It's nice to be back in Corsica," Loeb said.

"I have very good memories of this place – I had my first title here, but that was a long time ago now in 2004.

"And now it is 14 years later and still in Corsica for the rally, it's a nice feeling. I really enjoy this place; I like it: I came a few times with the boat for the holidays and, of course, it's also the French rally, so this is very nice as well."

See Loeb feature on p22/23

### Lefebvre leads the competitive R5 field on Tour de Corse

Stephane Lefebvre will give Citroen's C3 R5 its competitive debut at next month's Tour de Corse, an event packed with its biggest entry for three years.

Lefebvre will be joined on the French island by his fellow Frenchman Yoann Bonato who drives another C3 R5. The April 5-8 event provides the perfect benchmark for the World Rally Championship's latest R5 car, with Jan Kopecky leading the WRC2 field away in his factory Skoda

Fabia. Japan's Rally Sweden sensation Takamoto Katsuta is the leading Ford Fiesta R5 runner away behind the Czech Republic's asphalt expert. Briton Gus Greensmith is competing in Corsica, but his Ford Fiesta R5 won't be registered for points.

The Bastia-based rally has 92 entries and includes the healthiest turn-out yet for the FIA R-GT Cup, where three Porsche 911s (including one for Irishman John Coyne) are

joined by four Abarth 124s. Defending R-GT champion Romain Dumas is not among the entries.

The entry is bolstered by the full field of 13 Junior WRC cars, including Brit Tom Williams.

At the front of the field, Bryan Bouffier returns to drive M-Sport Ford's third Ford Fiesta WRC and Sebastien Loeb partners Kris Meeke in the Citroen squad for the second event in succession.



Ingram flew on his way to a fourth place finish last weekend

### Ingram chuffed with his Azores pace

Chris Ingram has described his competitive debut in a four-wheel-drive car as a "dream come true" on last week's Azores Rally.

The Manchester driver made his debut in his Toksport-run Skoda Fabia R5, won the FIA ERC Junior U28 category and finished fourth overall behind Alexey Lukyanuk, Ricardo Moura and Bruno Magalhaes – all of whom are previous winners of the event.

"I can't begin to describe just how enjoyable it was to drive this car on those roads, it's was pretty mint," Ingram told *MN*. "This was a genuine dream come true. This is something I've been working on for so long, to finally be here and driving an R5 car – and a car so brilliant from Toksport – it's just amazing." Now Ingram will turn his

attentions to the Canary Islands and the ERC's second round, an all-asphalt affair on the Spanish islands (May 3-5).

"Everything has been so focused on the Azores up until now," said Ingram, "but now I'll start working on getting some seat time in the Skoda on Tarmac before the Canaries."

One area he will be keen to work on is his pacenotes.

"I used my notes from last year in the Azores," he said. "It didn't work at all. In a two-wheel-drive car, I had so much down as 'max' and it just wasn't in the four-wheel drive. I was having to judge each corner as we were coming to it, which really wasn't ideal. We'll have that sorted for the next one. But for my first time in an R5 car, I think I achieved everything that was possible."

## GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

# DAVID EVANS

"The RBF has raised £1m"



**I**n November 2011, everything went a bit orange. Jensen Button, Lewis Hamilton, Seb Loeb, Ogier and Vettel... they all wore the T-shirt. They all painted it orange. And so did Jamie Oliver.

And so did Melanie Sykes, helping to light up a 10-year anniversary well worth marking.

A decade had passed since Richard Burns and Robert Reid won the World Rally Championship and what better way to remember that moment than taking us back to 1997, a pint of Boddingtons and the line: "Do you want a flake in that, love?"

Undoubtedly, Burns would have approved.

Richard couldn't be with us to paint it orange. He had, of course, passed away four years on from taking the title. And the orange thing wasn't just about remembering a great mate, brilliant driver and world champion. It was about something even more important than that, it was about helping the Richard Burns Foundation to raise money for, among others, the Youth Cancer Trust, Make a Wish, Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance and Brain and Spine Foundation.

Why am I telling you this?

Because, after years of rattling buckets and raising an utterly inspiring £1,030,953.25, RBF is shutting its doors.

More than 500 volunteers – including patrons Reid, Marcus Gronholm, Guy Wilks, Marino Franchitti and Markko Martin – have delivered more than 15,000 hours of support for a cause which nobody could ignore.

And a driver we will never forget.

Just as RB was a pioneer for in-car safety during his time in the World Rally Championship, RBF has strived and succeeded in delivering the same results in the cause it has supported. And it's hard to imagine a better way to close out 11 years than, on the lock-stops in a brace of bright orange Toyota GT86 rally cars. RBF's final major donation is to Spinal Track – a charity which offers disabled drivers the opportunity to live a moment or two in top. Prior to RBF's involvement, all the Spinal Track cars had been used on circuits. Not any more; those GT86s are set ready for the loose.

Richard's former girlfriend Zoe Scott said: "The Richard Burns Foundation was some small answer to the large question posed by Richard's untimely death. I am proud of what our volunteers, charity partners, corporate patrons and ultimately our donors have achieved in Richard's name over the past 11 years. It is now an appropriate juncture to call time on our work, celebrate what has been achieved in his name and pass the baton to Spinal Track, a brilliant and fitting initiative that really does have the power to change lives."

Predictably, I can't believe it's 11 years since RBF started. Even more shocking are the 17 that have passed since RB grabbed the hand of the man sitting next to him to inform Reidy that – in case of any doubt – he now actually was: "The best in the world!"

Richard Burns was an inspiration for a Foundation which delivered realisation of dreams. To those of you who helped – especially the unsung heroes like Liam Clogger and Colin McMaster – must go a huge thank you. Your efforts and your millions changed lives.

Just like the first bloke to paint it orange.



**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: Flatshiftmedia, Writtle Photographic, Songasport

# MALCOLM WILSON RALLY FAILS TO RESCHEDULE IN '18

## No date for postponed Cumbrian BTRDA event



MW Stages last ran in 2017

By Jack Benyon

**The Malcolm Wilson Rally will not run in 2018, after originally being postponed from its March 3 date due to bad weather.**

The second round of the BTRDA Rally Series had looked extensively at where it could fit back into a congested rally calendar. The event worked with both the Cheviot Stages [October 28] and Malton Forest Rally [November 4], along with the Devil's Own Road Rally [October 28] in an attempt to reschedule.

However, due to the North Lakes Forests not being available, the necessary mileage for a BTRDA event would have been unachievable.

The BTRDA Rally Series will now run with one fewer event as

its regulations don't contain a reserve event. As per MSA regulations, the reserve event must be included in the regulations for the series.

"We're obviously disappointed that the Malcolm Wilson couldn't find a date to run on," said Neil Cross, BTRDA Committee Chairman. "We are going to go as per our event regulations and [count the] best five scores of seven events, and best four scores of five events for the MSA English Championship. Originally it was six from eight and five from six."

On the subject of why the BTRDA didn't identify a reserve event, Cross added: "We like the idea of having one event per month. Generically the rally season, with the odd exception of popular events,

like Grizedale, finishes after Rally GB. It doesn't matter when Rally GB runs but that's the rough cut-off point. There's not a lot of events we can look at after Rally GB that would fit the criteria [for being a BTRDA event]. The Malcolm Wilson organisers worked hard."

The Border Counties Rally, which was due to run the weekend after, also failed to find a date, although the Mid Wales Stages is being re-organised for May 27.

In a statement, the Malcolm Wilson organisers praised the support of Cockermouth Town Council and Allerdale Borough Council, and also confirmed that competitors could receive a refund by emailing details to rsandham7@gmail.com, quoting the start number and both crews' names.

## Williams wants consistency in France

Welsh driver Sara Williams is hoping to improve her consistency in a bid to move up the Clio R3T European Trophy France standings.

Starting her second year in the series on the Rallye Touquet Pas-de-Calais earlier this month, Williams set top-three times overall before retiring with electrical trouble.

"I need to be more consistent now, we had one good stage and then one bad stage," said Williams. "It was really slippery, there was a lot of mud dragged out on the road and we had a

couple of spins. I think we were unlucky."

The next round of the seven-event championship, Rallye Lyon-Charbonniere on April 20-22, is new to Williams, but is further south and likely to have less cuts and mud dragged onto the road.

"I'm looking forward to the next round now and getting a good result on the board," the Brecon driver added.

"I'd like to do the whole season, but it depends how the next round goes because if we don't have a good run on that one, points will be lacking."



Williams' Clio R3T



Photo: John Fife

**There was a dead-heat in Sunday's DCC Junior Stages Rally at Ingliston when Lewis Haining and Johnnie MacKay finished on an identical total. MacKay lost out on the final stage and admitted: "I was just too cautious." Haining – in his first run in his new Skoda – was delighted with his first Junior victory, winning courtesy of fastest time on the first stage: "The Skoda has a better rear end than my previous car so I can lean harder on the bends."**



4x4 series runs off-road all around the UK and has low entries

## British Cross Country could be cancelled

A decision was expected to be made on Monday as to the future of the British Cross Country Championship, due to a low number of entries.

MN understands that the series garnered 24 entries, one short of its 25 threshold to run set by the organiser. The MSA-backed championship, run by the Marches 4x4 organising club, was set to take in six rounds across the UK this year.

Last year's championship was won by Martin Gould in a Buxton 4x4 Rivett and he had been one of those slated to return.

A Facebook page, run by the championship photographer but not affiliated to the Marches 4x4, confirmed that the championship had indeed been cancelled for this year.

The championship was unavailable for comment as MN went to press on Monday.



Butler debuted new-build Toyota Corolla last weekend

## Butler debuts sub-£6000 Toyota Corolla for two-litre BTRDA's Rally First class

Guy Butler debuted a new 200+ bhp Toyota Corolla T-Sport built for £6000 on Rally North Wales last weekend, ahead of using the car in the BTRDA Rally Series this year.

The car, built by John Goff of Rallyme, is a culmination of analysing what would make the most cost effective car for the Rally First 2.0 championship in

the BTRDA. The 2005 car is an 1800cc and Butler used it to finish 23rd of the modern two-wheel-drives last Sunday.

"We looked at what we could do differently than last year," said Goff, who aims at entry-level rallying to bring new drivers into the sport. "The BTRDA has launched the Rally First 2.0 class but there hasn't been many

people building them. The Corolla is 1800cc but they're around 180bhp standard, so they're quite a powerful lump. So we've bought a couple of them.

"It's a bit unusual so we've had to work with different suppliers to get things like the suspension sorted. Bilstein has worked with us to get it right. It's an affordable car, it's cost around £6000 to build.

That's the mindset we have to have. It should be a competitive car and I'm really happy with how it's come out."

Butler, who has competed in the Fiesta ST Trophy for two seasons, added: "John's developed the Corollas and done a fantastic job. I'm going to do a few rallies in it and I'm looking forward to it."

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WE'LL KEEP YOU ON TRACK



## 'Ingram tops ERC Junior Under 28s on R5 debut'

Azores Rally report, p19



Photos: William Neill, Writtle Photographic

## Faulkner and Foy out of hospital

John Faulkner and Peter Foy's Rally Barbados entry is in doubt after a huge crash on the AGBO Stages at Weston Park earlier this month.

The pair hit an oak tree and Foy had to be extracted and airlifted to hospital. At Royal Stoke University Hospital, Faulkner's foot was put in plaster, while Foy was diagnosed with a broken ankle and femur.

The Ford Escort Mk2 they were using was destroyed.

"This was a huge high speed accident, Peter and I would like to thank all involved in our recovery at the scene and care at local hospitals," said Faulkner. "The rescue, medical crews, organising club and fellow competitors were all great and we have received many good wishes."

The accident may force Foy to miss the Speyside Stages where he was due to join Mike Faulkner in his Mitsubishi Lancer E9.

The Sunday modern AGBO Stages event was postponed due to snow. It was due to be decided on Monday if and when the event would run.

ITRC won't allow RHD R5s

# NO RIGHT-HAND-DRIVE R5s FOR IRISH TARMAC

Right-hand-drive R5 cars will not be eligible to score points in the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship in 2018.

There's a long history in Ireland of drivers and preparation firms converting cars to right-hand drive and both Spencer Sport (Mitsubishi Mirage) and Dom Buckley RSC (Ford Fiesta) have completed

converted machines.

Late last year, *MN* broke the news that the championship was considering including them in late 2018, but the championship has issued a statement to confirm otherwise.

It read: "The initial competitor enquiries were received in November 2017 and this allowed little time to

get around the issues involved before the first round of the championship. There was extensive communication by Tarmac Rally Organisers Association with both the FIA, Motorsport Ireland, Iain Campbell [BRC championship manager] and other parties to try and find a solution,

however this was not forthcoming."

A right-hand-drive R5 car is not disallowed under FIA rules. To be an R5, it must have been homologated, and no manufacturer has yet homologated a RHD one. *MN* understands several manufacturers are considering homologating a RHD R5 for 2019.

## MN'S ROAD RALLYING EXPERT

# IAN MILLS

"GPS and phones are tough to police"



**I**t seems that the MSA have bowed to the inevitable: the use of GPS and navigational systems will be permitted on road rallies from January 1 next year.

The recommendation was issued and put out for consultation in November; any feedback must have been received by today (Wednesday, March 28). It's likely to be ratified in the summer. Frankly, I can see no argument that can be made against the move, opposing it would be reminiscent of King Canute and that trick he tried with the tide. I must admit that initially I had a low opinion of such gadgets. This stand was probably influenced by an incident while I was marshalling on a south western rally 15 years or so ago. One navigator had decided to plot the route on his laptop and navigate from that. At my control I issued one wrong approach and, of course, it was to the chap with the computer.

Things have progressed since then and it's been common to see navigators, while plotting, using their smartphones to check out on Street View some tricky junction or three-metre control. This, despite the ban on the use of such devices currently enshrined in the Blue Book. However how does an organiser keep a constant eye on 90 crews over a 140-mile route? Additionally, road rallying is supposed to be designed for standard cars and any decent new cars these days has a sat nav among its plethora of gizmos. It's a rule that's impossible to police.

It's sad to think that someone can navigate a rally simply by punching the grid references into a sat nav, and there are versions that will accept Ordnance Survey references, and off they go with an electronic voice telling them what route to take. Hopefully such things as farm tracks and three-metre controls should cause them issues.

I still think that there's a need to ban the use of mobile phones during rallies; there are too many nefarious activities for which they can be used – summoning up outside assistance, being told which give ways are manned and having code boards texted back to you. I know of at least two occasions last year when crews were caught and penalised for the latter offence. No doubt these were just the tip of the iceberg, but organisers are developing schemes to catch such miscreants, as those instances show.

We just can't give in to all new technology. With the development of driverless cars, the logical conclusion to this evolutionary movement would be to have such vehicles guided by sat navs; their progress and timing could be automatically monitored remotely and you could have a road rally executed without any human involvement at all. Meanwhile we could sit at home wearing virtual reality headsets pretending to take part in a rally. That's progress .... I guess.

## ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

The premier award on the **Roamerlite Novice Road Rally** was taken by Elliott and Sam Stafford, who trounced their opposition in the Novice Class by coming home over a minute and a half ahead of the opposition. They had led throughout the night. By coincidence the runner up spot was taken by Elliott Stafford's regular navigator, Lewis Sim, who

took on the role of driver for the event. He and Richard Jones won the Beginners Class. Experts and Semi-Experts weren't eligible for overall awards, but Jamie Crump/Robbie Pugh were the fastest crew of the night, with Osian Davies/Clive Jones second. The Staffords were third on scratch times.

Richard Hunter/Gary Evans took their first win in almost a year when they dominated Clitheroe DMC's **Primrose Trophy Rally**. The pair finished the event almost two minutes ahead of John Robson Rally winners, Matt Flynn/Rob Bryn Jones. The result put Jones at the head of the ANWCC Championship table.

Ian Mills

### Results

**Roamerlite Novice Road Rally**  
Organiser: Telford Auto Club When: March 24/25  
Where: Shropshire Route: 100 Miles  
Starters: 58.  
1 Elliott Stafford/Sam Stafford (Mazda MX-5) 3m43s; 2 Lewis Sim/Richard Jones (Renault Clio 172) +1m35s; 3 Mark Downes/Phil Morris (Peugeot 205); 4 Jake Hilditch/Tony Beddoes (Peugeot 205); 5 Gareth Owen/Michael Hughes (Ford Puma).  
**Class winners:** Jez Maddox/Rhys Lister Jones (Peugeot 206); Sim/Jones; Jamie Crump/Robbie Pugh (Ford Escort).

## McCullough sticks with Fiesta R5 for SRC

Scottish Rally Championship frontrunner Mark McCullough will continue in a Ford Fiesta R5 for the next round of the series, the Speyside Stages.

He switched to the car at the last minute ahead of the season opener, the Snowman Rally, in February.

McCullough had been scheduled to drive an R5-spec Mitsubishi Mirage on the Snowman Rally but swapped to the M-Sport built car for the round.

"It's an event-by-event basis," said McCullough. "The car costs a fair amount to run.

We'll try and do the whole championship if we can.

"There's a few Fiestas out in the championship already. The car seems very good. We had a few issues at the Snowman with a misfire but we managed to set fastest time on the first stage which I still can't believe as I'd never driven it before that stage.

"Hopefully we'll test before the Speyside and get some miles under our belts.

"It's going to take a while to learn, the car is far better than I am at the moment!"

The Speyside has received 47 entries as *MN* went to press.



Donagh Kelly won last year's event based in Londonderry

## Lark in the Park Rally switches to Ballykelly

Next month's Lark in the Park Rally will relocate to a new venue, ending its long-standing association with Londonderry.

The non-championship meeting will take place at Shackleton in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland.

It becomes the third rally promoted by Maiden City Motor Club to run out of the former RAF base.

The rally – now renamed the Shackleton Rally – utilised St Colum's Park in recent times and on occasions included a closed-road stage over the Irish border.

Organisers have also said that the rally will comprise six special stages, with clerk of the

course Declan McCay hoping the move proves popular with both new and returning competitors.

"It has taken quite a bit of negotiating to get the rally move over the line," he told *Motorsport News*.

"It is always difficult to know how the news will be received but we want to attract as many entries as we possibly can.

"For us it was a case of either use the date or lose it, and the Motor Club couldn't afford to do that.

"We had looked at holding a Targa Rally instead but there are lots of events either side of ours and we felt it might not get the response we are looking for."



Despite a fastest stage time the Snowman didn't go well

**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
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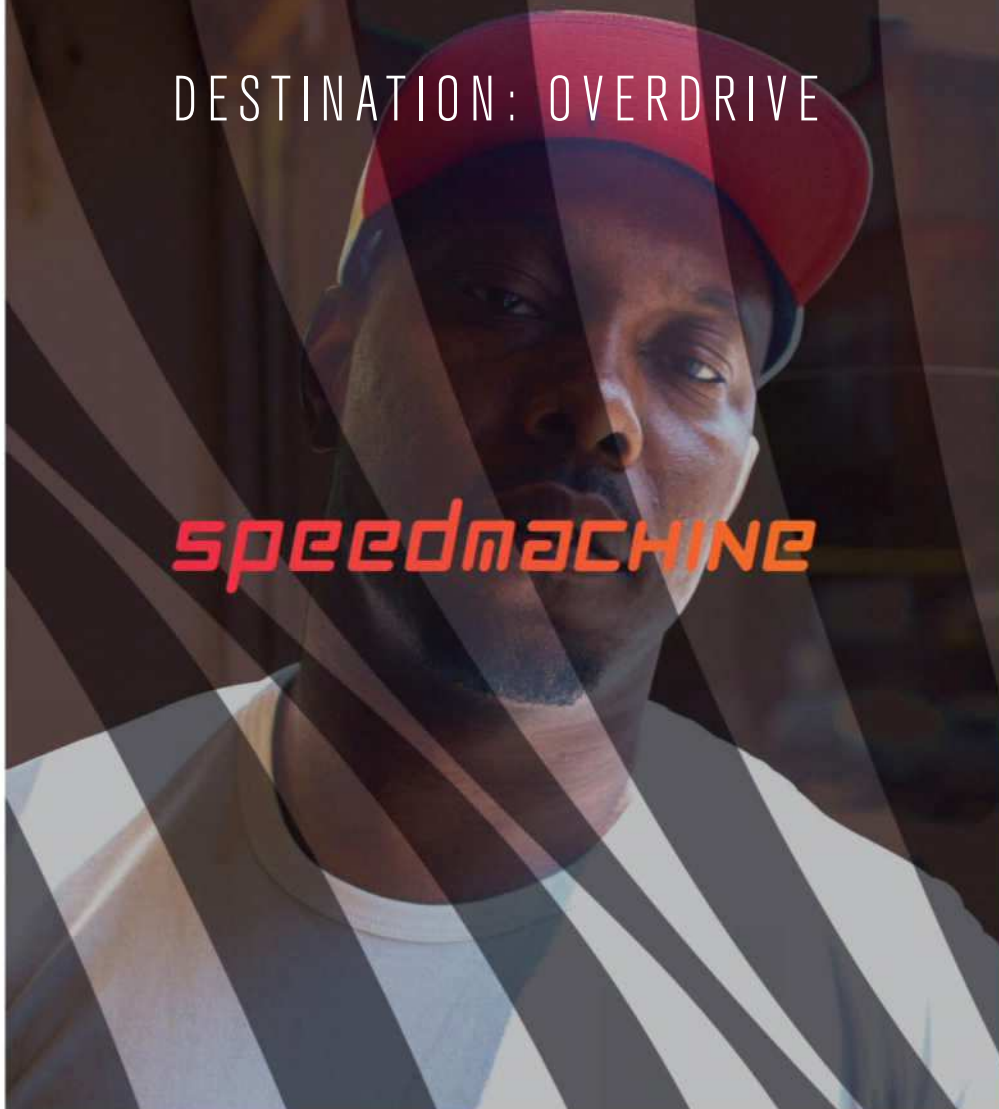
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# RALLY REPORTS

Photos: ERC Media

## LUKYANUK WINS, INGRAM STARS

Brit takes Under 28 win on R5 debut. By **Matt Kew**



Lukyanuk excelled with new technique



Russian took victory

### RESULTS

European Rally Championship, Azores, round 1/8, March 22-24

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Armatov	Ford Fiesta R5	2h33m51.7s
2	Ricardo Moura/Antonio Costa	Skoda Fabia R5	+16.4s
3	Bruno Magalhaes/Hugo Magalhaes	Skoda Fabia R5	+25.7s
4	Chris Ingram/Ross Whittock	Skoda Fabia R5	+1m24.2s
5	Fredrik Ahlin/Joakim Sjöberg	Skoda Fabia R5	+2m33.1s
6	Norbert Herczig/Ramon Ferencz	Skoda Fabia R5	+4m02.9s
7	Lukasz Habaj/Daniel Dymurski	Ford Fiesta R5	+4m12.2s
8	Rhys Yates/Elliott Edmondson	Skoda Fabia R5	+4m15.7s
9	Ricardo Teodosio/José Teixeira	Skoda Fabia R5	+4m43s
10	Jose Pedro Fontes/Paulo Babo	Citroen DS3 R5	+5m01.2s

Junior Under 28: Ingram/Whittock Junior Under 27: Diogo Gago/Miguel Ramalho (Peugeot 208 R2) ERC2: Juan Carlos Alonso/Juan Pablo Monasterolo (Mitsubishi Lancer E10) ERC Ladies' Trophy: Tamara Molinaro/Martijn Wydaeghe (Ford Fiesta R5) ERC Nations Cup: Eifren Llarena/Sara Fernandez (208 R2).

**A**fter crashing out of the lead of the event last year, Alexey Lukyanuk took victory on Rally Azores, while Manchester driver Chris Ingram starred on his R5 competition debut.

"I'm a little bit disappointed because we could have got a podium," mused Ingram. To reflect on his impressive R5 debut in the European Rally Championship slightly downbeat, despite finishing fourth overall and winning a strong Junior Under 28 for R5 drivers, is testament to the speed with which he adapted to his new Skoda Fabia.

"I think [I've been quick from the off] just because I have been waiting for this chance for so long and it suits my driving style. I've driven really neat and I'm just hungry for it."

In his favour, as reigning Under 27 champion he was already familiar with the unforgiving and often fog-covered mountain roads of the season-opening Azores Rally. But nevertheless, his and co-driver Ross Whittock's three days were littered with time-haemorrhaging setbacks that needed overcoming.

A stall at the beginning of the first stage was followed by Ingram's car suffering an electrical glitch and cutting out at the top of Sete Cidades, costing the pair 20 seconds. They were lucky to escape with only a missing rear bumper and smashed tail light after carrying too much speed through a section of woods and glancing a tree.

"I don't know how we got away with it, we were so, so lucky," Ingram said.

The biggest dent to a potential



Ingram beat issues for Under 28s win

top-three finish came as Ingram picked up a rear-left puncture on the morning of the final day, losing half a minute to those ahead.

By contrast, Lukyanuk's run to victory was relatively straightforward. Having made an effort to lower the risks in his often wild driving style, he held a commanding grip on the rally beyond his 16s winning cushion. A momentary visit through a field then a brief scare to avoid a herd of cows failed to unsettle the Russian. Had it not been for a brake calliper leak and a half-spin that led to some premature donuts in his Ford Fiesta R5 on the final stage then he would have been nearly a minute ahead of local hero Ricardo Moura.

Lukyanuk is back to good health after a crash while co-driving/tutoring in the passenger seat in his native Russia hospitalised him for over a month. He suffered a fractured heel bone in his left foot, fractured right patella, fractured pelvis, fractured sacral vertebrae and bruised lungs.

Three-time Azores winner Bruno Magalhaes completed the podium although rear differential issues ended his hopes of further progress.

"We needed to get a good start to the year and we got that with fifth," said Fredrik Ahlin upon his graduation to the ERC full-

time. Having missed out on British Rally Championship title honours by just one point in 2017, he was unapologetically conservative with his driving, acknowledging also that it was DMACK's first run at the mid-Atlantic rally while the majority of the other runners ran the usual Pirelli or Michelin tyres.

Ahlin's CA1 Sport team-mate and fellow BRC driver Rhys Yates was making his first competitive outing after switching from Fiesta to Fabia, and only his third event outside the UK, with an impressive ERC Under 28 podium behind Ingram and Ahlin. Getting wedged and needing to reverse back-and-forth plus carrying too much speed over a jump and taking a heavy landing on the front axle were dismissed as "stupid" mistakes. But he was hurt most by getting held-up behind two drivers, stopped in separate stages.

Defending ERC2 champion Libor Erdi Jr withdrew after only a mile-and-a-half with terminal suspension failure, helping fellow Mitsubishi Evo X driver Juan Carlos Alonso to seal the class victory.

With the aim of securing greater financial backing, Diogo Gago maximised his chances of returning for future ERC events by winning the Under-27 class in his Peugeot 208 R2.

## Morrison seals victory in Subaru showdown

### DCC Stages

By John Fife

Organiser: Dunfermline CC When: March 24 Where: Ingliston, Edinburgh Championships: Scottish Tarmac Championship, North of England Tarmac Championship, Borders Rally Challenge, Border Ecoosse Car Club Championship Stages: 8 Starters 74.

The second round of the Scottish Tarmac Championship earned Gordon Morrison and Cameron Fair their maiden rally victory after a day-long battle with John Marshall and Scott Crawford on Saturday's DCC Stages Rally on Ingliston showground.

The two Subaru drivers were dead level after six of the day's eight stages. Morrison snatched a three-second lead on the penultimate test, setting the two up for a final stage shootout. It all went wrong for Marshall on the first left hander after the stage start. "The door swung open as

I handbraked it round the hairpin," chuckled Marshall.

The incident cost him another 8s and all hopes of victory were gone.

After a career spent racing quads, Morrison was delighted with his first rally victory: "It was difficult. The anti-lag kept switching itself off, it was a struggle to try and keep the engine cool."

John Rintoul and Ross Hynd completed the podium line-up in their Ford Fiesta S2000 just 20s behind Morrison.

Taylor Gibb was fourth in his Mitsubishi ahead of the top two-wheel-drive machine, Alan Gardiner's Escort Mk1.

Top 1600 runner was 11th-placed Ben Wilkinson in his Citroen Saxo while young Martyn Douglas scored a convincing 1400 class win in his VW Polo finishing 29th.



Morrison: debut rally win

### Results

1 Gordon Morrison/Cameron Fair (Subaru Impreza) 61m 23s; 2 John Marshall/Scott Crawford (Impreza) +0.11s; 3 John Rintoul/Ross Hynd (Ford Fiesta); 4 Taylor Gibb/Jane Nicol (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 5 Alan Gardiner/Robin Nicolson (Ford Escort Mk1); 6 Tom Blackwood/Gordon Winning (Escort Mk2); 7 Colin Gemmill/Derek Keir (Escort Mk2); 8 George Auld/Richard Stewart (Escort Mk2); 9 Richard Sutherland/Jack Sutherland (Opel Manta); 10 Iain Sanderson/Kyle Dods (Escort Mk2). Class winners: Martyn Douglas/Brian Pringle (Volkswagen Polo); Ben Wilkinson/Andrew Wilkinson (Citroen Saxo); Auld/Stewart; Gardiner/Nicolson; Morrison/Fair.

## Willett is unstoppable over Caerwent for third victory in a row

### Tour of Caerwent

By Simon Gronow

Organiser: Forrester's Car Club When: March 25 Where: Caerwent Training Area Championships: WAMC Welsh National Tarmacadom Championship; CMSG Stage Rally Championship; ASWMC Stage Rally Championship Stages: 6 Starters 82.

For the third year running, Dave Willett and John Davies won the Tour of Caerwent in their Ford Escort Mk2. On their first event of the year, the pair spent the day testing brake and suspension set-ups, which obviously worked, as they set fastest time on every stage to win comfortably.

Thomas Cooper/Ian Davis had an "awesome day" in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9, their only issue being brake problems caused by using old pads.

Bob Fowden was regretting leaving his Subaru Impreza WRC on suspension settings used on Epynt recently. He and Paul Williams spent the day trying to find the optimum set-up and had to be content with third on this occasion. Despite suffering brake problems on their Darran T90 on the final stage, Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon made up

six seconds on Escort G3 crew Lee Edwards/Mike Roberts to overtake them for the class win and fourth overall.

### Results

1 Dave Willett/John Davies (Ford Escort Mk 2) 1h13m16s; 2 Thomas Cooper/Ian Davis (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) +2m 46s; 3 Bob Fowden/Paul Williams (Subaru Impreza WRC); 4 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darran T90); 5 Lee Edwards/Mike Roberts (Ford Escort G3); 6 Philip Turner/Simon Anthony (Lancer E9); 7 Oliver Davies/Caron Tomlinson (Ford Escort Mk2); 8 Carl O'Grady/Sophie King (Nissan Sunny F2); 9 Malcolm Jones/Rhys Jones (Peugeot 207); 10 James Self/Nick Vigors (Citroen DS 3 R3T). Class winners: Paul Davis/Keith Richings (Vauxhall Corsa); Jones/Jones; Merriman/Curzon; Graham Hicks/Steven Hicks (Escort Mk2); Davies/Tomlinson; Cooper/Davis; Jonathan Davies/Kevin Davies (Peugeot 206); Rod Haven/Kevin Haven (Escort RS2000).

Photo: John Fife

Photo: Martin Walsh

## MOFFETT WINS IN SILVERMINES

### Limerick Forest Rally

By Kevin O'Driscoll

Organiser: Limerick MC When: March 24 Where: Silvermines, County Tipperary Championship: Irish Forest Rally Championship Stages: 8 Starters 90.

Josh Moffett and Stephen Thornton (Ford Fiesta R5) took victory in the Limerick Forest Rally by 13.8 seconds from Barry McKenna/Leon Jordan (Ford Fiesta R5). In doing so they reignited their Irish Forest Rally Championship challenge after faltering on the opening round seven weeks ago.

Erstwhile championship leaders Andrew Purcell/Mark Wiley – winners on the previous round, the Willie Loughman Forest Rally – had led for the first five stages as

Moffett struggled to get a rhythm. However, a puncture and subsequent damaged wheel on the sixth test cost Purcell 40 seconds and dropped him to third. The top three remained the same for the final two stages of the event, which was rescheduled after bad weather halted the original March 4 date.

David Crossen and Aileen Kelly (Ford Escort) were another crew to get over a disappointing opening round as they came home as top two-wheel-drive crew in eighth.

Top junior category points went to Marty Gallagher/Dean O'Sullivan (Peugeot 208 R2) from Derek Mackarel/Daire Hayes (Vauxhall Nova). Neither of these crews

finished the first round and with category leader James Wilson forced into Rally2 on the opening stage after sliding off the road, it helped third placed John O'Sullivan (Ford Fiesta R2) into the championship lead.

In the Junior 1000 category for 15-19-year-olds, Jason Murphy (Peugeot 107) took another set of maximum points. Last year's champion is looking good for a repeat after a strong start to the year, although Scotland's Peter Beaton (Peugeot 107) pushed him all the way. Aoife Gahan (Chevrolet Spark) and Rory Byrne (Citroen C1) were the other finishers in the category.

### Results

1 Josh Moffett/Stephen Thornton (Ford Fiesta R5) 40m37.4s; 2 Barry McKenna/Leon Jordan (Ford Fiesta R5) +13.8s; 3 Andrew Purcell/Mark Wiley (Ford Fiesta R5); 4 Cathan McCourt/Brian Hoy (Citroen DS3 R5); 5 Stephen McCann/Kaine Treanor (Ford Fiesta S2000); 6 Gerard Lucey/JJ Cremin (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 7 Donall Sweeney/Stephen O'Hanlon (Lancer E9); 8 David Crossen/Aileen Kelly (Escort Mk2); 9 John Byrnes/James Lowry (Lancer E9); 10 Shane McGirr/Eamonn Hayes (Toyota Starlet). Class winners: Tommy Cuddihy/Conor Flynn (Honda Civic); Martin O'Brien/Brian McCarthy (Citroen C2R2 Max); PJ O'Connor/Anthony Nestor (Lancer E9); Moffett/Thornton; John Mulholland/Adrian O'Connor (Subaru Impreza); Noel Lappin/Tony McGovern (Escort Mk2); Mike Garahy/Eoghan McCarthy (Escort Mk2); Ruairi Maguire/Grace O'Brien (Vauxhall Corsa); James Dunphy/Shane Gazely (Toyota Corolla); Emmet Cronin/Seamus McTigue (Escort); Crossen/Kelly; Mikey Conlon/Ciaran McPhillips (Escort Mk2); Niall Turley/Andrew Wedlock (Impreza); Marty Gallagher/Dean O'Sullivan (Peugeot 208 R2); Lucey/Cremin; Jason Murphy/Mathew Murphy (Peugeot 107).



Josh Moffett won in R5

# BRITISH GT PREVIEW

British GT boasts a lot of star names this year, but are the regulars bothered? By Robert Ladbrook

Barwell has three Lambos, but no factory racers



## DO FACTORY DRIVERS REALLY MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?



This year's grid is a complete sell-out, with 36 cars lining up

### ENTRY LIST

#### 2018 British GT Championship

##### GT3

DRIVERS	TEAM/CAR	CLASS
Ryan Ratcliffe/Rick Parfitt Jr	Team Parker Racing Bentley Continental	Pro/Am
Callum MacLeod/Ian Loggie	Team Parker Racing Bentley Continental	Pro/Am
Patrick Kujala/Leo Machitski	Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan	Pro/Am
Phil Keen/Jon Minshaw	Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan	Pro/Am
Jonny Cocker/Sam de Haan	Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan	Pro/Am
Nicki Thiim/Mark Farmer	TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage	Pro/Am
Marco Sorensen/Derek Johnston	TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage	Pro/Am
Maxime Martin/Graham Davidson	Jetstream Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage	Pro/Am
Jonny Adam/Flick Haigh	Optimum Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage	Pro/Am
Darren Turner/Andrew Howard	Beechdean AMR Aston Martin Vantage	Pro/Am
Devon Modell/Struan Moore	RJN Motorsport Nissan GT-R NISMO	Silver
Rob Bell/Shawn Balfe	Balfe Motorsport McLaren 650S	Pro/Am
Yelmer Buurman/Lee Mowle	ERC Sport Mercedes-AMG GT3	Pro/Am

##### GT4

DRIVERS	TEAM/CAR	CLASS
Michael O'Brien/Charlie Fagg	Tolman Motorsport McLaren 570S	Silver
Jordan Albert/Lewis Proctor	Tolman Motorsport McLaren 570S	Silver
Finlay Hutchison/Daniel McKay	Equipe Verschuur McLaren 570S	Silver
Joe Osborne/David Pattison	Tolman Motorsport McLaren 570S	Pro/Am
Ben Barnicoat/Adam Balon	Track-Club McLaren 570S	Pro/Am
Mike Robinson/Graham Johnson	Balfe Motorsport McLaren 570S	Pro/Am
Jason Wolfe/Ben Norfolk & Basil Rawlinson	Invictus Games Racing Jaguar F-type SVR	Pro/Am
Matthew George/Steve McCulley & Paul Vice	Invictus Games Racing Jaguar F-type SVR	Pro/Am
Scott Malvern/Nick Jones	Team Parker Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4	Pro/Am
Michael Broadhurst/Mark Murfitt	Fox Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT4	Pro/Am
TBC/TBC	Richardson Racing Mercedes-AMG GT4	TBC
Will Burns/Mike Newbould	HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55	Pro/Am
Callum Pointon/Patrik Matthiesen	HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55	Silver
Callum Hawkins-Row/Anna Walewska	Team Hard Ginetta G55	Pro/Am
Benjamin Wallace/Nick Worm	Team Hard Ginetta G55	Silver
Ben Green/Ben Tuck	Century Motorsport BMW M4	Silver
TBC/TBC	Century Motorsport BMW M4	TBC
Martin Plowman/Kelvin Fletcher	UltraTek Racing Team RJN Nissan 370Z	Pro/Am
Jesse Antilla/Stephen Johansen	UltraTek Racing Team RJN Nissan 370Z	Pro/Am
Tom Wood/Jan Jonck	Academy Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage	Silver
Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones	Academy Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage	Silver
Sennan Fielding/Tom Canning	Steller Performance Toyota GT86	Pro/Am
Alex Quinn/Dean Macdonald	Steller Performance Toyota GT86	Silver

It's a question he's clearly been asked before. There's a short pause before the answer comes. Clipped and blunt in its delivery. "I'm already a bit sick of everyone saying works drivers this and factory drivers that – when they're in the car they're just drivers, like the rest of us. And we're still aiming to beat them."

Those were Jonny Cocker's words. The 2004 British GT champion – the youngest ever winner of the top class at the age of 18 – will be back on the grid this year sharing a Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan GT3 with rookie driver Sam de Haan.

Cocker had been asked if he, or indeed Barwell, felt under any extra pressure given the mass influx of factory drivers into GT3 this season. After all, Barwell is one of the only teams on the grid without one across its three-car entry.

His response may as well have been 'who cares?'. "We're here to race, and do the best job we can," he adds. "GT racing is about a lot more than just having a big name on the side of the car."

This situation has arisen from two factors. The first being the World Endurance Championship's move to just five rounds this year as part of its 13-month superseason. Aston Martin's Vantage GT3 is in the last year of its lifecycle, and AMR would probably like to extend the winning record of British GT's most successful model ever, so has plugged five of its WEC drivers into seats.

Jonny Adam, Marco Sorensen, Darren Turner, Nicki Thiim and AMR new boy Maxime Martin will all take part.

The second factor is the knock-on effect of that, with some taking the 'fight fire with fire' approach, so Mercedes man Yelmer Buurman is in too, as is McLaren ace Rob Bell. It's fair to say the level this year will be higher than it ever has been.

But while the spotlight has shone brightly on the star additions, the six pairs lacking a factory star have just gone about their business, quietly taking aim

at the superstars dropping down into what is largely their territory.

Barwell has its own secret weapons. Cocker is one, rising Finnish star Patrick Kujala is another, but arguably its biggest asset is Phil Keen.

"The entry list this year is mega, but for me seeing those names just gives me extra motivation," says Keen, who alongside Jon Minshaw has been runner-up in the championship for the last two seasons.

"We don't need works drivers. We've got three strong pairings and one of the best team and car combinations around, so we're more than equipped to fight. And let's not forget they've got a lot to learn, and a lot to lose as it's going to make the rest of us look great when we do beat them. Jon's ready and up for it this year, and I'll just keep driving my socks off and we'll see what happens."

One point there is very valid. Despite having the profile, many of the factory boys do have a lot to learn about British GT. Some of the tracks, for example.

Barring two-time British champion Adam and Bell, the others don't have extensive experience of the British circuits. Turner has tested on most, but hasn't raced on them for many years. Sorensen has a base grounding from his 2008 British Formula Ford campaign, similar with Buurman who did British F3 back in 2006. Thiim has only raced at Silverstone at international level, and did the FFord Festival once in 2006.

"There is definitely a lot to learn for this year," admits Martin, who will share his Jetstream Motorsport Vantage with GT Cup champion Graham Davidson. "This is a really high level championship now, in terms of the level of the cars, drivers and teams. It's all new to me. Even the Vantage GT3 is quite new to me as I've spent most of my time with BMW. It's difficult to know what we can expect, but I'm here to try and do something good. There's five Aston drivers, so people say we're going to work together and fix things. But we're all here in separate teams with separate customers, so we will find it hard to do that as each one wants to

win and it's an even competition between everybody. We obviously don't want to be crashing into each other either as that won't look good for anyone involved!"

In addition many of the works racers will be more used to racing with other pros, so the concept of British GT's successful Pro-Am format will also be a learning curve. As fast as the Pros are, they can't win unless their team-mate is nurtured, coached and performing.

That evens the playing field when you look down the entry list as almost each factory driver is paired with an unfamiliar team-mate, meaning relationships have to develop quickly. One partnership without that issue is reigning champion Rick Parfitt Jr.

The number one Bentley has undergone much change over the winter. Title-winning team-mate Seb Morris is off to Europe, and he's been replaced by Welshman Ryan Ratcliffe, who lifted the GT4 crown alongside Parfitt back in 2013.

The pair are, effectively, one of the lowest rated teams on the grid, with Parfitt being a Bronze and Ratcliffe a Silver-graded driver. Does that mean a title defence is out of the question?

"We wouldn't be here if we didn't think we could win, it would just be a colossal waste of money otherwise," says Parfitt. "Sure, it looks like we're up against it but it's consistency that wins this championship, not just outright speed."

"Whoever is champion this year will win it with much fewer points I think. It's so tight nobody will run away with it. If you finished fourth in every race you'd win the championship, I still believe that."

If Parfitt can reproduce the performances he did last season, he's likely to be at the front of the Am field,

"We're all here to try and win"

Maxime Martin





2018 British GT	
TRACK	DATE
Oulton Park	Mar 31-Apr 2
Rockingham	Apr 28/29
Snetterton 300	May 26/27
Silverstone GP	Jun 9/10
Spa-Francorchamps	Jul 21/22
Brands Hatch GP	Aug 4/5
Donington Park GP	Sept 22/23



McLaren is back with Balfe team



Parfitt (inset) says he and Ryan Ratcliffe face an uphill battle to retain title

which will still give the car a fighting chance. In the other side of Team Parker's garage is Ian Loggie and Callum MacLeod. Ex-Formula Ford champion MacLeod was often the fastest Bentley driver last season, and he and Loggie have been racking up the testing miles, so will be ones to watch.

The Nissan GT-R GT3 of Struan Moore and Devon Modell blends a youthful driving team with the proven experience of factory team RJN Motorsport in what could be one of the surprise packages of the season.

Cocker's team-mate de Haan is another area of intrigue. This will be his first season of racing. Not just in a Lambo. Ever. He too has been gaining mileage pre-season – and with several race outings in Caterhams and Mazdas to build himself up to the necessary International C licence grade for British GT. Cocker says: "Sam may be lacking in experience, but he's progressed amazingly so far and he's training and testing intensively. I think he'll surprise a few people this year."

The experienced Lee Mowle and Buurman have title credentials. Mowle's British GT history has been chequered – he finished third overall alongside Joe Osborne in a Triple Eight BMW in 2015, but has been less successful since and last year only did a part-season.

With a full year, knowledge of the Mercedes AMG GT3 and the experience of ace engineer Keith Cheetham, Mowle

and Buurman are in with a shout.

McLaren returns for its first full British GT3 season since 2016 with Balfe Motorsport running an entry for Shaun Balfe and Bell. The pair have been class winners in the International GT Open before switching focus.

"We felt we'd gone as far as we could in GT Open and when I heard the entry for British GT it just seemed like another level up," says Balfe. "If we can win here then we can pretty much win anywhere!"

Then lastly, we have the fleet of Astons. Beechdean returns with Andrew Howard sharing with Turner. The team knows all about British GT, having won titles in both classes, and Howard has nothing to prove. He and Turner form the oldest pairing on the grid – at a combined age of 97 – and arguably also the most proven.

Adam shares with series newcomer Flick Haigh in Optimum Motorsport's new Aston effort. Adam knows the Vantage GT3 better than any man alive, and will be key to the new team bedding in its new machinery quickly.

Thiim and Sorensen slot in at TF Sport, alongside Mark Farmer and Derek Johnston respectively. The team suffered from a difficult to diagnose chassis issue last season, which had the knock-on effect of throwing out the set-up on the sister car. Both cars have been heavily revised for this year, and with two of the series' most promising Ams onboard, Tom Ferrier's team is looking strong yet again. ■

# MORE MARQUES AND TOP STARS BOOST FIELD

# GT4

**T**here was a time when the British GT4 entry list just featured a handful of Ginettas and a few Aston Martins.

Now the class has truly come of age with a record-breaking – and more significantly – very diverse entry for this season. There's set to be 23 cars in the class in 2018, shared between eight different manufacturers and 14 teams.

Added to that mix there are some good drivers, new cars, top-line teams and yes, even a smattering of those infamous factory drivers. Among the entry are eight crews competing in the Silver Cup category – designed for semi-professional drivers – once again showing the trend for younger career racers looking to use GT4 as a springboard.

McLaren becomes the most popular brand, with its carbon-bodied 570S leading the new-generation of GT4 machines. The car's prolific straightline pace last season made it a weapon, and this year six will compete.

Tolman fields three cars, two for McLaren's new young driver programme members – the silver pairings of Jordan Albert/Lewis Proctor and Michael O'Brien/Charlie Fagg – and a third for new works racer Joe Osborne and David Pattison in the Pro-Am class.

Balfe runs the car of former GT4 champions Graham Johnson and Mike Robinson, while former F3 star, and works McLaren racer, Ben Barnicoat also joins the championship for the first time, sharing a Track-Club entry with Adam Balon.

"The entry this year is amazing, so I'm actually really looking forward to qualifying too, when

everybody's really on the limit," Barnicoat says. "I don't know what to expect, but GT4 has moved on so much in recent years and it'll be really interesting to see which drivers are fast and how close the brands are. My job is just to be the fastest McLaren racer, so hopefully McLaren is the fastest brand too."

Three new brands join this year, with Century Motorsport fielding a brace of BMW M4 GT4s, Fox, Team Parker and Richardson Racing running Mercedes-AMG GT4s, and Jaguar Invictus Racing's stunning new custom F-type SVR GT4s.

The BMWs will be of interest. The M4 may not stack up to the 570S and AMG in road-going form, but the race car is highly developed.

"BMW have thought of everything, the car's amazing," says Century boss Nathan Freke. "GT4 has a development cost cap and because the M4 costs a lot less than a McLaren in base form, BMW have been able to go deeper into the development. In my mind this is a real pure-bred racing car."

The car looked quick in early testing. Ginetta convert Ben Green will share one with Caterham graduate Ben Tuck. The second's line-up is yet to be confirmed, but Freke shared it with David Pittard in testing to cement a 1-2 in the timesheets.

The Mercedes is an unknown quantity so far, with teams due to receive the first UK chassis in mid-March. That leaves little time for testing, but sources close to Mercedes motorsport insist the car is already a strong platform.

"It's the perfect Pro-Am car," says Scott Malvern, who will share the Team Parker-run car with Nick Jones. "The technology

and development that's gone into it is amazing. It's accessible, easy and comfortable to drive, but at the same time has loads of power and a great balance. It'll suit the UK tracks nicely."

The Jaguars have been specially developed by the factory's Special Vehicle Operations unit and custom-built to the order of SuperDry fashion guru James Holder. Crewed by members of the Invictus Games community – with the Ams swapping mid-year – it will be interesting to see how the new cars fare in the races. But they look, and sound, stunning.

GT4 stalwart Ginetta is represented with four cars, two each for last year's title-winning team HHC Motorsport and Tony Gilham's Team Hard.

HHC expands to two entries for the first time, with GT4 Supercup champion Callum Pointon sharing with Patrik Matthiesen and Mike Newbould partnered by ex-BTCC man Will Burns.

Both of HHC's champion drivers from 2017 – Will Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton – have moved on to Europe, but team head Charlie Kemp reckons a title defence is still on the cards.

"Callum and Patrik will be out for the championship, no doubt," he says. "Both of them have bags of ability. Mike and Will can fight for the Pro-Am title and will only get stronger as the year goes on. The Ginetta is still a great, proven race car and is strong on its tyres, so the longer races should be great for us."

RJN will also run two Nissan 370Z GT4s, and should not be written off. With Martin Plowman sharing one with the ever-improving Kelvin Fletcher, the pair could be in title contention.



McLaren becomes the most popular GT4 brand

## FEATURE

David Evans discovers that the French legend has some clear targets for his competitive outings in 2018



Loeb has a new philosophy

# LOEB RETURNS FOR

**S**ebastien Loeb settled back and put his feet up on the chair opposite. Today had been a good day at work. And now it was time for a quiet beer and a moment's reflection on his first World Rally Championship Saturday in a while.

For anybody else, day two of Rally Mexico would have been an amazing day; out of full-time WRC competition since 2012, Loeb stepped back aboard Citroën's C3 WRC and won a stage on day one, then moved into the lead of the event on day two. But the sweetness of that Saturday night *cerveza* was tainted by the Guanajuatito puncture which dropped him from first to fourth.

The world's moved on and it's Corsica test time now, just

inland from Algeria. But that puncture in the hills above Leon still bugs him. "It was nice to be back in Mexico," he tells *Motorsport News*. "I enjoyed it, but that puncture..."

The passing of the seasons tells only in the increased prevalence of salt over pepper in the trademark on-event Loeb stubble. One thing which remains is the humility.

"Before I went to that rally, I really didn't know what would happen," he says. "I just didn't know. I was really happy that I was able to be on the pace and in the fight with the other guys who have been driving these cars every week. For my speed, I wasn't sure, but it's nice to see that it's still there."

For many, Loeb's return undermined the current crop of World Rally Championship stars. I'm not so sure. Let's not forget, this is Sebastien Loeb. For anybody reading these pages at primary school, or for those who struggle with a medium-term memory, Loeb was really quite good at the height of his power. Really good like, history-rewriting (and then rewriting again) good. Much as rallying is all about speed and reactions, it's also about experience and guile. The nine-time champion has those four bases perfectly covered.

But next week there's an even bigger test. Next week Loeb comes back to Corsica with numbers on the doors

for the first time in a decade. It's easy to reach back and remember 2008, when he crushed everybody, won all-but two of the 16 stages and left the island on the back of a three-minute win. But what's going to happen this time?

Again, he's in the dark. And at the moment, he hasn't driven the car, so he doesn't know.

"They [the other drivers] tell me the biggest difference with the car is on the asphalt," he says. "I guess now I just need to get in it and drive and find out for myself."

If Mexico is anything to go by, he'll be right there. What round three absolutely taught us is that Loeb's eye remains very firmly in. He might have been away from the WRC, but he hasn't been away from competition. Ring-rusty he might have been, but match-fit he most certainly was.

Loeb's arrival at the test was slightly later than planned after logistics were complicated by the need for his presence at an event in Paris the evening before. One of the reasons Loeb called time on his stellar WRC career was because of the onerous timetable. Ironically, he's busier than ever right now.

After Mexico came the first round of the British Rallycross Championship at Silverstone, then a trip to France, then Corsica, then back to Silverstone

for the World RX launch and then back to Corsica for the rally.

"After Barcelona and the first [World RX] race, then things might be a little bit more quiet," he says. "Maybe then I can relax a little bit. But for now, I seem to be hardly ever at home. You ask about my training for Mexico – there really wasn't so much time. I tried to do some work before Dakar and before the season, but I was so busy. There's not much time for the gym now."

The current generation of World Rally Championship drivers are intensely focused on fitness, nutrition and physiology and intently focused on doing their homework with onboarders. While Loeb kicked back with a pint, plenty of his rivals were either tucked up in bed or looping footage of themselves running through the recce. After seeing him beat them on the stages on Saturday, one can only imagine the psychological effects of seeing him shun a fruit-flavoured isotonic in favour of a Heineken or a glass of red.

All of the above points to Loeb's pedigree and class as the reasons he was able to fight at the front in Mexico. And will likely do the same in Corsica next week. If not, it's increasingly clear, it won't be the end of the world for Loeb. Graft done, it's his time now. Or that was the plan.

"I wanted to see different disciplines,"

he says, "and I'm doing that. Maybe last year was a little bit too much though, with Dakar and rallycross. Last year there was so much to do with the testing [for Dakar], then we did Silk Way [Rally] and Morocco [Rally] as well. It was a lot."

Peugeot committed a significant resource to a four-year Dakar programme with the sole aim of a Loeb victory. In the end, it didn't come. And talking to Loeb now, it sounds like there wasn't much love lost between him and world's most arduous marathon rally.

"We were second last year," he says, "but that event is different. The driving style is not the same [as for the WRC], it's not always [about] the speed, but for the right line, things like that. I didn't enjoy that side of things so much. I tried it, but you know you need so much experience there. Will I be back? It's not in the plan right now, but further into the distance, who knows?"

The current plan, which runs for the next two years, is very firmly fixed on rallycross. Despite *MN*'s best efforts to get Loeb to reconsider and return full-time to the WRC on the back of his sensational Mexican outing, the 44-year-old Alsatian is all about rallycross – especially after convincing Peugeot to get behind the series and take the 208 WRX back in-house.

The effect of Peugeot's entry becoming a factory effort won't be





Loeb was immediately back in the spotlight on his Mexican return



The 'feeling' came straight back for Loeb on his WRC comeback

# SOME SERIOUS FUN

felt immediately, according to Loeb.

"We don't have a new car for this year," he says, "we have last year's car for the first part of the season. There are some improvements, but the team is working hard to change things and bring the evolution for the car with a lot of different things during the year. I hope this will be enough, but we don't know."

Does that shift the emphasis towards next season's WRX title for Loeb?

He says: "Let's see what is the changes with the big evolution for this year. What didn't change is my motivation, I still want to win. We have more experience for rallycross now and that's important and I'm ready to continue to work hard for this. We have a lot to work on with the team and I hope it will be good enough."

Loeb's painfully aware that the WRX field is becoming increasingly competitive with Audi, Volkswagen and now Renault taking an increasing interest, albeit via private teams.

"This competition is good," he says. "It shows the championship is interesting for people and the level is really high. We could see this at Silverstone last week when I was competing there for the first time. The gap to the next car was very big and this shows the difference in the level between the national sport and World RX. In World RX, everything is

improving all the time. I'm enjoying this. The feeling on the start line, when you have so many of these cars around waiting to go, is still incredible.

"For sure, I really enjoy the sensation of rallying and nothing is the same as this – I discovered that again in Mexico. But there were reasons why I stopped competing in the WRC and they didn't change."

Testament to that decision is his response to the potential for a free weekend in August being taken up by a return to Rally Germany, his most successful event with nine wins.

"That," he says with a grin, "is in the summer holidays. I'll be on the beach."

It's well documented that Loeb grew tired of the travel and testing commitments after 15 years at the sharp end of world rallying. Granted, he'll still be long-hauling it to Canada, America and South Africa with WRX this season, but the vast majority of European rounds can be done on a quick turn around between Thursday and Sunday.

From talking to those close to the top of the PSA Group hierarchy, Loeb's importance simply can't be underestimated. His nose might have been out of joint when he was dropped from Citroën's World Touring Car Team at the end of the 2015 season, but bringing Citroën, Peugeot and DS together under one PSA Group

Motorsport roof has served Loeb well.

PSA Group chairman Carlos Tavares talks about Loeb as being "one of the family". He's more than that. He's the chosen one, the favoured son, the *pomme* of the collected PSA *oeil*.

Prior to Mexico and after Craig Breen's run to second in Sweden, Tavares and co. came under fire for extolling the virtues of Citroën's development programme for junior drivers. And then ditching Breen for a 44-year-old.

Asked about this policy by *MN*, Citroën CEO Linda Jackson took aim and smacked us to the boundary with: "I'm not even going to debate Sebastien. Sebastien is part of the PSA family and, for me, he's part of our history. I'm not even going to comment [on this]. Sebastien's a great ambassador for the three brands, this is something he wanted to do and it's something we're quite happy to share with him."

Undoubtedly, Breen being forced aside hit the Waterford driver hard, but it was only in Mexico where the thinking behind Citroën's decision to bring Loeb back to the C3 became more apparent.

Out of nowhere, the press office became that bit more French again. One prominent journalist from the Channel's northern shores told *MN*: "In France, it's simple: the people don't know Craig Breen. Even after Sweden,

it's still nothing compared with Loeb coming back. We made so many pages talking about this story and in France it makes total sense. There is some sympathy for Craig from those who are closer in this sport, but to most of the country and for those who know sport, but maybe not the rally, then Seb is the story for now."

Next week that story continues in Corsica, but right now it's time for Loeb to get back behind the wheel. Again.

The morning concludes team-mate Kris Meeke's final running in the car ahead of an event he came so close to winning last year. The Dungannon man is happy to have Loeb alongside him for the season's opening all-asphalt encounter.

"It's the same as Mexico," says Meeke, "he comes here with so much experience. He's seen these roads – OK maybe not *these* roads – but this island in all weather and different conditions. It's fantastic for me to be able to talk to him and learn from his time with this team."

Anybody who doubted Loeb's continued fan-appeal has clearly been absent from France's World Rallycross round for the last couple of years, when tens of thousands of fans turned out to cheer just one word: "Sebastien."

It'll be the same again this season.

Next week in Corsica? Well, that's a different matter. Sure there will be a

presence and plenty of Tricolours, but the very nature of the event being on an island makes it tough for French WRC fans to show their appreciation. It might have been better if the series could have popped back to Strasbourg, so Loeb could dash through his streets of Haguenau once more.

But that's not going to happen. And anyway, this isn't some sort of comeback or farewell tour, it's about Loeb having a good time doing what he loves.

And few would doubt that Corsica's ceaseless curves present more of a driving challenge than anything France's north-east had to offer.

Will he win next week; will he win this season? Nobody knows. But be in little doubt, he'll be doing what he's doing with a smile on his face.

"It's important to be enjoying life," he says, "and there's a lot of pleasure in driving these cars in rallying and in rallycross."

But as the balaclava goes on, helmet on top; belts tightened, fingers flexed, engine triggered and wheels pointed at the first apex, it all gets a bit more serious. Enjoying life and having fun as he is, don't be fooled – the desire to succeed and the will to win are just as strong as ever.

And a Corsica win, 10 years on from his last, would be the perfect lead into the main business of the season. ■

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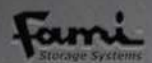
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# OPINION

Photos: Mick Walker, Gary Hawkins

JUNIOR REPORTER

## STEPHEN LICKORISH

# TIME FOR A SERIES CULL?

**I**t is not exactly a new argument and it's one that has been made numerous times over the years. But it's arguably more relevant now than ever. My colleague Jack Benyon has recently written about the problems national rallying faces with too many events – and it's not an issue specific to rallying, there are simply too many club racing series and events in the UK too.

If you take the February 25 edition of *MN's* sister title *Autosport* from 1982 as an example, there's an editorial stating that: "The 1982 season will see 768 qualifying rounds of 64 championships (including lesser series) at 228 race meetings. This is our oblique way of saying, once again, that there is too much motor racing in this country."

Now things are even more imbalanced, while the number of race meetings has only slightly increased over the past 36 years, the number of categories has ballooned. There is an incredible 208 club series in the UK and Ireland in 2018. But how can we possibly justify having 208 series when there are only about 11,000 Motor Sports Association race licence holders – and that includes those with International licences and may not race in the UK, certainly not in club categories.

The UK is alone in having such a populated club scene. Most European countries have only a handful of incredibly well-supported categories – with the Netherlands one of the table-toppers with just 25. Now, there are certainly some excellent club racing series in the UK and the variety is second to none – both facts that should be celebrated – but that still does not justify the sheer volume that we have.

A closer look at the list makes it clear that there are some series that we just don't need.

Take one-make series catering for BMW machinery. There are seven: Kumho BMW, Production BMW, BMW Compact Cup, M3 Cup, BMW 330 Challenge, the BMW Car Club Racing series and the Scottish BMW Championship. Some of these don't boast particularly large entries so surely it would be best for fewer better-supported series rather than having more not so good classes. Even worse is the Mazda MX-5. There are five categories just for that one type of car: the MX-5 Championship, MX-5 SuperCup, MX-5 SuperSeries, MX-5 Cup and MaX5 Championship. They are just two of the many examples where obvious reductions could be made.

And given the sheer volume of club racing there is at the moment, we are making some changes to the way we report on it in *MN*. In the past, we've adopted a policy of trying to cover every single race meeting, but we will no longer be doing this. Instead of reporting on everything, we will now concentrate on the best that club racing has to offer and give more space to that. And as well as freeing up space by not covering every meeting we will also have extra space by no longer including race results.



MX-5 Championship gets big grids, but not all series do



Goodwood: Great start to UK season



MG Trophy boasts large entry numbers

Again, because of the huge number of races that take place, huge amounts of space was dedicated to information that is now widely available online. Instead of using that space listing the top six in the results, we will now have more room to tell the best stories from the meetings – details that you most definitely can't get from an online results sheet. We will adopt an approach that focuses on the interesting stories, fascinating cars, best events and amazing people in club racing rather than the intricacies of every single race – but we will still cover all the races at the biggest and best-supported events.

Club racing is an integral part of *MN*, and that will continue to be the case. No more than one or two meetings per weekend, if any, won't be included. We feel these changes will better celebrate the eclectic world that is club racing rather than trying to cover everything without any great detail. Don't worry, no organising club or championship will be banned – and we will constantly review what is getting reported on to make sure nothing is getting unfairly left out. And all series will continue to be included in the news pages.

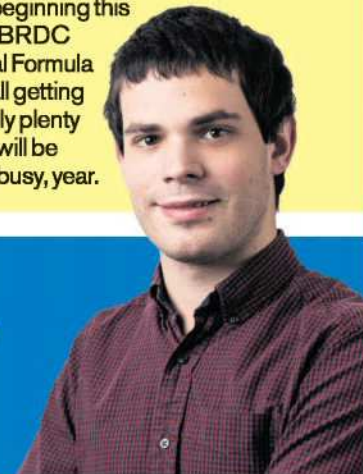
As that editorial from 1982 said: "As the season gets under way, everything will come out in the wash, with the best championships drawing the cream. These will

be the ones that people will want to watch, while poor championships will provide the sort of racing which sends people home yawning.

"A changed attitude is needed from the RAC, the promoters and the organising clubs. The innovation of new formula is healthy and necessary but now is the time for some innovation of a different kind. There is only a limited pool of people who want to race, and an even more restricted number who can afford to race. Let's not squander these resources by trying to cater for every conceivable minority, so losing out on the quality of racing."

That's just as true today.

Although this column may seem overly negative, there's no denying the huge amount there is to celebrate in club racing this year. Earlier this month the season began in earnest with another terrific Goodwood Members' Meeting and there's a whole host of major categories beginning this weekend with British GT, BRDC British Formula 3, National Formula Ford 1600 and TCR UK all getting underway. There's certainly plenty to look forward to in what will be another exciting, but very busy, year.



**"Club racing is an integral part of MN, but how can we justify 208 series?"**

# BHRC: RALLY NORTH WALES

Photos: Writtle Photographic

## ROUND-UP



Davies headed 4WDs

Running for the first time, the new Rally 2WD format proved to be a big hit with the majority of the two-wheel-drive crews entered in the modern section of Rally North Wales, as they got to tackle some classic Welsh stages in excellent condition.

Following a cautious start, John Rowlands/Glenn Latham attacked the third stage, Gartheiniog, to hold the lead at service and promised "a big push this afternoon". Unfortunately, time was lost with a stage five puncture, but Rowlands held on to take the win, finding the stages to his liking as they held a 21-second advantage.

After a 12 month lay off, Phil Burton/Mal Capstick were more than happy with the conditions: "the stages are spot on," enthused the Escort driver as he finished second.

Bent steering on their Talbot Sunbeam didn't prevent Kevin Shepherd/Jamie Atherton finishing third as they overtook David Hutchinson/Jeff Garnett for the final podium spot on the final stage.

In the separate event for four-wheel-drive cars, Dylan Davies and Llion Williams cantered to a comfortable win. The pair, in a Group N Subaru instead of their usual B13 Impreza, ran on the same tyres all day and set fastest time on every stage. Initially, Paul Davy/Roger Allan were their nearest challengers, but a broken driveshaft on the penultimate stage dropped them to fourth.

Taking their best Welsh Championship result were second placed Mathew Hirst/Declan Dear who had a good run in their Mitsubishi Lancer E10, and they were followed home by Wug Utting/Bob Stokoe who had a problem-free run on their first event of 2018 in their Impreza. Andy Davies/Max Freeman retired their similar car with turbo failure.

**Simon Gronow**

### Results

#### Modern two-wheel-drive event

1 John Rowlands/Glenn Latham (Ford Escort Mk2) 46m17s; 2 Phil Burton/Mal Capstick (Escort Mk2) +21s; 3 Kevin Shepherd/Jamie Atherton (Talbot Sunbeam); 4 David Hutchinson/Jeff Garnett (Escort Mk2); 5 Alan Roberts/Aled Edwards (Ford Ka); 6 Max Utting/Mike Ainsworth (Ford Fiesta ST); 7 Colin Griffiths/Tom Bishop (BMW Compact); 8 Tommi Meadows/Shannon Turnbull (Ford Ka S1400); 9 Mike Wolff/Mark Twiname (BMW E30); 10 Andrew Fox/Jamie Lee-Fox (BMW 325i). **Class winners:** Meadows/Turnbull; Roberts/Edwards; Jonathan Whalley/Peter Dennis (Escort Mk2); Rowlands/Latham; Burton/Capstick; Kalvin Green/Tom Wood (Fiesta ST); Ian Jamison/Dean Kellett (Porsche Boxster).

#### Four-wheel-drive event

1 Dylan Davies/Llion Williams (Subaru Impreza) 44m54s; 2 Mathew Hirst/Declan Dear (Mitsubishi Evo 10) +1m 38s; 3 Wug Utting/Bob Stokoe (Impreza N12b); 4 Paul Davy/Roger Allan (Impreza); 5 Bob Morgan/Adie Williams (Skoda Fabia vRS); 6 Iwan Evans/Sion Williams (Impreza); 7 Alex Howard/George Fleming (Land Rover Freelander); 8 Rob Aslett/Ashley Aslett (Impreza); 9 Ron Hall/Phil Spilstead (Impreza WRX) **Class winners:** Hirst/Dear; Davies/Williams; Utting/Stokoe.

# ELLIOTT WINS AS R2WD DEBUTS

Escort Mk2 man kicks off British Historic bid. By **Paul Lawrence**



Elliott was supreme in Dyfi

**N**ick Elliott and Dave Price scored an emphatic victory on Rally North Wales as they saw off a quality field to win the opening round of the British Historic Rally Championship.

After six stages across the superb Dyfi complex, Elliott had an impressive 41-second margin over Marty McCormack/Phil Clarke and Paul Barrett/Dai Roberts. However, the winning gap would have been much smaller had Escort rookie Osian Pryce and co-driver Dale Furniss not dropped almost a minute with a puncture. Fourth place, 1m12s down on Elliott, was still a fine result for Pryce as he sampled rear-wheel drive for the first time.

"There was big pressure all day but we had a clean run and the pace has been good," said Elliott. "There were a lot of good people out there."

As usual, Elliott was wide awake on Saturday morning and went eight seconds ahead of Ryan Barrett/Paul McCann on the opening Dyfi stage. Barrett, making a welcome return to gravel after a number of years on asphalt, kept the pressure on and the margin was only 13s at service after the first loop of stages.

Sadly, Barrett went out on stage four with a broken 'diff and suddenly Elliott had a 45s cushion over McCormack. Over the second loop it was Ryan Barrett's older brother Paul who was on a mission. Fastest in the two closing stages of Big Ray and Gartheiniog took him to within two seconds of McCormack. But Elliott was home and dry with a hugely impressive drive against tough opposition.

Things might have been different, however, had the BRM-powered Hillman Avenger of Ieuan Rowlands and Emyr

Hall not gone out on stage two with distributor problems. Rowlands' time on the opening stage was believed to have been within four seconds of Elliott.

"We had a ball," said McCormack after sitting in the car for the first time since the finish ramp of the Roger Albert Clark Rally, which he won. Paul Barrett has put down a marker for the season in his just-finished car. Pryce, meanwhile, showed his class in unfamiliar surroundings. "I loved it," he said. "The car has been perfect."

Another impressive run for Steve Bennett and Osian Owen netted fifth, despite losing a place back to Pryce when they knocked a tyre off the rim on the final stage. Alan Walker and John Connor battled all day with a misfire, but rounded out the top six after a friendly battle with Simon Webster/Jez Rogers, while James Slaughter/James Whitaker had a good day in eighth overall despite a steering rack issue before service.

From a fabulous historic field, there were many great performances and it was Bob Bean who headed a strong Category 1 field. Fresh from celebrating his 80th birthday, Bob and new co-driver Miles Cartwright were mighty in their Ford Lotus Cortina and showed hallmark pace to win by a minute from Gwilym Roberts and Don James.

Other class winners in Category 1 were Ricky Evans/Mathew Evans (Hillman Imp), Paul Mankin/Desmond Bell (Lotus Cortina) and Rikki Proffitt/Graham Wild (Porsche 911). The Porsche crew struggled with a misfire but went clear once 911 rival Dessie Nutt left his car teetering on the edge of a big drop at the flying finish of the first stage.

The absolute star of Category 2 was Adam Milner, with Roy Jarvis getting the ride of his life in the co-driver's seat of their 1600cc Escort Mk1. Their outrageous speed took them to 10th overall, a Category 2 victory by a minute and a half and class C2 spoils by over four



Milner continues to impress in Mk1

## RESULTS

**BHRC, Rally North Wales, round 1/7, Dolgellau, March 24**

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Nick Elliott/Dave Price	Ford Escort Mk2	44m47s
2	Marty McCormack/Phil Clarke	Ford Escort Mk2	+41s
3	Paul Barrett/Dai Roberts	Ford Escort Mk2	+43s
4	Osian Pryce/Dale Furniss	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m 12s
5	Steve Bennett/Osian Owen	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m 22s
6	Alan Walker/John Connor	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m 45s
7	Simon Webster/Jez Rogers	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m 52s
8	James Slaughter/James Whitaker	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m 02s
9	Stuart Egglestone/Brian Hodgson	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m 13s
10	Adam Milner/Roy Jarvis	Ford Escort Mk1	+2m 19s

**Class winners:** Ricky Evans/Mathew Evans (Hillman Imp); Paul Mankin/Desmond Bell (Lotus Cortina); Bob Bean/Miles Cartwright (Ford Lotus Cortina); Rikki Proffitt/Graham Wild (Porsche 911); Milner/Jarvis; Barry Jordan/Paul Wakely (Hillman Avenger); Chris Skill/Tom Murphy (Ford Escort Mk1); David Hopkins/Tony Vart (Talbot Sunbeam); Egglestone/Hodgson; Elliott/Price; Barrett/Roberts.

minutes. "We did the whole event on two rear tyres," said Milner who rallies on a tiny budget. However, there was a late scare when a loose oil union was spotted going into the second run of Gartheiniog. It all held together and Milner went seventh fastest through the nine-mile stage.

Barry Jordan and Paul Wakely (Hillman Avenger) had a good day to win class C3 while Chris Skill and Tom Murphy (Escort Mk1) topped class C5 despite a troublesome clutch pedal. Mark Holmes/Craig Simkiss and Chris Browne/Ali Cornwell-Browne kept Skill pushing on.

David Hopkins and Tony Vart (Talbot Sunbeam) had a strong run to claim class D2 while D3 produced another of the drives of the rally as Stuart Egglestone and Brian Hodgson claimed a superb victory in their Pinto-powered Escort Mk2.

Over the morning stages, Egglestone had to fly to keep ahead of Josh Browne/Jane Edgington and Ben Friend/Cliffy Simmons. Despite being on unfamiliar territory, Egglestone headed the young chargers at service by 10s but the battle then fizzled out as Browne retired with an oil leak and Friend suffered a final stage engine failure.

# RACING REPORTS

**SILVERSTONE: BARC BY JASON NOBLE**
**MARCH 24/25**

Photos: Steve Jones

## MORRIS STILL IN THE THICK OF THE FORMULA FORD ACTION



Morris shot from sixth to first in race one

**Early afternoon Sunday, March 25, 2018, Brooklands corner on the Silverstone National circuit. The familiar backfire of period Formula Ford 1600 engines rattles by. In among the throng is a yellow and white liveried Royale RP26 being hustled through the complex with a lairy zealotry which makes these cars so gripping in a way the thin tyres could only dream of doing.**

The ragged driving, full of energy and fervour, doesn't belong to a young gun

out to prove a point. It belongs to FF1600 legend Rick Morris – the man who went toe-to-toe with a young Ayrton Senna in 1981 and clinched the FF1600 title a year later. As Morris enters his 47th season behind the wheel of a race car, the 71-year-old explains with a gentlemanly humility befitting the series that the way he drives a car hasn't changed.

"Oh yeah, I've never thought of myself as talented, but I do try and persevere with every aspect of the car, and make sure the car is how I want it, that's what I try to do," he says.

"I've always been good with cars that slide. It's handy with Formula Ford generally because if you watch these things at somewhere like Becketts or Stowe they are continually sliding."

Remarkably, the popular Hertfordshire racer was one of the few amateur drivers able to battle it out at the front of the FF1600 championships during the late 1970s and '80s with the aspiring professionals.

In 1981, a young Brazilian by the name of Ayrton Senna da Silva was the main championship rival, and despite Senna taking the title that year it was Morris who led the points for much of the season.

Morris's part-time effort is also said to have been a matter of much chagrin to Senna.

But running part-time is what has helped Morris continue racing – and significantly at a high level – into his 70s. It's what keeps him coming back year after year.

"Over the years I have been lucky I haven't had to pay for my racing, it's only this last year I had to pay for it, and I'm lucky I'm able to do that.

"I've never become a professional racing driver. All through the late '70s and early '80s virtually everyone at the

front was a professional racing driver, but I had a job, which meant I was able to get a mortgage, start a business and have some money when I'm 70 to go racing. And it's pure racing – as soon as you put wings and slicks on it you mess it up."

Morris also has a fitness regime that would put most people half his age to shame – something which is also helping keep him sharp on the racetrack.

"I am very keen on being fit," he admits. "I do a lot of cycling and swimming. In a scientific way as well, with a heart rate monitor and everything else."

That fitness has helped him quickly bounce back from injury. His run at last year's Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch – which began well with a pole lap in the wet – was marred by a crash "head on into the bank at 43mph" which destroyed the front of the car.

The experience didn't put him off – he went on to race in South Africa and New Zealand over the winter while waiting for his repaired chassis to arrive just a week before the Silverstone opener.

Watching his efforts trackside, you wouldn't know he was still getting to grips with his ex-hillclimb RP26. Duelling with the likes of Mark Armstrong, Mike Gardner and debut

winner Benn Tilley through Brooklands and Luffield demonstrates a savvy racecraft.

A phenomenal opening race featured progress from sixth to first in just two laps, thanks partly to a searing round-the-outside masterclass at Copse on Gardner.

He may not have finished first, but his close-but-fair dicing for the podium positions throughout showed his class and talent. A spin at Brooklands with Gardner on lap five admittedly wasn't his finest hour, but the recovery back up to third was very neat. And he bagged another third place in race two.

With such a strong track record and fine standing in the racing community, there must be a secret to cracking Formula Ford he has mastered.

"No wings, no aerodynamics," he says. "If you look over the years people that have come through Formula Ford – my team-mate in '79 was Tommy Byrne and Tommy is regarded as being a very good driver. He was good in 1600, Senna was good in 1600.

"I think if you can drive Formula Ford fast at the front consistently, you will be a good driver, nobody would argue with that."



Morris is now into his 47th season of racing – and is still at the front

## Kendall is Super in first Mighty Mini race to storm from seventh to win

It may have been the first day of school for the Mighty Mini Championship but the boisterous activity throughout the field was more akin to the last day of term.

Both 20 minute contests featured plenty of charging drives – not least from the bold efforts of race one winner Scott Kendall.

Starting on the fourth row for the first, a fine opening lap culminated in a dive inside Greg Jenkins for second into Brooklands – a feat which allowed the reigning Super Mighty Mini class champion to hound David Kirkpatrick for the lead a lap later at Luffield.

Jenkins kept himself in the mix, with him and Kendall trading the lead throughout. It was eventually settled in favour of Kendall.

Kendall was again in contention for race two, before Jo Polley made her presence felt having overcome a nudge

on the pit straight and a wide moment at Becketts.

She crossed the line first in a four-wide run to the line thanks to an excellent final exit from Woodcote. "I went through every place from first to sixth – that's why Mighty Minis is so good," she said.

The Hyundai Coupe Cup was all about the renewed rivalry between Steve Kite, who took five wins last season, and Alex Cursley, who took seven.

A lights-to-flag run in race one was good news for Kite, but he had to hold off early pressure from Cursley in the second. A surge from Wayne Rockett in third meant Cursley had to focus on his mirrors, allowing Kite to escape with a 3.708s gap to Rockett in second.

Jemma Moore began from pole in the first Junior Saloon Car Championship encounter, doing well to hold off Lewis Saunders

and Ben Kasperczak. Kasperczak made a daring lunge into the lead at Brooklands just seconds before a heavy impact between Moh Ritson and Charlie Mann in the main pack brought the safety car out, reducing the number of laps Moore could challenge for the win.

Kasperczak had the restart under control, and eased to a 3.558s victory.

The second race again featured polesitter Moore being mugged by Kasperczak – this time at Becketts early on. A staunch attack from Steven Chandler on Moore allowed Kasperczak to win by more than 7s this time.

If drivers taking a brace of victories in the weekend's various single-make series hadn't been established by late Sunday afternoon, it certainly was when Ben Palmer picked up his second win from two in the Michelin Clio Cup Series.

The current race class champion was



Kendall won first Super Mighty Mini race, and just missed out on brace

challenged only by Anton Spires last year, but with Spires not competing it freed the shackles from Palmer who eased to a 19s victory over Simon Freeman in race one. He followed it up with a second lights-to-flag cruise over John Hamilton and Freeman in the final race.

A meagre five-car grid took to the Renault UK Clio Cup Junior encounters. Series rookie Nicholas

Reeve led much of the opener until Gustav Burton got his elbows out for an inside lunge at Luffield for the on-the-road victory.

The stewards deemed Burton to have been overly aggressive, handing him a one-second time penalty which restored Reeve's debut win. A second victory on Sunday afternoon puts Reeve at the top of the standings.

### WINNERS BOX

**Classic Formula Ford 1600**  
Race 1: Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)  
Race 2: Mike Gardner (Crosle 30/32F)

**Classic & Historic Thunder Saloons/Blue Oval Saloon Series**  
Race 1: Dale Gent (Subaru Impreza)  
Race 2: Dave Cockell (Ford Escort Cosworth)

**Hyundai Coupe Cup**  
Race 1: Steve Kite  
Race 2: Steve Kite

**Junior Saloon Car Championship**  
Race 1: Ben Kasperczak (Citroen Saxo VTR)  
Race 2: Ben Kasperczak (Citroen Saxo VTR)

**Michelin Clio Cup Series**  
Race 1: Ben Palmer  
Race 2: Ben Palmer

**Super Mighty Mini**  
Race 1: Scott Kendall  
Race 2: Jo Polley

**Pre '66 Classic Saloon & Historic Touring Cars**  
Race 1: Jonathan Lewis (Mini Cooper S)  
Race 2: Jonathan Lewis (Mini Cooper S)

**Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars**  
Race 1: Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)  
Race 2: David Howard (Jaguar XJ12)

**Pre '93 Touring Cars/Pre '03 Touring Cars/Pre '05 Production Saloon Cars**  
Race 1: Steve Barden (Honda Civic Type R)  
Race 2: David Hunt (BMW M3 E36)

**Renault UK Clio Cup Junior**  
Race 1: Nicholas Reeve  
Race 2: Nicholas Reeve

# RACING REPORTS

**BRANDS HATCH: BRSCC BY MARK LIBBETER**
**MARCH 24/25**

Photos: Gary Hawkins

## PERFECT START FOR BLACKWELL-CHAMBERS



Blackwell-Chambers won a trio of races

Three proved to be the magic number at Brands Hatch as Danny Harrison, Will Blackwell-Chambers and Michael Watton all claimed hat-tricks in the opening rounds of their respective championships.

Harrison proved unstoppable in the trio of Fiesta Championship encounters, despite the best efforts of Harry Gooding. After the first race had been delayed by two stoppages, Harrison took the spoils by pulling off a superb opportunist move at Paddock Hill when pacesetter Gooding was held up by a backmarker.

In the battle for third, Tom Hutchins looked to have lost out to Charles Plumley on the final lap, but a post-race time penalty for exceeding track limits reversed the result in his favour. Harrison's route to success was more comfortable in race two, taking a lights-to-flag victory from Gooding and Plumley.

Plumley briefly led race three until being pushed wide at Graham Hill Bend, enabling Gooding and Harrison to battle for glory once more. Gooding initially held the advantage, but Harrison made a decisive move on lap seven and never looked back. Former BTCC racer David Nye completed the podium after a fine tussle with Ryan Faulconbridge.

A clean sweep of victories in the Mazda MX-5 Championship contests helped Blackwell-Chambers make the perfect start to his title defence, though Samuel Smith never allowed him time to relax.

Smith led early in race one until fading tyres ultimately meant he had to give best to both Blackwell-Chambers and Oliver Allwood. In races two and three, Smith

provided Blackwell-Chambers with his strongest opposition, but the reigning champion did enough to come out on top on each occasion.

In the three 'B' races, run for slower qualifiers, Paul Tucker took a convincing victory in the opener ahead of Simon Woods and Charlie Rawles. Race two was won by Clive Powles, passing Marcus Bailey late on, while Rawles emerged victorious in an entertaining four-way squabble for the race three honours.

Watton, meanwhile, staked his claim for successive F1000 Championship titles with a crushing treble success. Paul Butcher, runner-up in the standings for the past two years, took advantage of a slide at Graham Hill Bend by Dan Clowes to snatch second in race one, but was beaten to the position himself by Adam Walker in race two. Walker also took second in the third event ahead of Clowes.

One driver to narrowly miss out on treble glory was Joshua Jackson in the Mazda MX-5 Super Series, although two wins was still an impressive return. Jackson had twice fought off Jake Bailey's attentions to claim victory in the opening two races, but the latter refused to be denied in the third encounter. After relentlessly hounding Jackson, Bailey powered ahead on the approach to Paddock on lap 18, holding on to win by just 0.158 seconds. Richard Breland claimed a pair of third places, with Mazda racing stalwart Paul Sheard taking the final rostrum spot in the finale.

Starting this season as he ended the last, Scot Steven Dailly was another double winner in the pair of BMW Compact Cup races. The highlight

### WINNERS

**Fiesta Championship**

 Race 1: Danny Harrison (ST)  
 Race 2: Danny Harrison (ST)  
 Race 3: Danny Harrison (ST)

**Mazda MX-5 Championship**

 Race 1A: Will Blackwell-Chambers  
 Race 2A: Will Blackwell-Chambers  
 Race 3A: Will Blackwell-Chambers  
 Race 1B: Paul Tucker  
 Race 2B: Clive Powles  
 Race 3B: Charlie Rawles

**F1000 Championship**

 Race 1: Michael Watton  
 Race 2: Michael Watton  
 Race 3: Michael Watton

**Mazda MX-5 Super Series**

 Race 1: Joshua Jackson  
 Race 2: Joshua Jackson  
 Race 3: Jake Bailey

**BMW Compact Cup**

 Race 1: Steven Dailly  
 Race 2: Steven Dailly

**Fiesta Junior**

 Race 1: James Waite  
 Race 2: James Waite

**Track Attack, Tricolore Trophy & Multi Marques**

 Race 1: Rich Hockley (Honda Civic)  
 Race 2: Clive Haynsford (Mazda RX-8)

of both events was the race-long duel for second between Owen Hunter and Ian Jones; a battle which Hunter edged each time.

James Waite was uncatchable in both Fiesta Junior encounters. Isaac Smith impressed with two solid drives to second, while Josh Steed and Oliver Turner secured a third each.



Harrison took three Fiesta wins despite constant pressure from Gooding



Reigning F1000 champion Watton dominated all weekend with three wins

**KIRKISTOWN: 500MRCI BY RICHARD YOUNG**
**MARCH 24**

## MOORE HOLDS ON FOR FORMULA VEE WIN AFTER EPIC BATTLE

There's something about Kirkistown that brings out the best in Formula Vee, and something about Vee that keeps the wily Ray Moore at the head of the pack. But this time, only just...

Moore started the 'A' race from pole, and history will record that he led for most of the two-part affair, though history also has a habit of glossing over the details.

Part one lasted just four laps, with Moore's black Leastone just ahead of the squabbling field when Colm Blackburn was ejected from the train, leading to a red flag for barrier repairs.

At the restart Moore resumed his position in front, but his pursuers

were in no mood to settle for podium positions. For the remaining laps, the seven-car battle behaved more like a high-speed rugby scrum, running three or more abreast into the Hairpin at times. Moore held on for victory but only by 0.132 seconds from Lee Newsome's green Sheane, with Anthony Cross, Stephen Morrin and Gavin Buckley in close attendance. Everybody had a shot at the lead at some point, but Moore was in front when it mattered.

A 10-second penalty for an out-of-position start dropped Buckley to the tail of the pack post-race, allowing Luke O'Faolain and Shane McBride to complete the top six.

Buckley had earlier incurred the

same official displeasure in the 'B & C' race, where he might have been credited with second spot rather than fifth. Ken Browne was the winner from McBride and O'Faolain.

By contrast the Formula Ford 1600 races were gentlemanly. Matt Round-Garrido started his Medina from pole but was overwhelmed in the early stages by Alan Davidson's Mondiale and the Van Diemens of David McCullough and Will Herron.

McCullough eventually stretched away to win by a length from Herron, with Jake Byrne (Ray) finishing third on the road. However, in post-race

scrutineering, Herron - who had struggled in the closing stages with low oil pressure - was disqualified for a technical infringement lifting Byrne into second and Round-Garrido into the final podium slot. Davidson faded to sixth place.

Round-Garrido started from pole in race two, and although he was initially swamped by McCullough and Davidson, took just a handful of laps to regain control, stretching away to win by more than 7s. McCullough claimed the runner-up spot ahead of Byrne, while Davidson again had problems, finishing ninth.

Jim Larkham (Radical) withstood massive pressure

from Mike Johnston in his Opel Tigra to win both Roadsports encounters, earning 'Driver of the Day' in the process.

Mark Braden and Conor Farrell were victorious among the Global GTs which ran concurrently. Their second race proved almost as hectic as the Vee encounter, but without the red flags.

Mark Stewart beat Craig Brown in a brace of entertaining Ford Fiesta tussles, while Robbie Parks twice topped the Ginetta Junior results ahead of newcomer Seog Martin.

James Turkington (SEAT) also scored a double victory ahead of a tiny field of saloons.

### WINNERS

**Formula Vee**  
 Race 1A: Ray Moore (Leastone JH004)  
 Race 1B&C: Ken Browne (Sheane FV)

**Formula Ford 1600**  
 Race 1: David McCullough (Van Diemen TF01)  
 Race 2: Matt Round-Garrido (Medina JL17)

**Roadsports**  
 Race 1: Jim Larkham (Radical PRO6)  
 Race 2: Jim Larkham (Radical PRO6)

**Ford Fiestas**  
 Race 1: Mark Stewart  
 Race 2: Mark Stewart

**Ginetta Junior**  
 Race 1: Robbie Parks  
 Race 2: Robbie Parks

**Saloons**  
 Race 1: James Turkington (SEAT Leon)  
 Race 2: James Turkington (SEAT Leon)

# SPORTING SCENE

## Godfrey to stick with Mitsubishi for BRX

British Rallycross Championship leader Julian Godfrey will race a Spencer Sport-run Mitsubishi Mirage RX Supercar for a second event in a row at Lydden Hill on Easter Bank Holiday Monday.

Five-time British RX champion Godfrey finished fourth in the Silverstone season-opener earlier this month, but with the World Rallycross contenders that locked-out the podium ineligible for points, Godfrey took a maximum score.

The target for Godfrey's second Mirage outing is to continue to fine-tune the machine's set-up. "We had a great result first time out in the Mitsubishi Mirage RX at Silverstone and I want to drive the car again at a circuit I know well so hence we're going to contest round two at Lydden Hill in it," said Godfrey.

"Over the last two years I've not had the best of starts to the season, so it's nice to come away from the first round in the lead, rather than being fifth or sixth."

The Silverstone event was the Mirage's most competitive outing in rallycross to date. "It wasn't without drama as we had a lot of panel damage caused by cars crashing into us," said Godfrey. "That's partly why we have unfinished business in the Mitsubishi. We want to go to a circuit I know well and continue to develop a few areas of the car. There is more to come from the Mirage: we want to continue to explore the potential."

# PRODRIVE RENAULT MEGANE RS RX TESTS IN PUBLIC

## French machine runs at Silverstone



Chicherit put miles on the car

By Hal Ridge

**GCK's new Prodrive-built Renault Megane RS RX World Rallycross Supercar broke cover at the second official pre-season World RX test at Silverstone on Monday.**

The GCK-Prodrive tie-up to create the Megane RS RX World RX challenger was announced in early 2017, and following build completion at Prodrive's Banbury base in the UK, the new car undertook recent test sessions behind closed doors.

The squad will officially reveal its car at a launch in Paris next week, but ran the new two-litre turbocharged four-wheel-drive machine at Silverstone in a testing livery.

"This is really an important day for me, the team has been working really hard for the last two years," team owner and driver Chicherit told *Motorsport News*. "Finally we are here driving on track with the other cars for the first time, so we can have a better idea to see where we are. When you drive alone

by yourself for sure you are fast, but when you're the only one on track for sure you're the fastest."

Although technical details about the new machine were kept under wraps, the car returning to a closed garage between each run, driving duties are being undertaken by Chicherit and team-mate Jerome Grosset-Janin.

At the conclusion of the first morning of testing at Silverstone, Grosset-Janin posted the fastest time aboard the new Megane, 0.399s ahead of double World

RX champion Petter Solberg's Volkswagen Motorsport-built Polo.

"Clearly we have the right speed for where we want to be, so it's really good," said Chicherit. "We are just at the beginning of the development so we can clearly see where the potential is. With more work and more experience, I think the car can do it. It's really important for us to be here to really see where we are before the first race, it's better to know, so we know what to expect in Barcelona."

## BTRDA RALLYCROSS

# LYNCH BOUNCES BACK FOR BTRDA TRIUMPH

**BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship: Blyton Park**

Organiser: BTRDA When: March 25 Where: Blyton Park, Lincolnshire Starters: 57.

**Ford Ka racer Tony Lynch won the opening round of the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship at Blyton Park in Lincolnshire.**

The Wigan-based driver commanded the Super Modified A final from the front. He had earlier secured pole position with a pair of fastest times in the qualifying stages, despite losing time in Q2 in traffic.

Lynch was joined at the front of the order by a pair of rear-wheel-drive machines at the end of qualifying. It was Marc Jones' Toyota MR2 that posed the greatest threat to Lynch's lead in the early stages of the final.

Jones had been fastest in Q2 but in the five-lap final he was overcome for second position by B final winner Patrick Ryan (Vauxhall Nova), the pair then holding station behind Lynch to the end.

Lynch said: "I had a shocking second heat but because the Clubmans championship only counts two heats [from three], it meant I qualified on the front row of the final. Otherwise it might have been a different story.

"I had a little bit of good luck there but sometimes you need that in motorsport."

Irishman Ryan had a torrid start to the day, first with a throttle linkage issue and then a broken driveshaft, but fought back in the B final to pass both John Cross and Mike Dresser and earn his A final spot.

British Rallycross Super1600 team-mates Phil Chicken and Michael Boak, both in Citroen C2s, finished fourth and fifth in the A final, having passed Paul Johnson's BMW M3.

Renault Clio driver Eddie Gibbs won the Production final from the front of the grid, chased hard by Polish driver Tomasz Chojnacki (Citroen Saxo), while Sue Lane fended off the attentions of Keith Kershaawe for the last podium spot, in a Honda Civic and Peugeot 106 respectively.

Dale Ford was fifth with *Motorsport News* rallycross reporter Hal Ridge in sixth, of the 25 starters in the Clubman series' biggest class.

Just a week after making his rallycross debut at Silverstone, where he finished second at the opening British Rallycross meeting, Luke Constantine swapped positions for the lead with Morgan Wroot on multiple occasions in the Junior final at Blyton. This time he came out on top to score victory. Wroot



Lynch was uncatchable in the BTRDA Super Modified showdown

finished second with Constantine's cousin, James, in third and his older brother, Tom, in fourth. Eleanor Corner impressed in her second rallycross start with fifth while Amy Baines was sixth in a Vauxhall Corsa.

Shaun Buckley headed a rear-wheel-drive podium lock-out in the Classic category with his sideways Ford Escort, ahead of Ryan Taylor and Richard Todd in a pair of BMW E30s.

Ryan Stutchbury overcame a fire to finish fourth with his Peugeot 205, while Dan Beattie won the battle of the Subaru Imprezas to claim Production 4x4 glory ahead of the similar car of Paul Davis. Ross Connelly completed the podium in a Nissan Pulsar.

### Results

**Super Modified:** 1 Tony Lynch (Ford Ka); 2 Patrick Ryan (Vauxhall Nova) +2.295s; 3 Marc Jones (Toyota MR2); 4 Phil Chicken (Citroen C2); 5 Michael Boak (Citroen C2); 6 Paul Johnson (BMW M3).

**Production:** 1 Eddie Gibbs (Renault Clio); 2 Tomasz Chojnacki (Citroen Saxo); 3 Sue Lane (Honda Civic); 4 Keith Kershaawe (Peugeot 106); 5 Dale Ford (Citroen Saxo); 6 Hal Ridge (Citroen C2).

**Junior:** 1 Luke Constantine (Suzuki Swift); 2 Morgan Wroot (Suzuki Swift) +1.463s; 3 James Constantine (Suzuki Swift); 4 Tom Constantine (Suzuki Swift); 5 Eleanor Corner (Suzuki Swift); 6 Amy Baines (Vauxhall Corsa).

**Classic:** 1 Shaun Buckley (Ford Escort); 2 Ryan Taylor (BMW E30) +10.164s; 3 Richard Todd (BMW E30); 4 Ryan Stutchbury (Peugeot 205); 5 Leigh Marsh (Ford Escort); 6 Ian Clarke (Rover Mini).

**Production 4x4:** 1 Dan Beattie (Subaru Impreza); 2 Paul Davis (Subaru Impreza) +3.352s; 3 Ross Connelly (Nissan Pulsar); 4 Tracey Bennett (Subaru Impreza); no other finishers.

## SPORTING SCENE ROUND-UP

BTRDA Car Trials chairman Neil Mackay took honours in the rearranged **Golden Springs** Car Trial on Sunday in his aging Citroen AX with a fabulous climb just before lunch.

He didn't relinquish during the afternoon, despite reigning Gold Star champion Shawn Franklin's best efforts, to win the class by six points dropping just 14 points despite extremely slippery conditions.

Barrie Parker held onto the rear-wheel-drive class despite a panic grab of second gear on the last hill as he nearly spun to a halt. He beat Cotswolds champion Dick Glossop, who has stepped up to National level, by a single point. Franklin had to settle for fourth overall.

Ian Wright continued to dominate Sporting Trials in 2018 by winning the **Presidents Trial** on Sunday once again by a clear margin. Roland Uglow made his first

appearance in the defence of his British championship to finish second, beating John Fack on a tie-break.

British championship leader Richard Sharp was a point back in fourth. Meanwhile, in slippery conditions, Jerome Fack beat live-axle expert class winner Steve Courts to fifth overall.

### Results

**Golden Springs Car Trial**  
Organiser: Woolbridge Motor Club Where: Manor Farm, Crewkerne When: March 25 Starters: 31.

1 Neil Mackay (Citroen AX) 59.8 percent; 2 Barrie Parker (Westfield) 69.1 percent; 3 Dick Glossop (Liege); 4 Shawn Franklin (Citroen Saxo VTS); 5 Trevor Moffatt (Vauxhall Corsa); 6 Kevin Roberts (Dutton Phaeton); 7 John Wadsworth (Ford Ka Sport); 8 John Charles (Liege); 9 Rupert North (Citroen Saxo); 10 Andy Wood (Toyota Yaris).

### Presidents Sporting Trial

Organiser: Southsea Motor Club Where: Petersfield When: March 25 Starters: 24.

1 Ian Wright (Sherpa Indy) 23 points; 2 Roland Uglow (Crossle) 31 points; 3 John Fack (MSR); 4 Richard Sharp (Cartwright); 5 Jerome Fack (MSR); 6 Steve Courts (Facksmile); 7 Stuart Beare (Sherpa Indy); 8 Arthur Carroll (Sherpa); 9 Julian Fack (Crossle); 10 Ross Bruce (Concord).



Neil Mackay topped the Golden Springs Trial

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

### MN SAYS...

## Signs look good for a strong year

There might not have been overtaking, but 2018 could be a classic battle

Well who saw that coming? A Ferrari 1-3 in Australia was not what was on the cards after qualifying in Australia and it required a huge slice of luck for it to materialise. But it did, and it is first blood to Ferrari.

Lewis Hamilton was understandably fuming at the way Merc lost the race in Melbourne, with a dodgy computer programme blamed for the fact that the team did not realise that it was actually under attack from the Scuderia. "Was that my fault?" Lewis asked his engineers over the radio. It wasn't, but it is a shame that the four-time world champion couldn't read the race for himself. Or maybe he was just pointing out that it wasn't...

What the Australian GP has proved is that there are three cars genuinely in the mix this season. Sure, the Merc is fast and Hamilton's pole lap was stunning, but the fractions between the Ferraris, Mercedes and Red Bulls in the 58-lapper seem to suggest that we are in for a competitive season. Hamilton says he hopes it is close too, because he wants to fight. For the health of F1, a tight battle is probably even more vital.

**Matt James, Editor** (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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



ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S  
**FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!**

Bob Sketchley's shot from the Ronnie Hoare Trophy race at Goodwood's Members meet



Jack Batkin's picture of Sebastien Loeb



A flying James Harrold, by Peter Atkins



Sam Nudd's 750MC shot from Donington



Rich Cranston went to Hangar 17 museum



Ben Forrester was at the Lee Holland



Cheryl Cross was at British Rallycross



Rally North Wales fun, by Neil Taunton



Rob Austin at Brands Hatch, from Gary Hill



WSR early season prep, by Gary Hill



A snowy Donington, photo by Sam Nudd



Goodwood teapot, taken by Bob Sketchley

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Hans-Joachim Stuck set a new lap record at Le Mans in 1985

Tune in for a documentary on legendary photographer Rainer Schlegelmilch, a pioneer among sport photographers who has been capturing images from the world of motorsport for decades.

**Rainer Schlegelmilch: Freezing Speed** (Wednesday, 1900-1930hrs) charts his career with tributes from Bernie Ecclestone and Sir Jackie Stewart, among others.

Highlights from Down Under and the Australian Supercar Championship come from Adelaide (Thursday, 0930-1200hrs).

There's the chance to catch action from the Irish National Rally Championship with highlights from the **Mayo Stages Rally** (Friday, 2130-2200hrs), where competitors faced a mix of gravel, mud and Tarmac-based stages.

And the latest instalment from **The Great History of the 24 Hours of Le Mans** series comes from 1985 (Saturday, 1400-1430hrs), as Porsche brought its 962 to the event.

Hans-Joachim Stuck also recorded the fastest ever lap of La Sarthe at this running which would stand until last year.

**LISTINGS**

**RACING SATURDAY/SUNDAY**

■ **Silverstone, Northants BRSCC meeting:** TCR UK, FF1600, VW, Mazda MX-5, Alfa Romeo, Civic Cup, HRDC Allstars, Pre '66 Touring Cars **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1240hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0935hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £15 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

**SATURDAY AND MONDAY**

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire F3/GT meeting:** British GT, British F3, Ginetta GT5, Ginetta G40, Northern Saloon/Sports **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1145hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Monday, racing from 0950hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

**SUNDAY/MONDAY**

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent Truck meeting:** Pickup Trucks, Legends Cars, Kumho BMW, Quaife Modified Saloons, Tin Tops, Intermarque **Starts** Sunday, racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs)



Gary Prebble will be in action at Castle Combe on Monday

Monday, racing from 1025hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

**MONDAY**

■ **Castle Combe, Wilts CCRC meeting:** FF1600, GT, Saloons, Hot Hatches, BMW Car Club, Formula Vee, Locost **Starts** racing from 1230hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £15, child free **Web** castlecombecircuit.co.uk **Contact** 01249 782417

**SPORTING SCENE FRIDAY**

■ **Northampton National Hot Rods Starts** 1300hrs **Admission** adult £16, under 5 free **Web** nationalhotrod.com

**SATURDAY**

■ **Stoke, Staffordshire BriSCA F1 Starts** 1700hrs **Admission** adult £18, 12-15 year-olds £7, under 12s free **Web** brisca.com

**MONDAY**

■ **Ipswich, Suffolk National Hot Rods Starts** 1400hrs **Admission** adult £16, under 5 free **Web** nationalhotrod.com

■ **Lydden Hill, Kent British Rallycross Championship Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** rallycrossbrx.com

Details correct at time of press, but please check before travelling

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

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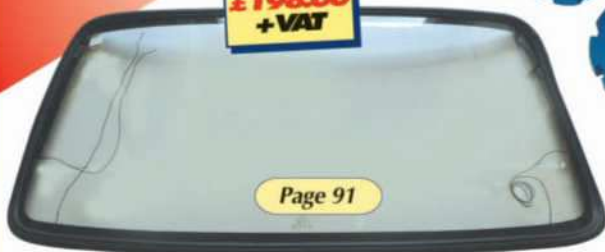
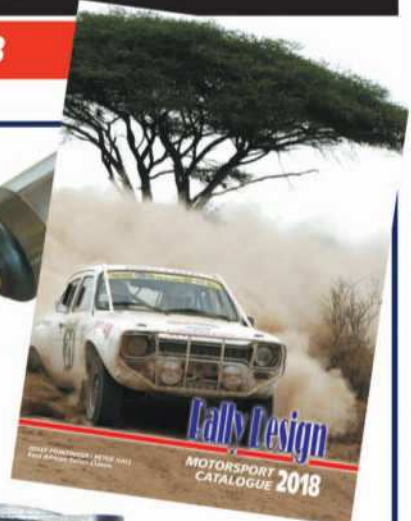
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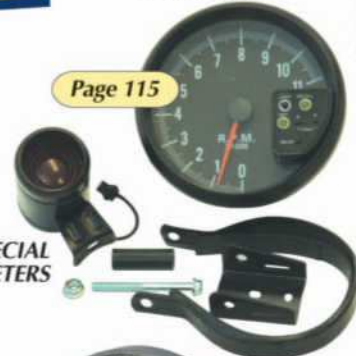
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