



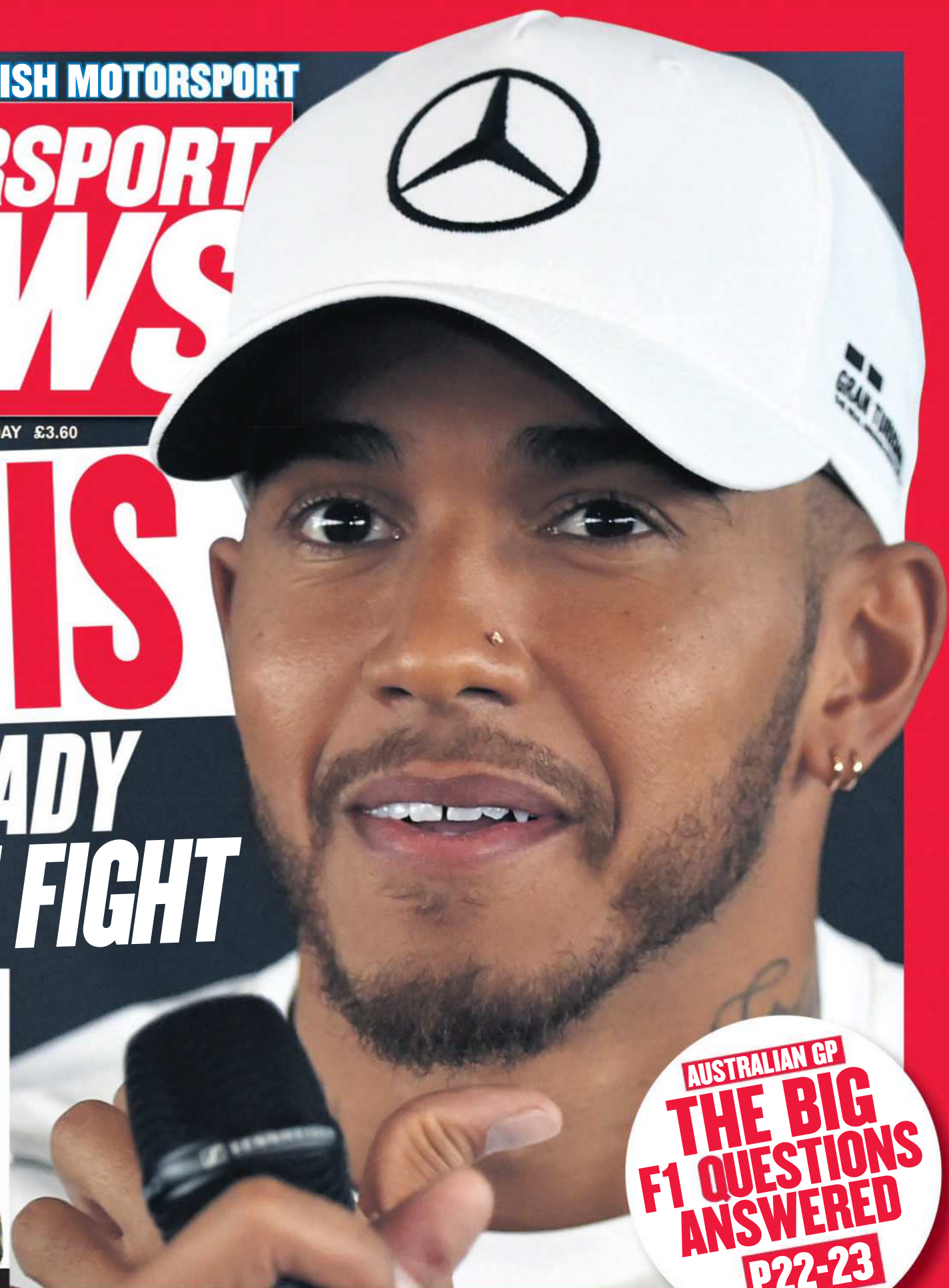
# LOEB LAPS UP SILVERSTONE

FRENCH LEGEND WINS BRITISH RALLYCROSS OPENER P28

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

# MOTORSPORT NEWS

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# LEWIS

## I AM READY FOR THE FIGHT

By Matt James

Reigning champion Lewis Hamilton says that he is in better shape than ever as the new F1 season blasts into life in Australia this weekend.

The Mercedes driver will chase his fifth world crown and says that he has learned lessons from his successful 2017 challenge to make him an even more formidable opponent this term.

"I'm always thinking of the next steps as a racing driver, how can I improve," said Hamilton.

"You have what you feel is such a complete season [as 2017], but there's still so many areas that you can get better at."

Full story p2-3



Mercedes flier

AUSTRALIAN GP  
**THE BIG F1 QUESTIONS ANSWERED**  
P22-23

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## GOODWOOD SHOWSTOPPERS



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## CLASSY KIRKALDY

SCOT TOPS THE MN CIRCUIT CLASH P19



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**British champion says he is fired up for**



**HAMILTON:**



Hamilton, Bottas and Wolff are ready to kick off the campaign in Melbourne this weekend

**By Matt James**

**Reigning champion Lewis Hamilton says he will aim to have a perfect season in his quest for an historic fifth Formula 1 title.**

The Mercedes man became the first Briton to land four world titles after a successful campaign in 2017, when he won nine of the 20 races and overtook Michael Schumacher's record for the most career pole positions set.

The Mercedes has yet to show its true potential in testing, but the team is excited about the 2018 car, the W09, and its prospects.

Hamilton will be going toe-to-toe with Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel for a fifth crown. The two will match up to each other in this weekend's opening race, the Australian Grand Prix.

Hamilton said: "There were 20 races last year and I didn't win every single one. In hindsight, I could have set the car up better or performed a little bit better. That

inspires me to improve for this year."

**Landmark ahead**

While Hamilton is in prime position to equal Juan Manuel Fangio's tally of five world titles, the Brit insists that he is just focusing on the challenge ahead rather than aiming for the record books.

"If I'm honest, I'm always thinking of the next steps as a racing driver, how can I improve as a racing driver," he said. "You have what you feel is such a complete season, but there's so many areas that you can still improve. As well as the success on track, it is about how you integrate with your team, how you work with your personnel, your engineers, how you divide your time through the year – all these different things, you're just constantly evolving and improving."

"I think what's really exciting for me is it's my 12th season in F1 and

I'm just as excited as I was in my first season, which I definitely didn't expect."

The 33-year-old says that the battle with Vettel would be a motivation, but he says he will not add any more pressure to his attack in 2018.

"I don't think [there is] any more [pressure] than there ever has been," said the 62-time race winner. "Winning that last world championship last year, the pressure was immense to make sure I performed. The team is performing and my job is to also deliver: it's a chain. I'm an important link, we are all important links, but I'm maybe the finishing touch, the catalyst to make the whole thing move, at the end."

"And this is what I do, this is what I've done since I was young, this is my comfort zone. And I love the pressure, personally. Usually when there's more pressure, that's when I perform better. The cool thing this year is I'm fighting

# HEADLINE NEWS

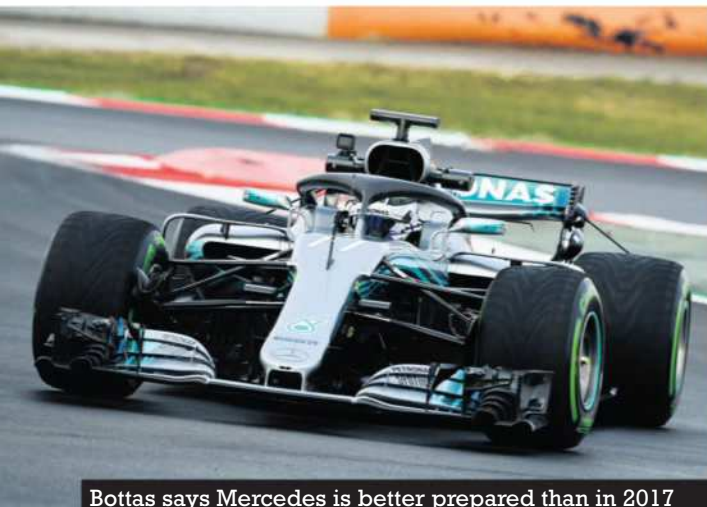
Photos: LAT

## landmark title charge



Hamilton says he is happy with the new W09 racer

# I WILL HIT THE GROUND RUNNING



Bottas says Mercedes is better prepared than in 2017



Vettel and Hamilton are both on the cusp of a fifth title

### F1 RECORDS

#### Most wins

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Michael Schumacher	91
2	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	62
3	Alain Prost	51
4	Sebastian Vettel	47
5	Ayrton Senna	41
6	Fernando Alonso	32

#### Most pole positions

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	72
2	Michael Schumacher	68
3	Ayrton Senna	65
4	Sebastian Vettel	50
5	Jim Clark	33
6	Alain Prost	33

#### Most fastest laps

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Michael Schumacher	77
2	Kimi Raikkonen	45
3	Alain Prost	41
4	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	38
5	Sebastian Vettel	33
6	Nigel Mansell	30

#### Most world titles

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Michael Schumacher	7
2	Juan-Manuel Fangio	5
3	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	4
3	Alain Prost	4
3	Sebastian Vettel	4
6	Jack Brabham	3
6	Niki Lauda	3
6	Nelson Piquet	3
6	Ayrton Senna	3
6	Jackie Stewart	3

against another four-time world champion, I don't think that's ever happened before – so it's quite an exciting season."

### Light under a bushel

After the two prolonged pre-season periods of running in Barcelona recently, Mercedes only clocked the eighth fastest time compared to its rivals.

The Brackley-based team was one of the few not to run the new hypersoft compound from Pirelli. Team boss Toto Wolff said that was a deliberate ploy as the two drivers concentrated on gaining information from the car from longer runs, rather than one-shot qualifying pace.

"We decided not to use the hypersoft because we felt it is a tyre that is usable for one lap only. Testing it is about collecting data and understanding set-ups," said Wolff. "The hypersoft is just an additional big step in grip from the ultrasoft. It will be a qualifying tyre, and we felt that we would

rather concentrate on the development work than on single-lap."

The Mercedes team has focused on trying to smooth out some of the inconsistencies in the chassis, which could be temperamental at times last season and had some difficulty using its Pirellis compared to other machines.

Hamilton has already said that the W09 "feels like a better car" than last season, and he is the pre-season favourite with all bookmakers to land the crown this year.

### Team-mate debate

Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas will look to cement his reputation within the series, and the team, after an inconsistent season in 2017.

The Finn, who was a new recruit at the start of the campaign, won three races and finished third in the drivers' standings. He was also crucial to Mercedes lifting the constructors' title.

The 28-year-old says he is looking for an upturn in his personal performance in 2018. "Every year is crucial, that's how it goes in Formula 1," he explained. "I feel good for the year, I feel very much part of the team, I feel very supported in the team."

"I know I can win based on last year, I know I've learned massively. I have very high targets myself for the year. If I can get even near my targets I'm sure the future is good."

Bottas is also upbeat about the new machine for 2018, saying that a less troubled build up to the campaign has given the team a lift.

"We had more difficulties last year to understand the package we had and going to Melbourne we had to guess certain things and made some mistakes in the first race with the set-up of the car," he said. "I feel we understand the package better at this point. We will find out very soon."

## Mercedes fears the threat from Red Bull

Reigning champion Lewis Hamilton expects the Red Bull Racing pair of Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen to be his biggest threats in Melbourne this weekend.

The Milton Keynes-based team set the fifth fastest time when lapping from all of the pre-season running was combined, but an aerodynamic upgrade for its RB14 chassis is expected to reap big rewards, especially on the Australian circuit.

While Hamilton acknowledges a threat from Ferrari and particularly four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, the Briton says that Red Bull is lurking.

"I think it's going to be Max and Daniel maybe –



Red Bull: big threat

I'm talking about [threats] from other teams, Valtteri will also be in that mix.

"This year is going to be exciting, because last year there was a big difference between teams in the beginning, and then they got closer – in 2018, I think it starts this close and then it's going to overlap, and separate, and overlap during the year as people are developing.

"Also we don't bring upgrades at the same time. Some will. I think Red Bull will bring something at the first race, which will be interesting to see."

Red Bull's Ricciardo said that he was unsure that his team would eclipse Mercedes, but he thought they would be well in the mix this weekend.

"Now it looks like we're close," said the Australian. "I still don't really know where Ferrari is, I'm quite confident that Mercedes is just in front of us, but Ferrari I'm not sure. I think we're going to be a lot closer than last year."

"I'll do some homework. At the same time, I don't really spend too much time [on it], because in Melbourne I guess we'll find out."

# RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

## F1 ROUND-UP

### Changed Toro

Toro Rosso boss Franz Tost says there is "a big difference" between his team's newfound status as Honda's Formula 1 partner and its previous relationships with engine suppliers. The outfit has used Cosworth, Ferrari and Renault engines in the past but Tost says the changes with Honda began with the design of the car. "In the past, we just got a power unit and suppliers said: 'Look, this is the power unit, with the pipes, with all the aggregates, just put it into your car,'" he said. "Now our designers are sitting together with the Honda engineers, they think 'OK, how can we create the oil tank, in front of the engine, how to put it in a best possible way into the chassis.'"

### No bankrolling

Renault will not just fund its Formula 1 team until it matches Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull because their resources are in "another league", says chief technical officer Bob Bell. Since purchasing Lotus at the end of 2015, Renault has been on an aggressive recruitment drive and invested heavily in upgrading the F1 team's factory. "Our team is being managed from the very top in a very sensible way," said Bell. "We were sixth in the championship last year and we need to get into the position to comfortably maintain fourth place in the future. Until we can do that, and demonstrate to Renault that we're capable of achieving that, they are not going to start writing cheques for a lot more people or resources."

**Alonso nearly quit**  
McLaren driver Fernando Alonso considered quitting Formula 1 at the end of 2017 to pursue his dream of winning motorsport's unofficial triple crown. "Yes, I did think about the possibility of changing series and stopping Formula 1," he told MN's sister title *F1 Racing*. "But I felt it was not the time for me to step out. I knew I would regret it for the rest of my life and that I would have this bad taste for the rest of my racing career. So definitely I still want to succeed. There is unfinished business for me and McLaren together."

### Don't poke the bear

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff has warned Formula 1's chiefs against 'provoking' Sergio Marchionne, because there is a real danger of him pulling Ferrari out of F1. Ferrari chairman Marchionne has warned several times that if future F1 rules do not suit his business he will shut down his grand prix team. "Don't provoke Sergio Marchionne," said Wolff, when asked about Ferrari's threats to quit F1. "I think that F1 needs Ferrari more than Ferrari needs F1. And he has an understanding and a vision of what the DNA in F1 needs to represent for Ferrari, and he is a no-nonsense guy. So, you better not mess with him."

# VETTEL: MERC TEST PACE 'DECEPTIVE'

## Ferrari driver questions testing analysis



Vettel has "confidence"



Ferrari appeared to have poor long-run test pace

### By Matt Beer

#### Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel believes Mercedes and Red Bull's strong long-run pace in winter Formula 1 testing could prove to be deceptive.

Analysis of the testing times suggested Mercedes had a clear edge on race pace at Barcelona, with Ferrari potentially falling behind Red Bull having been the champion team's main rival in 2017.

But Vettel says the fact Mercedes and Red Bull did race simulations

entirely on the medium Pirelli tyre means their performances might not be representative.

Ferrari dominated the top end of the timing charts at Barcelona with times set on shorter runs with Pirelli's softer compounds, while there were hints that Mercedes was struggling with tyre temperature on the softer types.

"Our competitors – Mercedes and Red Bull – used one type of tyre for their race distance simulations, which is something you can't do in a grand prix," said Vettel.

"This has an impact on the strategies and ultimately on the result."

He insisted Ferrari had had a strong pre-season and would head to the Australian Grand Prix in a good shape as its main rivals.

"We're starting from a good base with our SF71H car," Vettel added.

"Now we'll have to work on development to further explore and improve its potential."

"I have a lot of confidence in our team, I know how skilled and committed the guys in Maranello are."

"We, too, did a good job in terms of mileage, totalling some 4323km [2686 miles] of running."

"I have a personal best of 188 laps in one day, which is 875km [543 miles] and a total of nearly 3000km [1865 miles]."

"We did not experience any major issues with the car, and I had fun driving it."

"I can't wait to be in Australia, because once we get on track there, we will all be driving and racing under the same conditions."

"And, as I said before, I have confidence in our car."

## F1 cars could be a second per lap faster around Silverstone this year following major resurfacing work

F1 lap times at Silverstone could be up to one second faster in 2018 according to track bosses after the entire 3.1-mile venue was resurfaced over the winter.

Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle explained that the circuit had to undertake work to placate Dorna, the promoter

of the MotoGP category, but had gone even further than was required to revamp the venue.

"When we looked at it, the asphalt at Silverstone hadn't been re-laid since 1996," said Pringle. "The surface was looking a bit patchwork, so we decided to resurface the whole thing while we

had the chance, and we have gone for the best surface we can."

"Some of the bumps have been removed too, and we are looking at a lap time gain of about one second per lap for an F1 car. All the categories that compete on the GP track will be able to circulate at lap record pace –

and it will offer more grip in the wet as well. It is an exciting development for Silverstone."

"F1 teams spend millions of pounds looking for a one-second-per lap improvement, but we have been able to deliver one with the work that we have done in February."

## Ocon aware that he needs to show his ability to his Mercedes bosses this year

Mercedes protege Esteban Ocon says he is aware he needs to "confirm" his ability to his bosses in his second full Formula 1 season with Force India.

Ocon made his grand prix debut in the middle of the 2016 season with Manor, then stepped up to Mercedes' lead customer team Force India for an impressive maiden full campaign in 2017.

Though Lewis Hamilton is expected to

resign with Mercedes beyond the current campaign, the other seat with the German manufacturer is up for grabs.

As well as current incumbent Valtteri Bottas, Ocon needs to establish himself above Mercedes reserve drivers Pascal Wehrlein and George Russell.

"I think it is one of the most important years of my career," Ocon told *Autosport*.

"After learning a lot last year everybody is waiting for me to confirm this year, which is quite normal. It's what my bosses are looking at."

"My career's managed by Mercedes so my bosses set me some targets for this year and I have to respect them."

"I feel like if I do a strong job here there will always be plenty of opportunities, but at the moment I'm fully focused on Force India and that's the important thing."



Ocon: Important year ahead

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'Is McLaren in the mire again?'  
F1 season preview, p22



Photos: LAT

# VERGNE HOLDS OFF DI GRASSI TO WIN IN URUGUAY



Vergne was able to keep di Grassi at bay in close race

Formula E points leader Jean-Eric Vergne kept reigning champion Lucas di Grassi at bay for all 37 laps of the Punta del Este round last weekend after di Grassi was controversially excluded from pole position.

Of the five drivers who contended the Uruguayan superpole segment – di Grassi, Vergne, Mitch Evans, Oliver Turvey and Alex Lynn – all but Vergne

had their times struck off after striking a bollard marking the track limits at the Turn 14/15 chicane. Evans was then consigned to a 16th place start owing to a weight-balance irregularity caused by a battery change.

Di Grassi started from second on the grid, and when Vergne made the better start the order was set for the first half of the race. Di Grassi shadowed him

throughout until the mid-race car changes, but their pitstops were equally quick and the pair left in the order they arrived. Di Grassi made a lunge at the penultimate corner on their out-lap but couldn't make it stick, and remained almost within touching distance until the flag.

"I had my pole position taken away very unfairly," fumed di Grassi. "We had a fast

car today but this track is impossible to overtake on, and Jean-Eric made no mistakes."

Sam Bird fought back from what he described as a "woeful" qualifying lap and a ninth-place start to claim the final podium position, leapfrogging team-mate Lynn in the pits. Turvey went the other way; having started fourth, he dropped to seventh during the car-swap phase.



## Audi driver kept second Di Grassi fined for wrong underwear

It wasn't just in Punta del Este qualifying that Lucas di Grassi was penalised, he was also fined for wearing non-compliant fireproof underwear during the Uruguayan race.

The Audi driver was fined €10,000 [£8,800] and given three penalty points but was able to keep his second-place finish.

"It was a mistake on my part," di Grassi admitted. "It should never happen – it was not something that I'm used to using."

"It was a decision that I made today because of the extreme heat and I ran out of underwear, and I didn't want to use a wet one – so I just put a new one [on]."

"We did all the safety that was required with the seatbelts, with the pitstops – everything that is actually really important for safety was done."

"And I didn't think this underwear issue would be any problem. But of course I must be aware that I should wear compliant [kit] during a race."

## ESM Nissan squad wins close Sebring 12 Hours contest

The Extreme Speed Motorsports Nissan squad claimed victory in a close-fought Sebring 12 Hours, as highest-placed Brit Harry Tincknell suffered late trouble.

The #22 ESM Onroak-Nissan DPi driven by Pipo Derani, Nicolas Lapierre and Johannes van Overbeek completed a 12-second victory in the second round of the 2018 IMSA SportsCar Championship.

Derani was at the front of the safety car queue when the race went green with just over an hour to run.

After a demon restart, he was able to pull a clear gap over Felipe Nasr in the #31 Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi-V.R.

Brazilian Derani was six seconds up on Tincknell in the best of the Joest Racing Mazda RT24-P Daytona Prototype internationals going into the final round of pitstops with 40 minutes left to run.

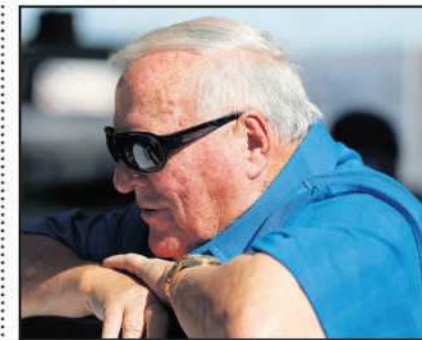
He emerged from the halts with a nine-second lead over the Wayne Taylor Racing Cadillac driven by Renger van der Zande and was able to control the gap to the chequered flag.

The Mazda, which Tincknell shared with Jonathan Bomarito and Spencer Pigot, failed to restart at its final stop and needed a push to get going, dropping the car to sixth position.

## QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

**AJ Foyt was unable to act as grand marshal for the Sebring 12 Hours last weekend after he suffered a second attack from killer bees. Foyt, 83, was previously stung more than 200 times in the head in 2005 – with both attacks caused by him disturbing beehives while using his bulldozer. Foyt is expected to make a full recovery but said "I look like I had a fight with Mike Tyson and lost" ... McLaren junior Nyck de Vries will contest the World Endurance Championship**

superseason with the Racing Team Netherlands LMP2 squad in a Dallara P217 once Jan Lammers steps back from driving following the Le Mans 24 Hours... **Reigning NASCAR Cup champion Martin Truex Jr claimed his first win of the season at Fontana last weekend, after leading 125 of the 200 laps. He did lose the lead for a spell after a slow pitstop but was able to pass Kyle Busch with 32 laps remaining to win by an eventual 11 seconds from Kyle Larson and Busch...**



Foyt was under attack from bees...again



Giovanardi will race Giulietta

## Double BTCC champion Giovanardi to return to action in an Alfa Romeo in World Touring Car Cup this year

Two-time British Touring Car champion Fabrizio Giovanardi will race in the World Touring Car Cup this year in an Alfa Romeo.

The 51-year-old Italian, who last raced in the BTCC in 2014, has starred in Alfa machinery before, taking

three European titles in a 156. Giovanardi, who took the BTCC crown in 2007 and '08, will now race a Giulietta in WTCR with the Team Mulsanne squad.

"I wish to thank everybody at Romeo Ferraris [who built the Giulietta] who

have made possible the 2018 season," he said. "I had the pleasure of driving the car very recently, and I was very impressed."

"For me, it will be a comeback on the world stage after a few years out of racing, but my passion and

hunger for victory are intact. At Monza [when he tested the car earlier this month], I had the chance to start a journey that hopefully will bring a lot of satisfaction for those involved in the Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR by Romeo Ferraris project."

# RACING NEWS

Photos: Carl Faux, LAT, Jakob Ebrey

## IN BRIEF

### TCR signings

Total Control Racing has made three further signings for Ginetta Junior this year after adding a trio of rookies to its line up. Karting graduates Abbi Pulling, who won three British titles in 2017, Ethan Hawkey and Daniel Gale will join Ruben Del Sarte and Patrick Kibble as the team returns to the series after a year out.

### Boardley moves

Ginetta GT4 Supercup regular Carl Boardley has switched to Team Hard for this season. The 42-year-old former National Hot Rod racer finished eighth in the GT4 standings last year with the Xentek Motorsport outfit, but was third in 2016.

### BRDC SuperStars

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Dan Ticktum heads the list of drivers that have been selected to join the BRDC's SuperStars programme for this year. Also joining are British Formula 3 champion Enaam Ahmed, British F4 title-winner Jamie Caroline, Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Charlie Eastwood and Asian Le Mans Series winner Harrison Newey.

### Karters chosen

The Motor Sports Association has selected the two karters to represent the UK at the CIK-FIA Karting Academy Trophy. Josh Rattican and William Orton, both 13, will seek to emulate Callum Bradshaw who won the title in 2016.

### Charity selected

The Wessex Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre has been selected to be a charity partner with Castle Combe this year. The centre offers therapies for sufferers, as well as working with their families and carers. The charity will support the six Action Days that take place at the circuit throughout the year.

### Virtual GT

This year's virtual British GT Championship will feature cross-platform play for the first time, allowing PC racers to go up against Xbox users. The series, which is run by The Online Racing Association and fully licensed by GT organiser SRO, will run on the Forza Motorsport 7 game. The season runs over 10 rounds, with British GT tracks such as Silverstone, Brands Hatch GP and Spa on the calendar. Race formats differ between one-hour endurance and 30-minute sprint events.

### 750MC on TV

The 750 Motor Club will be televised on Motorsport.tv as well as the recent Amazon addition Motor Trend on Demand in 2018. The Brands Hatch, Rockingham, Silverstone International and Snetterton 300 meetings will be broadcast, meaning each category in the club will receive at least one TV appearance. In addition, each formula will receive its own individual production-quality highlights edits on the club's Web TV page, as well as on its YouTube and Vimeo channels.

### Tibbs to make return

Former Clio 182 frontrunner Andy Tibbs will return to the single-make series in 2018. The Norfolk man won three races at Croft and Snetterton during his last full-season assault on the championship in 2015. "I just missed it," said Tibbs, who expects to continue racing at the head of the field. "I had a trackday in the middle of last year, took some people round, and you just get the bug again. I'm sure I'll be in the top five, that's where I was before."

### Busy Rose

Kristian Rose, son of Fun Cup boss Paul, made his CNC Heads Sports/Saloons debut at Oulton Park last weekend in a Honda Integra. Rose Jr had driven the car from home in Milton Keynes, raced it on his road tyres and won his class before driving home again. If father Paul hadn't played his double points joker, they would have been joint points leaders.



Sutton (1) in a cool suit with Australian Supercars driver Scott Pye



Sutton tried Holden Commodore in Oz

# SUTTON TRIES OUT HOLDEN AUSTRALIAN SUPERCAR

## BTCC champion took part in driver evaluation day at Winton last week

By Matt James

**Reigning British Touring Car champion Ash Sutton took part in a driver evaluation day for the Walkinshaw Andretti United Australian Supercar team at Winton Motor Raceway last week.**

The 24-year-old was offered the drive by the team and drove one of its 650bhp Holden ZB Commodore machines which are used regularly in the championship by James Courtney and Scott Pye.

It also meant Sutton was reunited with the team's engineer Carl Faux. Faux used to be the technical director of Team BMR, which ran Sutton to the UK title in 2017, and he also designed the BTCC

Subaru Levorg machines.

"It was a chance for me to try the car and see what Supercars is all about," said Sutton. "The car was a total monster – a real eye-opener. Even when I was leaving the pits, it felt bloody fast, half throttle and all I seemed to do is keep on pulling another gear..."

Sutton took part in a full day's running as he got to grips with the car on the 1.86-mile circuit.

"Supercars have a locked rear differential, and that means they are very different from what I have driven before," explained Sutton. "It requires a slightly different approach in my footwork techniques as the shift in balance is more towards understeer, but dialling myself into this

didn't take too long and once I had found the sweet spot I love the way the car rotated.

"I think it took me about 10 laps to get the hang of it and then I was really able to get into a rhythm. They are such impressive cars and I couldn't help but have a big grin on my face throughout my time behind the wheel."

Sutton said he would keep in touch with the team and was planning a return visit later in the season.

"I really enjoyed being around the team and I am planning to go over and watch one of the rounds," he said. "I will go at the end of the season – maybe the final round at Newcastle at the end of November. It is a championship I will certainly be keeping a very close eye on in the future."

### Butcher secures AmD MG6 BTCC drive

Scot Rory Butcher will take part in his first full season in the British Touring Car Championship this year after signing to drive one of the AmDTuning.com MG6 machines.

The 31-year-old, the brother-in-law of three-time champion Gordon Shedden, drove the Motorbase Performance Ford Focus for a part-season in 2017 as a replacement for the injured Luke Davenport. He scored two top-10 finishes at Knockhill.

He will now line up in one of Shaun Hollamby's cars alongside Tom Boardman. AmDTuning.com will also run a pair of Audi S3s for Sam Smelt and Ollie Jackson. Butcher said: "My move

into the BTCC last season was all a bit last minute and I was thrown in at the deep end for my debut on home soil at Knockhill, so I was determined to try and get a place on the grid this year to build on what I learned from the final four rounds of 2017 and to start building a long-term BTCC career.

"In January, it looked like it wasn't going to be possible but then I spoke to Shaun about the MG and we've been able to pull together a deal."

Team boss Hollamby said: "We want to challenge towards the front, and I fully expect Rory to be in the mix towards the top of the Jack Sears Trophy standings [for drivers who have yet to take an overall podium]."

### Fiesta convert Edwards joins Pattison and McCarthy in Clios

Three more drivers have been confirmed for the Renault UK Clio Cup with Jack McCarthy and Lee Pattison contesting another season and Nathan Edwards making his debut.

McCarthy starred during his rookie campaign with Team Pyro last year and took two podiums. He will remain with the Pyro squad, while 2010 runner-up Pattison

will again compete with WDE Motorsport.

Edwards has been a regular in Fiestas – finishing fourth in the standings in 2016 – and will contest the first round with WDE, but doesn't have the budget for the full season and so will return later in the year.

WDE team boss Wayne Eason said: "Budget will decide when he comes back,

it will likely either be just before or after the summer break. It's a real shame [he can't do the full season] as he's already proved he is a very capable driver. We're over the moon to have him as part of the team.

"I'm delighted to have Lee back and with him and Paul Rivett we've got two really good drivers that the likes of Nathan can feed off."



Edwards starred during the media day Clio test at Silverstone



Fiesta Junior runner-up Reeve will race with Specialized

### Reeve joins small grid for Clio Cup Junior opener at Silverstone

Fiesta Junior Championship runner-up Nick Reeve will switch to Renault UK Clio Cup Junior this year.

He will remain with Specialized Motorsport, which also makes its debut in the category.

Reeve, who won six Fiesta races last year, had considered graduating to a senior category but would have been forced to miss the start of the

season as he will not be 16 until the end of April. He is now targeting a step into the Clio Cup in 2019.

"My aim is to go for the title because you've got a massive prize – free entry into the senior championship [worth £18,000]," said Reeve. "The car is absolutely amazing, everything feels more like a race car. You can brake later [and] the front end works so

well because of the diff. The car is so much fun, especially because flappy paddles makes gearchanging a lot easier."

Reeve is part of a very small entry for the first round of Clio Junior at Silverstone this weekend. As MN went to press, Louis Doyle, Lorcan Hanafin, Jack Young, Gus Burton and Jamie-Lea Hawley were the only other drivers to be confirmed.

**'Minshaw/Keen starred  
in the Moss Trophy'**  
Goodwood report, p20



## EX-ROUSE SIERRA TO RETURN

Racelogic boss Julian Thomas is planning to join the Super Touring series this summer, having acquired a 560bhp Rouse Sport Group A Ford Sierra RS500.

Thomas purchased the car – originally driven by Guy Edwards and Andy Rouse in period – from dealer Duncan Hamilton, still in Kaliber livery.

"I worked with Andy Rouse on his Toyota Carinas [when the

turbocharged Sierras were outlawed and the BTCC adopted Super Touring's two-litre atmospheric engine regulations for the 1991 season]," said Thomas.

"I bought it as Edwards', then discovered it had Rouse race history, which is pretty cool. After Guy crashed Andy's regular car in qualifying at Silverstone in June, Andy put this one – rebuilt following

Guy's Thruxton shunt – on pole. He finished third behind Robb Gravett and team-mate Tim Harvey.

"The car hasn't raced for 25 years, although it's done trackdays and been up the hill at Goodwood.

"It needs a lot of work, including a new rollcage and safety equipment and refitting the original gearbox, which

Jeremy Welch will oversee."

The aim is to race the car for the first time at the Silverstone Classic, where it might have a sister car.

"I'd love to start it at the Silverstone Classic," said Thomas. "I've been speaking to Sean McNerney, who is preparing a 1990 Rouse RS500, so hopefully there will be two of them out there in July."



Aim is to have car at Silverstone Classic



Nicosia won at Knockhill in GT5 last year

### Race winner Nicosia to contest full Ginetta GT5 season

Ginetta GT5 Challenge race winner Geri Nicosia will take part in a full season of the series this year after joining Optimum Motorsport.

The 18-year-old contested the two GT5 rounds that were on the British Touring Car Championship's support bill last year with JHR Developments and won three of the four races. Nicosia, the 2014 Fiesta

Junior champion and a race winner in Ginetta Junior in '16, has now struck a late deal to race in the series full-time and is the latest top name to join the near-capacity grid.

"We had a lot of options – in most of the TOCA support categories and British GT – but Optimum Motorsport put the best package together," said Nicosia, who also made one-off appearances in the

Toyota MR2 Championship and Hyundai Coupe Cup last year in a bid to upgrade his race licence. "We only agreed it fairly late so we haven't had a lot of preparation time – I haven't tested the car yet at all.

"It will be difficult [to win the title] but the team should be good and they've won it before. It will be the most competitive field the championship has had in the last few years."

### Bridgman to stand-in for Rishover in LMP3 Cup opener

Former Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Tim Bridgman will join 360 Racing's line-up for the opening round of the LMP3 Cup at Donington Park.

Bridgman will share Jason Rishover's Ligier JSP3 with ex-British Formula Ford champion Jamie Spence because Rishover plans to take part in the London Marathon that weekend.

"We got together after Jason met a friend of mine on holiday in Mauritius," said Bridgman. "It was suggested that I send him my CV, then he called me, had a chat then we tested the car."

"I did a couple of races in Blancpain Asia last year, after an enforced absence of longer than I had planned. So I am looking forward to get back into racing more and when Jason mentioned a possible ELMS outing later in the year I was in."



Bridgman to drive Ligier for 360 Racing



Moffat and Derek Palmer Jr will drive Giulietta TCR cars in the new series this year

### BTCC race winner Moffat to race Alfa Romeo in TCR UK

British Touring Car race winner Aiden Moffat will compete in the inaugural season of TCR UK alongside his BTCC campaign.

Moffat will drive one of a pair of Alfa Romeo Giuliettas run by DPE Motorsport in the series, alongside former BTCC driver Derek Palmer Jr.

Moffat, who won at Donington Park last season on his way to 13th in the BTCC standings, will be

available to contest the full season of TCR UK as it has no clashes with his main programme for Laser Tools Racing. He and Palmer will drive Alfa Romeo's TCR car developed by Italian specialists Romeo Ferraris, examples of which were taken to race wins internationally by Dusan Borkovic and David Kajaia last year.

DPE Motorsport team principal Derek Palmer Sr, who was also responsible for

running the Save Our Paras Racing Infiniti Q50s in the BTCC in 2015, said: "Any petrolhead loves Alfa Romeos and it fulfils a personal ambition of mine to run two of these fantastic cars."

Elsewhere in TCR UK, Sean Walkinshaw Racing has announced another former BTCC driver, Howard Fuller, will pilot its Honda Civic in the new series which gets underway at Silverstone on March 31/April 1.

## ITV COMMENTATOR

# DAVID ADDISON

**"Goodwood's  
MM is a very  
different animal"**



**U**ndoubtedly, this year's Goodwood Members' Meeting was unusual. The Arctic weather, rendering trackside fans frost-bitten and car parks

like quagmires, was a world apart from what the Duke of Richmond would have wanted. That the weather affected early races on Sunday was, perhaps, inevitable, as owners decided that snow-covered run-off areas weren't for them.

On-track, though, the racing was as dramatic as ever, enjoyed by the hardy stalwarts and, for a three-hour segment, a huge audience on ITV4. But there are those who feel that the Members' Meeting isn't quite right: Group 1 saloons never raced there in period, for example, and nor did the spectacular Formula 5000 leviathans nor the jaw-dropping Group 5 cars that performed high-speed demonstrations.

But does it matter? After all, there is an argument to say that the Revival is the meeting at which you need to cater for only cars that raced at the circuit in period, whereas the Members' Meeting is a different animal: the first major historic race meeting of the season and catering for a different market. 'Come and watch a cracking day of historic racing', is the message. If you want to see Goodwood as it was before 1966, we'll see you in September.

Purists can argue about authenticity of cars to their heart's content, although it is inevitable with the ravages of time that some cars will be like Trigger's broom, but ask yourself why you watch motor racing? Is it for the authenticity of cars or the excitement of the racing they provide? I suspect, nay hope, it is the latter. If not, enjoy your subscription to *Nerds' Gazette*.

Sunday's race programme was topped by the Moss Trophy and a safety car-interrupted Gerry Marshall Trophy Sprint race, in which there was much to savour. Rob Huff's handling of Richard Meins' Jaguar E-type was just awesome as he had the car at some terrifying angles in his pursuit of race winner Phil Keen, his bravery around the outside at Woodcote underlining his testicular enhancement.

And then there was Graham Scarborough's efforts in the Gerry Marshall Trophy later in the day. Skid, as GDR Marshall dubbed him, was in fine form as he battled with Ric Wood's similar Ford Capri and the Great Man would have been proud of his old mate as he saved what seemed to be two impossible recoveries around Woodcote and the chicane. That Skid was excluded for an HTP-related offence would have induced an expletive-laden assessment from Gerry for sure!

The Members' Meeting delivers action aplenty from great cars hustled by masters of their art, and that, surely, is what we want to see. If Sunday's action didn't excite, you have no soul.

Long may it continue.



**AGREE/DISAGREE?**  
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**THE ORIGINAL SINCE 1967**

# RACING NEWS



Gough raced with Mills in Walter Hayes

## Clarke and Gough to race in National FF1600

Teen historic racer and Clubmans frontrunner James Clarke will switch to single-seaters this year with an attack on the British Racing and Sports Car Club's National Formula Ford 1600 Championship.

Clarke, 17, won his class in the British Automobile Racing Club Clubmans Championship in 2018 in a Mallock, and finished second in class in the Historic Sports Car Club's Historic Touring Car Championship in a Lotus Cortina.

Now Clarke will compete in the Scottish and National FF1600 championships in a Mygale SJ08, run by MCK Motorsport.

"In Clubmans and Historic Touring Cars I was learning a lot about driving different cars, but perhaps it [the racing] wasn't as close," said Clarke. "Although it was close at times, it was more to do with different cars having different strengths. In Formula Ford it's hugely competitive.

"It's such a different category to what I'm used to that I haven't set any targets. I know to expect that it's going to be competitive."

One rival Clarke will face is 2014 National champion Stuart Gough, who returns to the championship with the Kevin Mills team, for the first time since 2004. He was competitive in the Walter Hayes Trophy with the same team last year.

"It's what I know and what I love," said Gough of the National championship, after competing in Minis last year. "I know how good the championship is and it gives me the opportunity to go up against some of the more established names but also some of the young drivers coming through, I know I will be pushed."

## Gooding moves to senior Fiesta series

Harry Gooding is aiming to add the British Racing & Sports Car Club's Fiesta Championship title to the Junior version he secured in 2016 after signing with Jamsport for his maiden senior campaign.

Gooding won the Fiesta Junior Championship with the same team and planned to contest the new Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series last year before its postponement. Instead he combined a part-season in the Fiesta category with contesting the final three Clio Junior weekends, scoring a best result of second at Pembrey.

The 16-year-old will drive the same Ford Fiesta ST that took him to the junior title, but fitted with slick tyres.

"The target is to win the championship," said Gooding, who will have to fit racing commitments around sitting his GCSEs this summer.

"We'll just take this year how it comes and see where it leaves us at the end. I don't really want to move on without winning [the championship] because it would feel like I haven't really completed it."

Gooding has tested the car for two days ahead of the season-opener at Brands Hatch this weekend.

# WHORTON-EALES TO MINI CHALLENGE

## Former BTCC driver to race Mini with Jamsport squad



AWE joins the busy JCW grid

By Rob Ladbrook

### British Touring Car Championship racer Ant Whorton-Eales will join the Mini Challenge JCW Championship this year with the Jamsport team.

Whorton-Eales won the Renault UK Clio Cup title in 2016 before graduating to the BTCC to race an AmDTuning.com Audi S3 last season. He also has a history with the Mini Challenge, having won the lesser-powered Cooper Class title back in 2011.

For this year he will head-up a multi-car JCW entry from Jamsport, the squad which

ran him to the Clio title in 2016.

"I was made an offer that was too good to turn down by Jamsport," said Whorton-Eales. "Realistically, in the BTCC, I wouldn't have been fighting for outright wins in 2018. I know how it works and it would have been tough, but in the Mini Challenge I think I can be right in the mix and be up there fighting at the front again hopefully.

"The JCWs are amazing cars and not too far away from a BTCC machine. They are a little bit different in the brakes and in the speed, but that is it. It is very, very close and I know that people will think I am there to be beaten but I don't see it that way. It will

be tough but I am really excited about the challenge."

Jamsport boss Jamie Going added: "Ant's one of those special drivers that can simply jump into anything and be right at the front – he could probably drive a wheelbarrow faster than most people.

"He's got to be a title contender this year. He's won in almost everything he's done."

Jamsport will also run additional cars for Scottish Mini ace Joe Tanner, reigning Ford Fiesta Junior champion Jack Davidson and series returnee Calum King.

Additional reporting by Matt James



Whorton-Eales

## Large prize for Mini champ

This year's Mini Challenge JCW champion will win a fully funded season of endurance racing in Japan worth over £100,000.

The prize is being offered through a new relationship between British Mini Challenge promoter Total Track, Japanese firm Giomic and Chinese organisation Great Drive Group.

Both Giomic and Great Drive Group have ordered F56 JCW Challenge cars from Britain to launch their own versions of the challenge.

As part of the partnership, the champions of each of the British, Chinese and Japanese series will be offered the chance to share a funded car in the Japanese Super Taikyu endurance series for the full 2019 season.

Super Taikyu caters for both GT and touring car-style machinery, and the three winners will share a new endurance-spec Mini, which is under development at British manufacturer Excelr8 Motorsport.

Mini Challenge UK promoter Antony Williams said: "This has got to be one of the biggest prizes in British motorsport, and it's a great way to kick off our relationship with the Far East.

"Motorsport in Asia is rapidly developing and the JCWs were always designed to be an ideal springboard into touring cars. Having the chance to race in Japan for a full season is an amazing opportunity. The British champion will experience an entirely new racing culture and be put on the perfect stage to try and build a career in Asian motorsport and beyond."



Champion will race in Super Taikyu



Macdonald has driven ex-GPRM machine at

## A pair of Toyota GT86s join British GT4 grid for 2018

Two Toyota GT86 GT4s will join the British GT4 grid this season, entered by Steller Motorsport.

Sennan Fielding – who finished second in British F4 in 2016 – headlines one entry after switching from racing a Ginetta in VdV, and he's joined by the youngest driver on this year's grid, ex-Ginetta Junior racer Tom Canning, aged 16.

"It's great to be racing back on British soil," said Fielding, 22. "After getting involved with coaching drivers in sportscar

racing in recent months, I'm sure I can add something to the whole effort here too. It's always good to work with emerging talents."

The other car will be shared by a pair of 17-year-olds. GT4 returnee Dean Macdonald, who switches from a McLaren after finishing second in last year's GT4 standings, will be partnered by single-seater convert Alex Quinn. The latter took four wins in British F4 last year.

Steller has been working on the car since 2017 to prepare it for

this season, with touring car and sportscar engineer Gary Blackham behind the development.

"With the Toyotas now reengineered and an array of young talent we are eager to get the season started," said Blackham. "I'm delighted to bring a two-car effort for the full season. That will help everyone involved to carry the programme forward and to be real contenders at the sharp end of a fantastic GT4 field."

## Miloudi will only race sporadically this season

Reigning Formula Vee champion Ben Miloudi will not be defending his title in 2018 for financial reasons.

The Scotsman is aiming to take part in the Brands Hatch meeting in April and "possibly one other later in the year" but no more.

"I've made the choice to save some money this year," said Miloudi, who has not ruled out selling his car at the

end of the season. "It would be nice to do the full championship again but possibly next year I'll do it more seriously again. I'm going to take it as it comes."

His title rival from last year, Adam Macaulay, will also be absent from the championship for similar reasons. He has sold his UK-spec car to seek out a chassis in his home country of Ireland.



Formula Vee champion Miloudi will only contest selected races in the series this year

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# HISTORICS

'Milner should set North Wales pace'  
BHRC2 will kick off, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

## DOWN THE PUB WITH

**BRIAN REDMAN**

Racing veteran  
Age: 81 Lives: Florida

### He was celebrating F5000 at Goodwood

"It's fantastic to see so many Formula 5000s at Goodwood this weekend, including some fairly rare ones. Formula 5000 was a big part of my career. Although I'm recognised for sportscar racing, mainly in Europe, for me those four seasons in Formula 5000 with Jim Hall at Chaparral and Carl Haas with Lola were my best racing years."

### He loved his time in F5000

"They were wonderful cars to race and it was a fantastic time and the crew at Chaparral was just four people, including Franz Weis who built the engines and tested the car at Rattlesnake Raceway. We had a fantastic crew and Jim Hall led from the front."

### It all went wrong

"By 1977 I was already 40 but I thought I'd got another six or seven years of Formula 5000. But they changed the rules and put all-enveloping bodywork on the cars. The first race of the year was at St Jovite in Canada and we made a quarter of an inch change to the front wing. It took off and came down upside down and I broke my neck, shoulder, sternum and ribs. The ambulance blew a tyre on the way to hospital and I was declared dead!"

### It was a life-changer

"I was living near Gargrave in Yorkshire, living in a 17th century house, I'd got the ex-Steve McQueen Porsche 917 I paid £9000 for and everything was good. Suddenly life changed, as it can sometimes. I went to work for Carl Haas in Chicago selling Lolas and Hewland gearboxes. Within a couple of months of starting, the new IMSA rules came out introducing the GTP category and off we went with a Lola."

### He raced at Goodwood in 1960

"I only ever raced at Goodwood once in my early days and that was in 1960. I was living in Burnley and I was making mop heads. I'd had my first race at Rufforth in 1959 in my Morris 1000 sales reps' car with a supercharger. In 1960 I bought a Mini and I drove it from Burnley to Goodwood. That was an eight-hour trip and it rained. It then rained in the five-lap handicap race and I drove it home in the rain. I got home at 0400hrs and was in at work four hours later making mops!"



Redman: a mop maker...

# RALLY 2WD FULL UP FOR FIRST EVENT

New initiative gets going this weekend



Two-wheel-drives are back to the front

By Paul Lawrence

The new Rally 2WD concept will get off to a flying start on Rally North Wales on Saturday with 110 two-wheel-drive cars completing their stages in the morning ahead of the four-wheel drive field.

R2WD was designed to revitalise gravel rallying, notably for the groups most impacted by the move to

run all rallies with one seeded block of entries.

The initiative has worked well and Rally North Wales had a capacity fully paid entry in less than two weeks, with 80 historics including 18 Category 1 (pre-1968) cars.

In 2017, the same event ran with 88 starters and is the first UK gravel rally this season to run on a secure financial footing.

Clerk of the course Richard

Hinton from Wolverhampton and South Staffs Car Club said: "We are delighted to be working with the guys behind Rally 2WD."

"Rallying in 2017 was depressed with low interest from competitors and challenging financial times for rally organisers. Having been involved in event organisation for over 20 years we have been amazed at the response from competitors."

Simon Wallis, from R2WD, added: "The response to Rally North Wales has been incredible. To have a full and fully paid entry in two weeks is unheard of for an event of this type in the current era."

"We applaud the organisers for having the foresight to make major changes and we now expect a similar response to the Red Kite Stages on June 24, which will also run the R2WD format."



Volvo ran at Goodwood

## Ex-works Volvo breaks cover for Gerry Marshall Trophy outing

A rare Volvo 242 Turbo not raced for more than 30 years joined the Gerry Marshall Trophy grid at Goodwood in the hands of new owner Phil Perryman and John Young.

Raced in France in 1981, Perryman says it had not run

since 1982 and he has spent the last 12 months rebuilding it for Goodwood and, he hopes, the Historic Touring Car Challenge.

"The French Production series was called Group 1B and the car was raced in 1982 and then went

into storage," he said. "It is the first Volvo to run in the Gerry Marshall Trophy. But we're still learning it."

After qualifying midfield, they retired from the two-driver race with new-car teething issues.

## Daytona tribute at Silverstone Classic

The Silverstone Classic will pay tribute to the Daytona 24-hour race with a 'Daytona at Dusk' feature on the Saturday evening of the three-day historic festival on July 20-22.

Classic GT cars of the 1960s, FIA Masters Historic Sportscars and the new Masters Endurance Legends for prototypes and GT cars will deliver the

evening spectacle, replacing the previous Group C feature. The event will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona.

The Endurance Legends race, making its debut at Silverstone, will wrap up the evening with the sight and sound of GT and prototypes racing into the darkness until around 2100hrs.

## Spaggiari tries rare Lotus F3

The one-off Lotus 41X Formula 3 car, developed and raced by John Miles in 1968, ran in the UK for the first time since that debut season when Italian Enrico Spaggiari qualified at Goodwood.

The one-litre F3 car is not thought to have raced since Monza in 1970 and was found in Tuscany in



Lotus 41X: rare

1999. Spaggiari's crew have restored it over the last three years, but he elected not to start Sunday's snow-hit race.

"It has been in Italy for

50 years," said Spaggiari. "It was the first Lotus with a wedge shape. When we found it, there was a 1600cc Lancia engine in it."

## BTCC battler Tordoff plans more historic races in 2018 with his own Porsche 356

British Touring Car Championship racer Sam Tordoff debuted his newly-acquired Porsche 356 in the Moss Trophy race at Goodwood.

Tordoff, a Goodwood regular in period touring cars, wanted to

have a classic race car of his own and the 1954 car fitted well with his family's Porsche motorsport heritage.

"We love coming to

Goodwood and it's great to be here with our own car," said Tordoff, who shared it with his racing manager Tim Sugden in the two-driver race.

The pair failed to finish the race.

The former Californian car was owned by John Ruston and raced occasionally by Gareth Burnett. Tordoff now plans to contest the Pre '63 GT series and the Le Mans Classic.



# RALLY NEWS



Sweet Lamb will swap to Saturday

## WALES RALLY GB CONFIRMS CLOSED-ROADS FOR 2018

Route reshuffle means full day in North Wales on Friday for WRC crews

By David Evans

**Motorsport News can confirm October's Wales Rally GB will include action on closed public roads and no competitive mileage in England.**

The timetable for Rally GB has been significantly overhauled with the inclusion of a full day's action in North Wales for the first time in the event's history. Clocaenog and the roads around Betws-y-Coed will be used on the opening day of the October 4-7 event, meaning mid-Wales will shift from its traditional Friday slot to what's been labelled as 'Super Saturday'.

As well as offering fans more choice of where to watch and lessening the chances of spectators being turned away from full car parks, Friday's action is within easy reach of the millions who live around Manchester and Liverpool.

And there's good news for the teams, too: after bemoaning the lack of a lunchtime service during last

year's event, Rally GB managing director Ben Taylor has confirmed the event will be back in Deeside for a midday halt on Friday.

"This is something we've been wanting to do for such a long time," said Taylor. "Using the legislation, we have been able to build some real length into some of the classic stages up there; we're coming back to service at lunchtime and we're delivering a more compact route. This is a win-win for us."

While Taylor wouldn't be drawn on specific stages, MN understands Penmachno and Clocaenog are the key tests in for an overhaul this season.

A better deal for fans lies at the heart of the changes Taylor and his team are making to a route which will be sent to the FIA next month.

He added: "Last year we had people arriving at some stages with a ticket, only to be turned away because the car parks were full. They asked the marshals one question: 'Where can I go then?' We had room in the forests,

but there wasn't anywhere for the car unless they dropped it on the side of the road and walked in. I think people will forgive that sort of thing for one year but we've got to show that we've learned from it.

"We have moved mid-Wales to Saturday for precisely that reason and we've made it a real day of endurance; it's a dawn-to-dusk day with 100-odd miles of competition and five individual stage locations; there's a reason we are calling it 'Super Saturday'.

"We can't build more car parks in the middle of Dyfi, but what we can do is offer more viable alternatives for the fans in that region and that's what we've done."

The final day will return the crews to North Wales, but there will be a new powerstage for this season. There are completely new stage locations in 2018 as well as the departure of the only English elements, including the Cholmondeley test and regroup in Chester.

Taylor added: "Getting over to Cholmondeley sacrificed half a day of the route and it just wasn't possible for this year. We've built a real following in Cheshire in the last couple of years and we're absolutely not turning our backs on them at all. We'll certainly investigate ways to return there in the future."

Taylor denied the event was losing its family appeal by dropping its sole RallyFest stage.

"Don't worry," he said, "we're working on a real treat for families. We can't say anything yet, but if our plans come to fruition I think everybody will be really pleased. And, don't forget, we still have the crowd-friendly Tir Prince stage opening the event on Thursday night."

Taylor also confirmed changes to the WRGB National Rally, with that event moving to a Friday-Saturday rather than Saturday-Sunday format in an effort to bolster the competitive distance to 85 miles this year.

### GB route changes are positive

Where Britain's round of the World Rally Championship is concerned, it doesn't take a lot to get MN excited. Which is why we're *very* excited about what's coming in October.

Granted, it's more evolution than revolution; the woods of England's north and Scotland's south remain untouched by the wheels of the WRC, but while we remain on the Welsh side of Offa's Dyke, this is a big deal.

Newtown's a great place, but there are only so many Fridays you can spend standing outside The Victoria Vaults on Broad Street. Saturday will be a much better

**MOTORSPORT NEWS**  
says...

day... Let's be honest, the route had started to get a bit stale and this refresh was just about due.

Any time route co-ordinator Andrew Kellitt's given a freer reign and a box to think outside of, he comes up with something great. AK, Taylor and clerk of the course Iain Campbell have had their heads together on this one for a while. It's going to be good.

David Evans

**TOM WILLIAMS: MEXICO IS AS COST EFFECTIVE AS SCOTLAND**

**PAGE 26**



The Strength of Experience

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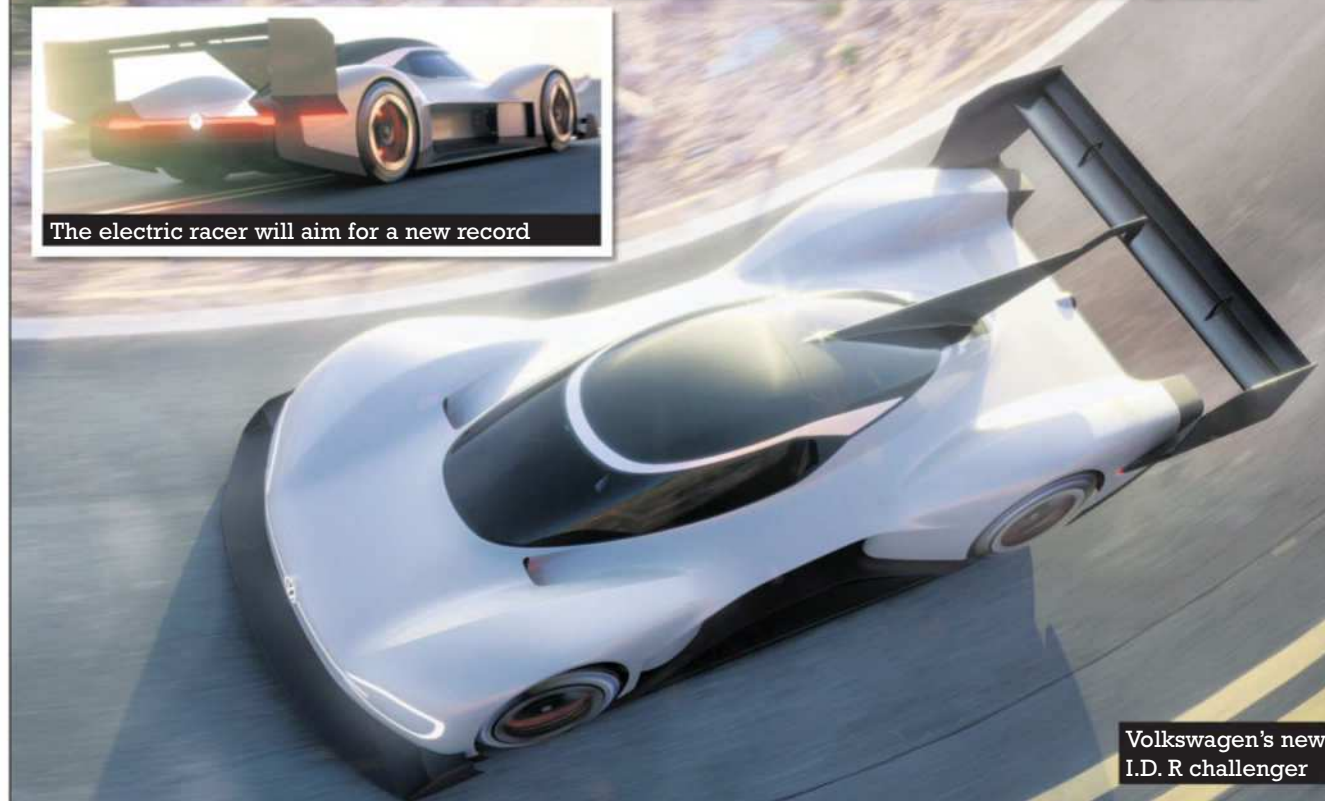
*"The Border Counties  
will not be replaced"*  
British counter counted out, p15



## VOLKSWAGEN REVEALS OUTLINE OF NEW ELECTRIC PIKES PEAK RECORD CHASER



The electric racer will aim for a new record



Volkswagen's new I.D. R challenger

Volkswagen has revealed the first images of its challenger for the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb record.

The car will be known as the I.D. R Pikes Peak after the German firm's I.D. range of electric road cars, which will be rolled out from 2020. The R denotes input from Volkswagen's performance

R range. Reigning FIA R-GT Cup champion and two-time Le Mans winner Romain Dumas will drive the four-wheel-drive car, with his sights set firmly on New Zealander Rhys Millen's 2016 electric prototype hillclimb record of 8m57.118s for June's 12-mile race.

Volkswagen Motorsport

director Sven Smeets said the time had come to erase the German firm's memory of its last Pikes Peak entry, Jochi Kleint's twin-engined Golf which came within a couple of corners of winning the 1987 event before suspension failure. "It is about time we settled the score," said Smeets. "The I.D. R Pikes Peak represents an

extremely exciting challenge for us, to show what is possible with an electric engine in motorsport. The entire team is behind Romain, who is highly motivated to set a new record for electric cars."

Testing of the I.D. R Pikes Peak is expected to commence in the coming weeks, with the race running in Colorado on June 24.

### GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

# DAVID EVANS

**"We have to embrace the electric future"**



**O**asis covered a Slade song a few years ago. Remember it? How did it go? I remember: *Cum On Feel the Noize...*

On the balance of the feedback I've had from last week's column I'd say you were, largely (completely) in favour of the retention of internal combustion in our sport. The news that M-Sport is already advancing on a car with a very alternative power plant caused something of an electric storm.

I know how you feel. I feel the same. And we're not alone: I had emails from drivers – who shall remain nameless – all lambasting such a step forward. How, they questioned, could this last bastion of genuinely, full-fat, high-octane motorsport even consider silent progress through the stages?

I agreed. But common sense dictates disagreement.

We're out on a limb here. In wider motorsporting circles, rallying is seen as a bit of a dinosaur. And when I say a bit, I mean a lot. Much as I loved Jarmo Mahonen's time as the FIA's rally director, it's impossible not to see our current lack of progress towards any kind of sustainable future as a part of his legacy. Jarmo rides a Harley. A big one; a thirsty one and a very noisy one. It's fair to say, his hand probably wasn't the first in the air when it came to Formula E-based fact-finding missions.

Times, I'm afraid, have to change. There's nothing more certain than a pretty grim future for anything wholly reliant on burning fuel via internal combustion. Painful as it is might be to admit, heads have to be removed from the sand if we're to save rallying for the next generation. Carry on as we are and, I'm told by *Guardian*-waving folk like my mother, that we'll be finished inside a decade.

Like it or not, she's right. So, well done M-Sport for making great strides to a sustainable future for our sport.

And not only that, well done for aiming at an 'affordable' four-wheel-drive car – something that is most definitely missing from the British national scene right now. Let's stop kidding ourselves that R5 cars – even the couple of years old cars – are affordable. They're not. And with the R4 concept knocking on the door of second-hand R5s price-wise, that's wide of the mark as well. What we're after is something around £100,000. Will M-Sport manage that? Time will tell. If it does, an electric motor with a stack of torque driving all four wheels would be entertaining from behind the wheel. Admittedly, you'd still miss the crack of a perfectly timed upshift, but, looking on the bright side there would be no more tell-tale anti-lag delivering the news loud and clear that a driver's right foot was anywhere but on the throttle...

I found myself discussing the current issue with Jim McRae at the back end of last week. The five-time champion could see the problem, but unlike many had a real insight into the answer. Remember the other R4? The car Colin built? It came with a 2.5-litre Millington Diamond motor, six-speed sequential gearbox and mechanical diffs. Price? Jimmy reckoned it would have been bang on the money. "It would have been around £100,000," he told me, "and it would have made the driver do the work, not the bloke on the bloody laptop."

Amen to that.



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

### Ingram bullish after maiden Skoda Fabia R5 outing



Ingram is confident ahead of the ERC

Britain's Chris Ingram says his first test of the Skoda Fabia R5 he will drive in this year's European Rally Championship has inspired more confidence ahead of this week's Azores Rally.

Ingram drove the Toksport-run car for the first time at the end of last week, admitting he was delighted with his initial mileage in the Skoda.

"I've spent so long in a two-wheel-drive car, it's just fantastic to be finally getting a chance in an R5 car," said

Ingram, who completed two days at Sweet Lamb with no problems. "And this R5 is absolutely awesome! I made a hell of a lot of changes to the set-up, which was quite conservative to start with. There was too much grip at the rear; in the Azores you need to be able to rotate the car easily, so we lost some of that [rear grip]. We had good conditions for the test – not too much mud, which is ideal for the [volcanic] Azores island.

"Now I just want to get out

there and get on with the event to see where we're at and what we can do."

Ingram's shot at this year's ERC title has been made possible after he picked up the €100,000 (£88,000) pot for winning last season's ERC Junior U27 title.

Ingram drives one of 35 R5 cars in an Azores entry of 60 crews. The Azores Rally starts on Thursday (March 22) from Ponta Delgada and finishes after 15 stages and 128 competitive miles on Saturday (March 24).

### Ahlin ready to spark his European title fight

Former BRC frontrunner Fredrik Ahlin starts his European Rally Championship campaign at the Azores Rally this week – and does so in confident mood aboard his Skoda Fabia R5.

Ahlin, who finished fourth in Elfyn Evans' 2016 British Rally Championship title-winning season, said: "The Azores will be our first gravel event of the year after our events on the snow in Sweden, but I'm feeling quite confident as gravel is my preferred surface. In previous years I have proved I was on par with

Elfyn Evans' pace on gravel, so I am sure we can have a good rally. Azores is a new event for me, so we are just going to go out there and drive as fast as we can and hopefully it'll be enough for a good result."

Carlisle-based firm CA1 Sport runs Ahlin's car and will prepare a second Fabia R5 for Rhys Yates. This week will be Yates' first overseas round of the ERC and his first competitive outing in the Fabia, although he did complete close to 200 miles of testing in Sweden earlier this season.

### Fewest points win for Ladies crews

Regulation changes in the European Rally Championship mean ERC Ladies' Trophy crews will be chasing the lowest number of points possible.

In an effort to equalise competition and "promote gender equality" each driver will be awarded the same number in points as they appear in the classification for four- or two-wheel-drive cars. For example, if Britain's Catie Munnings guides her Peugeot 208 R2 to third in

2WD then she takes three points. If her Ladies' Trophy rival Tamara Molinaro is fifth in 4WD, she picks up five points.

The driver with the lowest points tally from her four scoring rounds will take the title.

Munnings, who is also fighting for the ERC U27 title, has spent time at the same training centre Sebastien Loeb uses ahead of this week's Azores Rally – something she described as a "real eye-opener".

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: Writtle Photographic, Rally Gallery, John Fife

# QUINTIN MILNE: HUGE FINE AND 10-YEAR BAN

## Scot used a motorbike in forests



Milne: second on Snowman

By Jack Benyon

**Scottish rally driver Quintin Milne has been banned from competition for 10 years and fined £5000 for being found in a forest with an unauthorised vehicle, a motorbike, before last year's Grampian Rally.**

According to the Motor Sport Council National Court's findings, Milne was "unauthorised" to be on forestry commission land on multiple occasions, including before the Grampian.

The MSA blue book states 'any competition licence holder who permits the unauthorised presence at any time of any vehicle on a known special stage or Forestry Commission land will be disqualified from the event itself and referred to the MSC National Court'.

"Was I expecting a ban or a punishment? Yes, of course I was," Milne told MN. "The 10-year thing is, in my opinion,

and in many others judging by social media, out of hand.

"People have had a ban for a year or two for doing things that can endanger people's lives.

"They told me they were going to make an example of me. Out of principal, unless the police tell me it's wrong, I'll ride my bike in the forest. You're allowed to roam in Scotland but the Forestry Commission don't like it.

"The 10-year ban? You would get less time for murder.

"To appeal, I'd have to pay the fine, and then I'd likely not get it back. Out of principle, there's no way I'm paying that fine."

The National Court, which is independent of the Motor Sports Association, has also confirmed that the ban will be international, and therefore Milne will not be able to compete in motorsport for 10 years (*see sidebar*).

Milne had previously stated his intent to rally in Spain and Ireland.

### INTERNATIONAL BANS

*FIA law pertaining to Milne's ban*  
**12.11.2** International suspension.

Any competitor or driver who is suspended internationally shall hand back their licence to their ASN which shall not return it to them until the period of international suspension has expired.

**12.12.1** A sentence of suspension pronounced by an ASN shall apply only within the territory of that ASN.

**12.12.2** If, however, the ASN wishes the sentence of a suspension pronounced against any of its licence holders (competitors, drivers, officials, organisers, etc) to be recognised internationally, it shall notify its wish without delay to the secretariat of the FIA and the latter will inform all other ASNs. The sentence of suspension shall be noted by each ASN immediately, and the consequent restriction will thereby come into force.

**12.12.3** The recognition of this suspension by all ASNs will be posted on the website [fia.com](http://fia.com) and/or in the FIA Official Motor Sport Bulletin.

### OBITUARY

**Iain Urquhart  
1960-2018**

Scottish rallying has lost yet another friend and loyal supporter; Iain 'Coogie' Urquhart passed away suddenly at home on Saturday March 10.

A stalwart of Highland Car Club, and former clerk of the course for the Snowman Rally, 'Coogie' became more widely known at events throughout Scotland, and further afield at rally events throughout the UK as an MSA Steward and more recently an MSA Safety Delegate.

He started competing in navigational rallies and autotests before a brief foray into stage rallying, primarily navigating for Iain McGilvray in the Weldex Rally Team Peugeot 205, among others.

His expertise was based not just on Blue Book rules and regulations but on practical



experience of the various duties required of a rally marshal or official.

His reliance on humour even in difficult situations marked him out as a popular and very effective rally official when carrying out his duties.

Rallying's loss is nothing like the loss to his wife Teri and his girls, Louise and Hazel. Our thoughts are with them and their wider family and friends at this terrible time.

John Fife



Last year's Rallyday celebrated Colin McRae

## McRAE AND BROOKES TEAM UP TO CELEBRATE BRC AT 2018 RALLYDAY

Two of the British Rally Championship's biggest names – Jimmy McRae and Russell Brookes – will join Rallyday's 60th birthday BRC celebrations in September.

McRae and Brookes, who won seven titles between them, have signed up as part of the September 22 event's burgeoning celebrations of Britain's premier rally series. Legendary Ford team manager – not to mention former MN rallies editor –

Stuart Turner will be at Castle Combe to join two drivers he worked with through his career. In addition to the BRC theme, Rallyday will also commemorate the 20th anniversary of Roger Clark's death and 50 years of the Ford Escort Mk1.

McRae said: "I haven't been to Rallyday for a couple of years, so I'm really looking forward to going back. It's a great chance to meet folk from down the years and have a good chat – I'm sure

we'll be doing a bit of that. I don't know what I'm going to be driving, but there's talk of a Metro 6R4 and a Ford Sierra Cosworth. I'd be more than happy with either of those!"

Rallyday organiser Tom Davis said: "Jimmy, Russell and Stuart were absolutely at the forefront of the British Rally Championship at such a fantastic period through the late Seventies and Eighties. We've talked about re-staging the battle of the BRC

and the names McRae and Brookes always meant pretty intense competition.

"Unfortunately, we can't put them back in their Opel Manta 400s to compete again, but we can put them on our stage to talk about a fabulous period in our sport's history."

Fans hoping to land a reduced-price ticket for Rallyday have until the end of the month to save money on entry for the event. Visit [rallyday.com](http://rallyday.com) for details.

**KELLY MAKES IT FIVE WEST CORK WINS WHILE JOSH MOFFETT STARS** **PAGE 18**

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*'Win on Fiesta debut for Kirkaldy at Anglesey'*  
MN Circuit Rally Championship, p18



Photo: Matt Kew, M &amp; H Photography, Jakob Ebrey

# BORDER COUNTIES RALLY WON'T BE RESCHEDULED



Borders can't find a date

The Scottish and British Rally Championships will both be a round shorter in 2018, as the Border Counties Rally will not run this year.

Despite an attempt to reschedule, the event couldn't find a date that "suited all championships, land owners and key rally officials".

"It's certainly not a position we wanted to be in, but the organising team will now turn

its thoughts to 2019 and decide how and when to run a viable event," said clerk of the course Clayton Lackenby.

"Among other ideas, we are exploring routes which may allow a Rally 2WD format and we will watch with interest how other rallies progress with this during the year."

The Scottish championship has no provision for a reserve round in its regulations, so will

drop to six rounds. The British championship also lacks a reserve event, because of the work needed to organise an event over 45 miles in length and with a recce. "To insert another event, we'd need to get every competitor to sign up and agree to it which is very unlikely," said Iain Campbell, BRC championship manager. "We have been questioned as to why we don't have a reserve

event. But for the BRC we're looking at increased mileage, we're looking at a reconnaissance.

"For a gravel event to take on that amount of work under the strong likelihood that it will never be used, no organising team is going to look at that. That's why we don't have reserve event. So we will be five events, six counting rounds."

## Mid Wales Stages will run in May with Welsh Championship

The Newtown-based Mid Wales Stages has been rescheduled to May 27, having been cancelled on March 4 due to heavy snow in the area.

A number of events were canned on the same weekend including the Donington Rally, Malcolm Wilson Stages and the Bovington Stages. Mid Wales has now found a new home at the end of May.

"We were disappointed to have to postpone the event originally but we truly had no choice, we couldn't even get into the stages to use them,"

said clerk of the course Wayne Jones. "Ever since then we have been in talks with our championships and land owners and we are delighted to announce the new date. We extend our thanks for the championship organisers for accommodating us on this issue."

The event will remain a round of the Welsh Rally Championship, which heads to Rally North Wales which has become the second round of the series by default thanks to the delayed running of

the Mid Wales Stages.

Rally North Wales is dominated by a new two-wheel-drive format where those cars can run first on the road. Of the four-wheel-drive contenders, Tom Cave is set to debut a Subaru Impreza and will be in the fight for top all-wheel-drive entry, as will Andy Davies in his Subaru Impreza.

Osian Pryce, who leads the series after taking maximum points on the Cambrian in a Mitsubishi Mirage, switches to car number one in a historic-spec Ford Escort Mk2.



Mid Wales last ran in 2016

## MN championship finale has interest

Leading MN Circuit Rally Championship title protagonists have confirmed they intend to contest the new season finale at Anglesey.

It will be a second visit to the Welsh circuit of the season, chosen as the reserve event for the Donington Rally which was cancelled due to poor weather on March 4.

Series leader Chris West will be present, as will fellow frontrunner John Stone.

The latter may well have been forced to miss the Donington visit had it gone ahead after engine failure at the previous round at Snetterton, but he now has reason to be optimistic about the rescheduled finale.

"It's a relief," said Stone. "We've got another chance.

I've come to Anglesey ever since I started rallying, so I like it there."

Reigning champion Ian Woodhouse also confirmed his participation in the season finale in Wales, although he said he would have welcomed a change of scenery for the field.

"I think it should be at a different track that we haven't raced at yet, but I'll be taking part," he added.

Last year's Lee Holland Memorial Stages winner Wil Owen retired from last weekend's meeting, but also confirmed his interest to take part in the substitute round at his local circuit.

The season finale will take place at Anglesey on Sunday April 15.

## RALLYING IN IRELAND

# MAURICE MALONE

**"Tarmac series getting back on track after turbulent winter"**



**A**fter a lengthy few months, it seems that the music has finally stopped for Dance to Tipperary's title sponsorship of the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, at least the pause button has been hit.

Just before West Cork, the ITRC organiser, Tarmac Rally Organisers Association, confirmed it had terminated its short-lived deal with Dance to Tipperary, with the latter retorting with a statement which said, among other things, that the TROA view "did not reflect an agreed position". So it appears that there may still be some issues to work through and that this story isn't done.

Regular readers of *Motorsport News* may recall my column in the January 10 issue, where concerns were raised regarding the lack of TV coverage information forthcoming from both the TROA and the sponsor.

It's since been revealed that the status quo of the last few years will continue, with On The Limit Sports providing programmes across multiple terrestrial outlets at home, and satellite channels as far afield as the Americas, Australia and New Zealand.

Indeed, it's been a difficult period for the sport as a whole, with insurance issues almost preventing the William Loughman Forestry Rally from starting, and the Nenagh Stages Rally suffering from a late struggle for entries. Thankfully, both events went ahead, a credit to the respective organisers and motor clubs.

Overall, the signs are that things are broadly looking up for the ITRC. Frank O'Mahony has been appointed as chairman of TROA, David Gray choosing to bow out after seven years at the helm. Clonakilty Black Pudding and Michelin are onboard as associate sponsors, with Murray Motorsport involved in the Junior series and Treaty Plant Hire supporting the Modified section. Changes are also afoot within Motorsport Ireland, with John Naylor returning as president, and Alex Sinclair stepping down as CEO.

However, another dominant win by Donagh Kelly in West Cork once again highlights the thorny issue of allowing World Rally Cars to take part and win ITRC rounds, but not score championship points. To the casual observer, it's a little difficult to fathom how someone in a WRC car could theoretically win every round of the series, yet not be crowned champion at the end of the season. Talk currently abounds regarding the possibility of right-hand-drive R5 cars being allowed to compete, which could help in terms of pulling more competitors into the championship's top tier.

To be honest, the series needs it. It can't always be looking backwards, but the intense rivalries that existed in the past between the likes of Bertie Fisher, Austin McHale and Andrew Nesbitt *et al* are somewhat missing in the current era.

Perhaps additional competitors in the R5 class are what's needed to bring back the buzz of years gone by.

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

Photo: M &amp; H Photography



**Despite heavy snow, the Bramley Targa Rally went ahead last weekend and was won by Dave Lobb and Antons Kuzenko aboard their Vauxhall Corsa. The event, held at Bramley Military Training Area, Hampshire, is open to road rally or historic-spec road rally cars. Events like this run under a clubman permit mean a competition licence isn't necessary to take part.**



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# RALLY NEWS



Photos: Kevin Money, Rally Gallery

## MELBOURNE RALLIES CANCELLED FOR VENUE IMPROVEMENTS

No rallying at Yorkshire venue as clubs look to resurface and upgrade for 2019

By Jack Benyon

Three rallies scheduled to run at the Melbourne Airfield have been cancelled, as the clubs which organise events there will look to make improvements to the venue for 2019.

The Lookout Stages, John Overend Memorial Stage Rally and the Vale of York Stages have all been cancelled for this year due to ongoing resurfacing of the venue, which is primarily a pig farm, rally school and drag strip. A joint statement from the

Trackrod Motor Club (Lookout Stages), North Humberside Motor Club (John Overend Memorial Stage Rally) and Lindholme & Slaithwaite Motor Clubs (Vale of York Stage Rally), read: "There is extensive work being undertaken at the Melbourne Airfield site which is taking longer than anticipated and is still ongoing.

"Following lengthy discussions with the landowner, all four motor clubs involved in organising the three stage rally events held at Melbourne have made a joint decision not to run any of these events during 2018

but instead to invest their time and efforts into carrying out further venue improvements during the course of the year.

"Considerable investment in terms of finances and time is being put into the venue by both the landowner and the motor clubs to safeguard the venue for future rally use and to offer significantly better and smoother surfaces to rally on.

"We would also acknowledge the assistance of the governing body, the MSA, both for past and hopefully future funding for venue improvements.

"We are planning to relaunch all the events in 2019 with the Lookout Stages provisionally pencilled in for early April. We regret the necessity to cancel this year's Lookout, John Overend Memorial and Vale of York events particularly so close to the first event but fully intend to return to offer enhanced events in 2019. All entry fees received for this year's Lookout Stages Rally will be fully refunded."

Lookout Stages clerk of the course Andy Turnbull confirmed that multiple factors have hindered the ability to run

events at the venue. "We share the venue with the farm, TI Rally School and drag racing," said Turnbull. "There's a lease about to be signed for a commercial company to come on and use the main runway for vehicles testing and that will be a one-mile strip.

"That means the rally school is moved, the drag strip is either disappearing or being relaid, so it's a little difficult because the new Tarmac needs to be laid around now. That makes it tough for us as it could be while we were trying to run an event so we decided it wasn't feasible."

### Sunday's AGBO Stages postponed

The Sunday running of the modern element of the AGBO Stages at Weston Park had to be postponed due to heavy snowfall and ice.

The Shropshire venue ran the historic event on Saturday without weather issues (see report below), but conditions worsened overnight.

"The surrounding roads were in a right state," said clerk of the course Dan Lister. "The park itself had iced over and then had about five inches of snow on it which mainly came down between 0200hrs and 0500hrs.

"Most of the marshals and officials said they couldn't make it."

The modern section of the entry for Sunday had attracted 75 crews.

The organisers are working with officials and the landowner in a bid to reschedule the event in the future.

● John Faulkner and Peter Foy were taken to hospital after an accident on the AGBO Historic Stages on Saturday March 17. MN understands Faulkner was released from hospital, but Foy was kept in overnight and underwent an operation. He was expected to leave hospital on Monday as MN went to press.

### ROAD RALLY ROUND UP

A night long battle for the lead was resolved with Carwyn Evans/Dylan John Williams winning the Merfyn Hughes Memorial Rali Llyn.

With the fastest crews dropping time at 10 controls through the maze of lanes on the Llyn Peninsula, the winners and second placed Kevin Kerr/Huw Rhys Manion were separated by just four seconds at the Finish; the lead having changed on a number of occasions. Steven John Williams/Paul Roberts completed the Ford Escort top three but were over a minute behind the leading pair of cars.

Fourth place went to Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey, giving them maximum Welsh Championship points for the second event running, and the navigator a perfect 300-point score after three rounds of the series. Their title campaign was helped by the retirement, due to sheared wheel nuts, of Mark 'GT' Roberts/Dylan Jenkins.

Kevin Davies/Owain Davies would have won the rally but were excluded after it was found that they had added a signature to their card for a secret check where they had failed to stop.

Ian Mills

#### Results

##### Merfyn Hughes Memorial Rali Llyn

Organiser: Harlech & District Motor Club When: March 17/18 Where: North West Wales Championships: WAMC & ANWCC Route: 110 miles Starters: 89.

1 Carwyn Evans/Dylan John Williams (Ford Escort) 17m26s; 2 Kevin Kerr/Huw Rhys Manion (Escort) +4s; 3 Steven John Williams/Paul Roberts (Escort); 4 Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey (Subaru Impreza); 5 Iwan Rhys Jones/Gareth Rhys Jones (BMW 318Ti); 6 Gerallt Davies/Nia Hughes (Escort); 7 Gruffydd Jones/Adam Jones (Vauxhall Nova); 8 Tefor Pugh/Andrew Edwards (SEAT Ibiza); 9 Mike Roberts/Dafydd Sion-Lloyd (Escort); 10 Matt Barker/Jordan Dziadulewicz (Peugeot 206 GTi) Class winners: Rhys Jones/Rhys Jones; Jones/Jones; Carwyn Llyn Griffith/Sera Glyn Roberts (Nissan Micra).



Gareth James and Steffan Evans were quickest at a muddy Weston Park



Cunningham was top Mini driver

## James and Evans take narrow victory on the AGBO as Cunningham heads the Minis

### AGBO Historic Stages

By Peter Scherer

Organiser: Owen MC When: March 17 Where: Weston Park Championships: Welsh Historic, HRCR Mini Cup, Old Stager, Stage Masters Stages: 10 Starters: 53

Gareth James and Steffan Evans took their Ford Escort to victory at Weston Park after a day-long duel with Darren Moon/Chris Sharpe-Simkiss's similar car.

Initially there was nothing to split Moon and the Ferrari 308 of Lee Jones/Dan Boshier, leaving them tied for the lead on both of the first two stages.

James had erred at a chicane on the opener, but after setting quickest time on stage two, was soon up to fourth place and chasing Dave Pritchard and Emyr Hall's Escort.

But stage three and four were cancelled after John Faulkner/Peter Foy's sixth

placed Escort crashed heavily – they were taken to hospital (see story, above right) – and the Jones Ferrari hit a tree. "It was a big oak tree, ouch, my first big crash too and I don't want another," said Jones.

James was fastest again on both stages five and six, to take a two-second lead over Moon, while behind them Dave Pritchard and Eryl Pritchard/Harold Jones' Escorts had settled in third and fourth.

Moon fought back on stage seven to regain the lead by a second, only for James to take it back on the next. But with Moon halving the deficit on the penultimate run, they started the finale two seconds apart. "I had taken eight out of Gareth on the cancelled stage, but with that lost I had to push on the last stage and overshot a hairpin, spun and stalled after coming out of the

watersplash," said Moon. James therefore took the victory spoils by nine seconds over Moon, with Dave Pritchard a further 35s down in third. Eryl Pritchard retained fourth, with Ray Cunningham/Jared Gill's Mini Cooper S and Mike Simpson/Julie Lord's Ford Escort Mk1 completing the top six.

In the Mini Cup, Cunningham went clear from stage two, having tied on the opener with Colin McDowell/Cameron Rawson and Clive King/Anton Bird.

But after McDowell fell back, King led the pursuit, but was 38s adrift at the finish, while Jim Brindle/Sam Bould completed the class podium, after demoting Ian Clare/Anthony Elkes on stage six.

It was a close call for Brindle however, as Ryan Taylor/Hollie Churchill finished strongly. After taking fourth from John Cressey/Michael Anderson

on the penultimate stage, they started the last two seconds down, but could only match Brindle's time and had to settle for fourth, with Cressey and Clare completing the top six.

In the other classes Paul Steventon/Michael Hughes' Escort took the Class B spoils by over one-and-a-half minutes from Paul Kendrick/Luke Green's Escort and in Class D Lee Sellars/Geoff Moss were the only finishers in their Triumph Mk2 Pi.

#### Results

1 Gareth James/Steffan Evans (Ford Escort Mk2) 26m16s; 2 Darren Moon/Chris Sharpe-Simkiss (Ford Escort Mk2) +9s; 3 David Pritchard/Emyr Hall (Ford Escort Mk2); 4 Eryl Pritchard/Harold Jones (Ford Escort Mk2); 5 Ray Cunningham/Jared Gill (Austin Mini Cooper S); 6 Mike Simpson/Julie Lord (Ford Escort Mk1); 7 Tony Shields/Graham Whitaker (Ford Escort Mk2); 8 Clive King/Anton Bird (Austin Mini Cooper S); 9 Jim Brindle/Sam Bould (Mini Clubmans); 10 Ryan Taylor/Hollie Churchill (Austin Mini Cooper S). Class winners: Cunningham/Gill; Paul Steventon/Michael Hughes (Ford Escort Mk2); Lee Sellars/Geoff Moss (Triumph Mk 2 Pi).

# ITRC WEST CORK REPORT

Photos: Martin Walsh

## KELLY TAKES A FIFTH

Josh Moffett takes maximum Irish Tarmac points. By **Maurice Malone**



Josh Moffett kicked off ITRC season with maximum points



Five West Cork wins for Kelly

**A**mid a biting wind that made Clonakilty feel as if it had been relocated to inside the Arctic Circle for the weekend, a capacity entry took the start ahead of the 14 classic tests laid on by Cork Motor Club for the opening round of the 2018 Irish Tarmac Rally Championship. Quickest out of the traps on Ring were Donagh Kelly and Conor Foley (Ford Focus WRC). They shot into a lead that they were to hold on to for the duration of the event and an unprecedented fifth-straight West Cork Rally win.

On paper, it looked as if Declan Boyle would be their only realistic opposition, his Ford Fiesta RS WRC sounding sharper than ever after victory on the previous weekend's Mayo Stages, beating Kelly and others in the process.

However, Boyle dropped time on the first stage with a small impact that caused steering issues, and followed that up with a big spin on the second pass that really knocked the wind out of his sails. It was a Kelly benefit from there on in, as the Donegal man builds up to a full-on assault on his

home international event in June, a victory that he would truly love to achieve and has escaped him in a career which isn't short of big achievements including the 2015 ITRC title.

With World Rally Cars barred from fighting for the overall ITRC points, it was the battle of the R5 cars that provided the real interest over the weekend. The Moffett brothers took up where they left off in 2017 – where they had a titanic duel on the season ending Cork '20' Rally, by engaging in a rally-long duel. As in the Cork '20', the season started in the same way the last had finished, with Josh Moffett prevailing in the end by just 9.3 seconds to take second place overall and the championship lead ahead of Sam Moffett.

Josh Moffett felt that he was driving well within himself through Saturday's stages, but a sticking throttle on Sunday caused more than a fair share of moments, one of which left his Fiesta slightly down on power with a squashed exhaust. Despite this, and flurries of snow that made tyre choice a real headache, reigning overall ITRC champion Sam was kept behind until the end.

The Ford Fiesta seems to be the mandatory choice of car in the R5 category at the moment, with only

five-time ITRC champion Eugene Donnelly's much-vaunted debut in the MRF Tyres-shod Hyundai i20 breaking up the M-Sport monopoly. The 'Genie' was taking it relatively steady on his return to Irish rallying, commenting that he was finding it difficult to get the compound choice correct for the cold roads, and finished up ninth overall.

Desi Henry was visibly pushing in his new Fiesta all weekend – having switched from a Skoda Fabia – although brake problems on Saturday morning dropped him some time, and a spin on the penultimate stage meant that he wound up behind the similar car of Robert Barrable. Despite this, Desi was delighted with his pace, which included a fastest time on one Sunday test.

Barrable won this event in 2011, and a return to a Fiesta from an i20 yielded fifth spot behind the struggling Boyle, but still ahead of Henry.

Daniel Cronin – brother of reigning British champion Keith – gained confidence in his Fiesta with every stage, taking a strong seventh overall on what his fifth event in the car. Fellow Fiesta man Stephen Wright headed Donnelly to eighth place.

Jonny Greer made a late decision to switch to a Fiesta after parts supply issues with his Citroen, and found it

### RESULTS

#### Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, round 1/6, March 17/18

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Donagh Kelly/Conor Foley	Ford Focus WRC	1h52m53.8s
2	Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m45.8s
3	Sam Moffett/Karl Atkinson	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m55.1s
4	Declan Boyle/James O'Reilly	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+3m09.6s
5	Robert Barrable/Damien Connolly	Ford Fiesta R5	+3m19.3s
6	Desi Henry/Liam Moynihan	Ford Fiesta R5	+3m35.6s
7	Daniel Cronin/Shane Buckley	Ford Fiesta R5	+4m57.5s
8	Stephen Wright/Arthur Kierans	Ford Fiesta R5	+5m17.2s
9	Eugene Donnelly/Mark Kane	Hyundai i20 R5	+7m35.6s
10	Jonny Greer/Kirsty Riddick	Ford Fiesta R5	+8m39.9s

Class winners Callum Devine/Brian Hoy (Ford Fiesta R2T); William Mavitty/Brian Daniels (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); J Moffett/Hayes; John Coyne/Stephen Joyce (Porsche 997 R-GT); Kelly/Foley.

difficult to get used to the difference in feeling between the two cars. A puncture cost him over four minutes on Sunday, the Carryduff man electing to immediately stop and change the flat rather than risk further damaging the rented car.

Last year's Billy Coleman Award winner, Callum Devine, decided to contest the event as a warm-up for the Tour de Corse in the Junior World Rally Championship which he is contesting this year, and put in a fabulous drive in his Fiesta R2T to come home ahead of a host of more powerful machinery in an astounding 11th overall. The quick stages didn't really suit the power

deficit of the little one-litre Ford Fiesta, but Callum enjoyed the weekend nonetheless.

One spot behind Devin in the overall order, Group N went to William Mavitty and Brian Daniels (Mitsubishi Lancer E9), as local man David Guest suffered turbo issues and a late impact with a ditch that smashed a window on his Lancer.

One of the best spectacles of the weekend was 1982 Tarmac champion John Coyne in his Tuthill Porsche 911, the wide and low RGT-class car looking and sounding spectacular on the West Cork stages, as Coyne also prepares to compete on the Tour de Corse.

## Kiernan's Proton debut yields a win in the West Cork National contest

The West Cork Rally always draws a huge National entry, and this year's event had quality evident throughout the field as well as quantity.

The big news before the start was Gary Kiernan's decision to rent a Millington-powered Proton Satria Neo S2500 due to his usual Ford Escort Mk2 not being ready in time.

Kiernan will now have plenty to think about after the weekend, as he and Ryan Moore took the National spoils ahead of John Dalton's Darrrian T90 GTR. The Welshman held an early lead on his return to the Clonakilty event, but suffered numerous issues on Sunday including a spin and intercom

problems that stymied his charge.

Rob Duggan – 2016 British Junior Rally champion – was due to compete in a 1.6-litre Escort until Andy Mahon's late withdrawal meant that a 2.5-litre car became available. However, Duggan didn't even make it as far as Ring village on Saturday morning thanks to electrical trouble.

Kevin Eves was another man to have a fraught rally: the reigning Irish Tarmac Modified champion experienced electrical issues on Saturday which caused his Toyota Corolla to cut out on bumpy sections. He still managed to finish third.

Local men Vincent McSweeney and

Michael Kearney had their first outing in a Class 20 Mitsubishi Lancer E7, and were on the pace straight away (despite very little test mileage) until gear-box issues forced them out of the event. The Bandon crew have put in some giant-killing performances in the past, so it will be interesting to see what they can do with the Mitsubishi in the future.

Jason McSweeney ended up fourth after a good battle with John Bonner, with Eugene Meegan's distinctive BMW 1-Series not far behind. Ford Escorts made up the majority of the top 30 finishers, although the pace shown by Kiernan's Proton and the

multitude of Darrians show that the status quo is beginning to change. The sheer number of competitors in Class 13 and Class 14 was a sight to behold. Undeterred by more powerful cars in Class 11F, Eric Calnan and Aileen Kelly held a commanding class lead until driveshaft failure, as Cathal McCarthy and Bernard Foley wound up victors.

In the Historic rally, Owen Murphy beat Barry Jones after a nip-and-tuck battle that saw both drivers pushing their machinery to the limit all weekend. Gary McNamee was a late entry in the Junior rally, and finished just ahead of Colin O'Donoghue.

### Results

1 Gary Kiernan/Ryan Moore (Proton S2500 Millington) 1h58m28.7s; 2 John Dalton/Gwynfor Jones (Darrrian T90 GTR) +2m05.3s; 3 Kevin Eves/Chris Melly (Toyota Corolla); 4 Jason McSweeney/Anthony O'Connell (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 5 John Bonner/Emmet Sherry (Ford Escort); 6 Eugene Meegan/Daragh Mullen (BMW 1 Series); 7 Conor McCarthy/JJ Cremin (Lancer E9); 8 Damien Tourish/Dominic McAlaney (Escort); 9 Phil Collins/Adrian Deasy (Escort); 10 Kevin O'Donoghue/David Randles (BMW M3). Class winners: Roland Doherty/PJ O'Dowd (Opel Corsa); Michael Kelleher/Eoghan McCarthy (Escort); Cathal McCarthy/Bernard Foley (Escort); Paul Fitzgerald/Pierce Doherty Jr (Escort); Declan Campbell/Kevin Creighan (Escort); Jason O'Mahony/Jonathon O'Mahony (Escort); Dalton/Jones; Kiernan/Moore; Garry Kelly/Mark Hurler (Honda Civic); Owen Murphy/Anthony Nestor (Sunbeam Tiger); Andy Johnson/Jim McSherry (Vauxhall Chevette); Harry Brown/Joseph McGrath (Hillman Avenger); McNamee/Brady; Stephen Horgan/Kevin Horgan (Ford Ka).

# MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Photos: SMJ Photography

## CLASS ROUND-UP



Nova man Jones took Class A

Gethin Jones ensured there would be a slice of success for the locals by scooping honours in **Class A**.

The Welshman survived crankshaft sensor niggles with his Vauxhall Nova to finish almost two minutes clear of his nearest rival, Dion Rowlands. An in-form David McMullan could not match his Snetterton heroics meanwhile as he came home a narrow third, ruing his 19th position on the road which meant he encountered a disruptive mix of faster and slower traffic.

Class points leader Aaron Rix played the consistency card by finishing in fourth place to consolidate his championship advantage.

"This circuit doesn't play to the Ford Ka's strengths like it will at Cadwell," said Rix, who rolled out of the previous visit to Cadwell. "The Vauxhalls have more power to play with. Today was about picking up the points."

**Class B** would go the way of the Ford Fiesta of Ashleigh Morris, who inherited a comfortable lead after a decisive third stage.

Former British Touring Car Championship race winner Paul O'Neill stepped back into Paul Sheard's Mazda MX-5 in the latter's absence and started brightly, running as high as 10th overall after the opening stage, and went on to be quickest in class on all stages. However, an altercation with a chicane would prove costly, resulting in a stage maximum and a penalty of over five minutes, which handed the initiative back to Morris. Robert Lee Jones/John Knight took second.

Dane Walker surprised even himself as he guided his Mk2 Escort to **Class C** success, but it wasn't without drama. A broken water bottle left he and co-driver Dave Boyes having to cope with a footwell full of windscreen washer fluid early in the morning, a scare which would not deter the pair from an otherwise calm class win.

"We thought the radiator had gone at first, but the smell gave it away," was the co-driver's response, as their worst fears proved to be ill-judged.

Chris McCallum kept the fight alive by trading times with the class winner in his similar Mk2 Escort, while Cathy Sewart finished third in class after another competitive showing in the Talbot Sunbeam Lotus.

Points leader Chris West showed his nose to the four-wheel-drive contenders early in the day and would prevent a Ford one-two-three, doing more than enough to claim victory in **Class D1**. Mark Kelly was a distant second in class but lost further ground to his Peugeot rival in the title fight, Woodhouse similarly left to rue his tyre choice on stage one of the day.

Alan Kirkaldy would have even more to celebrate meanwhile with **Class D2** success alongside bragging rights in the overall event.

Dan Mason

# KIRKALDY TRIUMPHS ON FIESTA R5 DEBUT

Scot takes Anglesey win as West leads series charge. By **Dan Mason**



Kirkaldy's Fiesta debut was strong

**T**he so-called 'Mini Beast from the East' couldn't stop Alan Kirkaldy from earning a dream MN Rally Championship victory in the Lee Holland Memorial Stages at Anglesey in his debut with a Ford Fiesta R5, while Chris West took another brave step towards the title.

"It's the first time I've even sat in the car," were the ominous words uttered from former BriSCA F2 and Formula Ford racer Kirkaldy, who completed a clean sweep of all eight stages after being given a one-off drive in the car by Peter Smith, who ended the event second in his ex-Ott Tanak Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

Equipped with an ex-Stephen Petch Ford Fiesta, Kirkaldy had intended to race at Croft and then Donington before inclement weather called a halt to his and the rest of the field's plans both times.

Mother Nature's latest blizzard would not halt the action on this occasion, but it instantly shifted the early advantage to those in four-wheel-drive machinery.

Rivals' expectations quickly became a reality when four-wheel-drive Ford Fiestas occupied three of the top four spots after a testing opening pair of stages. Kirkaldy's impact was instantaneous even without the additional mechanical grip, racking up a brace of stage wins to open an early lead of 11 seconds. The tone was set. Only Smith could keep within striking distance.

Kirkaldy remained consistent as the Tarmac finally dried in the afternoon, completing an emphatic sweep of all eight stages to ensure victory on his maiden outing by a margin of 43s over a valiant Smith.

"He wasn't going to be beaten today," was Smith's response, while the winner enjoyed his new venture. "It's very different to what I'm used to," said Kirkaldy. "You really have to drive these things on the edge to be quick."

Behind them raged the continuing title fight between West and main rival, John Stone. Although mapping problems with his Fiesta's long-awaited new engine gave him an initial headache, Stone soon settled into a rhythm and moved ahead of title rival West with a strong run through stage four.

West would not be deterred, and soon the ever-unpredictable weather would turn back in the front-wheel-drive Peugeot 306 Maxi's favour. Contact with a water drum was not in the script, leaving the car's front bumper looking worse for wear after a sideways moment under braking on stage six.

West clawed back the lost time in a hurry when the track surface began to dry in the afternoon, overhauling Stone for third once again with two stages to run.

Two seconds separated the pair with one stage to go, Stone missing out merely by one second after a tense final run. "I can't complain," was West's response to continuing his 100 per cent podium record in 2018.

Traffic, as it turned out, would play its part in the battle, Stone saying: "I think we lost a combined 20s just trying to get past people during the day."

In stark contrast to the previous power-friendly visit to Snetterton, it was backs against the wall for those manhandling a Ford Escort Mk2 in Wales. Reigning champion Ian Woodhouse suffered most of all, after a bold decision to run a new set of winter road tyres proved unsuccessful on the opening stage.

One-and-a-half minutes were lost as the Escort struggled for grip in the day's greasiest conditions, Woodhouse briefly languishing outside the top 20 as a result. "We took a risk, but it didn't pay off in the end," he bemoaned. "We were the only one, but you have to think about giving it a try."

"Imagine if we'd had gone almost two minutes faster than everyone – then it's a completely different story."



West strengthened series points position

## RESULTS

Lee Holland Stages, MN Circuit Rally Championship, round 5/7, Mar 18

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Alan Kirkaldy/Cameron Fair	Ford Fiesta R5	46m07s
2	Peter Smith/John Millington	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+43s
3	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi	+1m18s
4	John Stone/Jack Morton	Ford Fiesta S2500	+1m19s
5	Mark Kelly/Andy Baker	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m53s
6	Nigel Gibbard/Simon John Rogers	Darrian T90	+2m20s
7	Ian Woodhouse/Jason Leaf	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m44s
8	Colin Gemmill/Derek Keir	Ford Escort Mk2	+3m19s
9	Carwyn Ellis/Edgar Jones	Ford Escort Mk2	+3m47s
10	Derek Blyth/Neil Colman	Subaru Impreza	+3m52s

Class winners Gethin Jones/Tomos Williams (Vauxhall Nova); Ashleigh Morris/Phil Kenny (Ford Fiesta); Dane Walker/Dave Boyes (Escort Mk2); West/Hounslow; Kirkaldy/Fair.

Upholding the flag for the Escort was an exuberant Mark Kelly. After a quiet previous outing, the Brands Hatch winner found a liking to the wet conditions once again and finished best of the Mk2 machines in fifth overall.

A Darrian T90 returned to the series in the hands of Nigel Gibbard who finished sixth, Woodhouse clawing back lost time to climb to seventh ahead of Colin Gemmill in another Escort. Carwyn Ellis' spectacular style earned

him ninth, the top 10 rounded out by Derek Blyth's Subaru.

It was a case of how times can change for last year's winner, Wil Owen. The local driver entered as the event's top seed after his triumphant showing 12 months ago, but an early battery problem required a bump start and meant he incurred a time penalty for arriving late at stage one. He later retired with a terminal alternator issue.

# GOODWOOD REPORT

## COLD GOODWOOD WARMED UP

Brilliant battles at Members' Meeting. By **Paul Lawrence**

**O**n a weekend when freezing weather and snow threatened to wreck the 76th Goodwood Members' Meeting, some fabulous racing kept the crowd on its toes in bitterly cold conditions.

The two-driver **Moss Trophy** for pre-'63 GT cars was just one of the highlights and an early contest between the Jaguar E-types of Jon Minshaw and John Young and the Ferrari Breadvan of Emanuele Pirro showed everything that is glorious about Goodwood.

Minshaw cut the early pace, but Young clawed him in and Pirro went with them to deliver a fabulous contest. However, it was always likely to be Minshaw's race as Phil Keen was waiting to take over from his British GT partner. Jack Young relayed his dad and Lukas Halusa took over the Breadvan from Pirro, but it was Rob Huff who starred in the later half as he oversteered the E-type of Richard Meins through to a spectacular second as Pirro and young Halusa completed the podium.

The **Gurney Cup** was a fitting tribute to the late Dan Gurney and the pack of 1960s sports-racers were sensational. Racing his newly

acquired Ford GT40 for the first time, David Hart took the race by the scruff of the neck and kept the flying Cobra Daytona Coupe of Andrew Smith at arm's length.

Young Olivier Hart dropped time on the opening lap in his dad's similar Cobra but recovered in style to tiger his way through a fabulous three-way GT40 contest for third. While Hart joined his father on the podium, Craig Davies topped the GT40 trio.

Few races wowed the crowd more than the **Bolster Cup** for pre-war specials as oversteer, aero engines, smoke and some outrageous machines produced yet more entertainment. Back out after a lengthy gap, Tim Llewellyn was the class of the field in the family's Bentley 3/8 Special, but Tom Walker (Amilcar), Justin Maeers (GN Parker) and Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Bentley 3/8) kept up a spirited chase.

Sunday's sprint race for part two of the **Gerry Marshall Trophy** was a real disappointment as a long safety car period followed a first corner shunt. A midfield melee dispatched Peter Mallet's Rover into the tyre wall and once it was cleared up only three racing laps remained for the live TV coverage.

That should take nothing away from Pantelis Christoforou who backed up his team-mates' Saturday win to make

it a great weekend for the Ford Escort Mk2. Ric Wood's Ford Capri headed the chasing hordes but there was never enough time for the reverse grid to unwind.

The weekend ended on another high with a glorious **Sears Trophy** for pre-'66 touring cars. With the fastest V8s not invited, this was a Lotus Cortina affair and four of them enacted an epic race as the cars danced on the limit of adhesion. Andrew Jordan and Andy Wolfe battled until a safety car allowed Mark Sumpter and Steve Soper, after a wild ride down the grass at St Mary's, to hook up and make it four cars.

Jordan needed every bit of his natural car control to stay ahead as little more than a second covered the quartet at the flag.

The **Hawthorn Trophy** field of front-engined grand prix cars really drew the short straw as the first race on Sunday and they slithered around in a winter wonderland. Tony Wood's Cooper Bristol was the class of those who took the start, but several front-runners elected not to run and Geraint Owen's pole-sitting Kurtis Indycar lunched its gearbox. Wood dominated as Edward Williams chose a tough day for his Maserati 250F debut but did well to bring it home second.

Conditions weren't much better for the following **Derek Bell Cup** and only 11 of the 25 qualifiers risked

it. Unsurprisingly, Jon Milicevic's Brabham BT21 was a resounding race winner.

James Cottingham (Porsche 904 Carrera GTS) won Saturday's **Ronnie Hoare Trophy** but Vincent Gaye came close to making it a fitting Ferrari win in memory of the man who imported Ferraris to the UK in the 1960s.

Gaye worked his 275GTB into contention only to loop into a late spin after dropping a wheel onto the grass at 'no name'. Billy Bellinger (Morgan SLR) nipped back into second before Gaye recovered. "Vincent was pushing so hard I thought he was going to get me," said Cottingham.

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards was the class of the **Caracciola Sportwagenrennen** in Peter Neumark's Alfa Romeo 8C Monza and was the better part of half a minute clear after 11 laps. Duncan Pittaway ran second in his Bugatti T35 but had a scare when the bonnet flicked up and flew off over his head. "I had a peer over the front and everything seemed OK," said Pittaway after continuing undaunted.

Finally, Martin Stretton (Lister Jaguar) scooped the **Salvadori Cup** as the Lotus 15s of Roger Wills and Olly Bryant hunted him down. "It was getting more and more Lotus conditions," said Stretton who was glad to see the flag after 12 laps.



Minshaw/Keen were stars in Moss Trophy

## GOODWOOD HIGHLIGHTS BY PAUL LAWRENCE

### EMANUELE PIRRO



Former grand prix racer Emanuele Pirro is hugely popular at Goodwood and races all sorts of cars with his trademark charm and good humour.

This weekend he was handed a famous Ferrari for the Moss Trophy when he partnered Lukas Halusa in the one-off Breadvan, the special-bodied version of a 250GT SWB from 1961. They finished third in the showdown.

"Driving the Breadvan was a really wonderful experience," he said. "I stopped by a lot of bakeries to deliver the bread! It is a wonderful car to look at and now I had the privilege to drive it.

"It was lovely to drive and we spoke the same language. There was real chemistry!"

### KEVIN ABBRING

The star of the Group 5 demonstration sessions was Dutch World Rally Championship driver Kevin Abbring. In Saturday's slippery conditions, he warmed the crowd with his sideways style as others took a more circumspect approach.

In the BMW 320 owned by Christian Manner, Abbring was great value.

"I've been driving quite a lot of historic cars," he said. "It's my first time at Goodwood and the atmosphere is awesome. It's a dream come true.

"You really get the feel of how it was to drive these cars and I was nice and sideways through the chicane. I needed to get used to the car and the quickest way to do that was to play with it!"



### BLAKENEY-EDWARDS



Taking pole position by 8.6s was a mighty performance by Patrick Blakeney-Edwards in qualifying for the Caracciola Sportwagenrennen.

As some questioned the wisdom of leaving the assembly area onto a wet, oily and snow-blown track, PB-E just got on with it in his stunning 1933 Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 Monza. Even he was surprised at his margin over the rest of the grid.

"The 8C Alfa is an iconic pre-war sports car and a very, very effective tool," he explained. "It's a really well-prepared car from Peter Neumark and it's an honour to be driving one of my all-time favourite cars.

"It was very slippery but the skinny tyres tend to help a little bit."

# 76TH MEMBERS' MEETING

Photos: Gary Hawkins, Paul Lawrence, LAT

# BY STUNNING RACING



Blundell was on form in Escort with Michael

## Escort begins 50th birthday year with Gerry Marshall win

In the year that marks the 50th birthday of the Ford Escort, it was a Mk2 that finally came good in the two-driver element of the Gerry Marshall Trophy.

Against the Rovers, Capris and Camaros, the Pinto-powered Mk2 RS2000 of Kerry Michael and former grand prix racer Mark Blundell proved perfect for the arctic cold, and slippery Goodwood as darkness fell on Saturday evening.

The highlight of a typically frenetic contest came when Blundell reeled in Mike Jordan, who had taken over Mike Whitaker's ex-Gordon Spice Capri. Driving beautifully, Blundell sneaked ahead on the sprint to Madgwick and then fended off a determined challenge from Jordan to deliver the first Gerry Marshall win for a two-litre car.

In the early laps, Whitaker drove a peach of an opening stint to romp clear as Craig Davies in his freshly-prepared Ford Mustang fended off the rapid Michael. At the driver change, Whitaker was 14s to the good, but more snow was blowing across the track and what little grip remained was fading fast.

That didn't trouble Blundell who showed his class to close down the Capri and go ahead. But the laps when Jordan re-challenged were awesome until a couple of big moments persuaded the Capri driver that the Escort was just too strong.

"I've done enough Le Mans to know how to do a driver change," said Blundell after a swift stop. "Kerry did a fantastic job." Jordan agreed: "Mark drove it brilliantly and they've done a great job with that car."

## FEVER!



The death of journalist and commentator Henry Hope-Frost little more than a week before the event cast a shadow over the Members' Meeting and there were many tributes to the popular member of the Goodwood team.

For someone with unbridled fever for the sport, and noisy racing cars in particular, a most fitting tribute was played out by the Formula 5000s gathered for high-speed demonstration sessions.

Prior to taking to the track, nearly 30 thundering monsters delivered a minute of noise in the assembly area and it was spectacular. HH-F would surely have approved immensely and would probably have commented that the noise had caused "significant trouser trouble".

## MOBY DICK

As part of the celebration of Group 5, the Porsche Museum sent a couple of cars and the spectacular 'Moby Dick' version of the 935 from 1978 was a real stand-out in the demonstration sessions.

The name comes from the long tail developed for Le Mans, where it ran at 228mph from 845bhp, but faltered in the race. Over the weekend it was driven by period ace Jochen Mass (aged 71) and Daniel Harper (aged 17), the new scholarship winner in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB.

"I couldn't be more excited to be at the Members' Meeting driving the amazing Moby Dick," said Harper. "It's an incredible car."



## BOLSTER CUP



A massively slippery track, skinny tyres, and loads of power in pre-war machinery was always going to be a winning combination in Saturday's qualifying session for the Bolster Cup.

A wonderful array of specials attacked the Goodwood chicane with gusto and for 15 minutes the crowd forgot about the biting cold.

Spectators new to this type of machinery were wowed by huge oversteer and wild slides. Master of the session was Mark Walker (left), back in 'Thunderbug' for the occasion in place of his son Hughie. With the eight-litre engine chugging away at impossibly low revs, Walker used all of the circuit, the kerbs and some of the grass to launch the car into another lap.

## WINNERS

**Ronnie Hoare Trophy**  
James Cottingham  
(Porsche 904 Carrera GTS)

**Gerry Marshall Trophy part one**  
Kerry Michael/Mark Blundell (Ford Escort Mk2 RS2000)

**Gerry Marshall Trophy part two**  
Pantelis Christoforou  
(Ford Escort Mk2 RS2000)

**Hawthorn Trophy**  
Tony Wood  
(Cooper Bristol)

**Derek Bell Cup**  
Jon Milicevic  
(Brabham BT21)

**Salvadori Cup**  
Martin Stretton  
(Lister Jaguar)

**Caracciola Sportwagenrennen**  
Patrick Blakeney-Edwards  
(Alfa Romeo 8C Monza)

**Moss Trophy**  
Jon Minshaw/Phil Keen  
(Jaguar E-type)

**Bolster Cup**  
Tim Llewellyn  
(Bentley 3/8 Special)

**Gurney Cup**  
David Hart (Ford GT40)

**Sears Trophy**  
Andrew Jordan  
(Lotus Cortina)

# F1 PREVIEW 2018

**Matt James** looks at the twists and turns that will embellish the 2018 season

## THE GREEN LIGHT ON A MOMENTOUS F1 SEASON

**T**here will be some round-the-clock head scratching going on at some of the grand prix team HQs right now.

Testing has stopped, the cars are being unpacked in Melbourne, but there is still work to be done, secrets to be unlocked. The boffins back at base will be looking through the testing data for that one last magic bullet.

There is a lot resting on this. It could be a huge season for either Mercedes driver and reigning champion Lewis Hamilton or Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel. Both are gunning for a Juan Manuel Fangio-equaling fifth world crown. That will add a certain fizz to the battle between the two.

But beyond that, there are a host of different plotlines that will play out over the course of the 21 races in the 2018 campaign. We have picked a few to look out for.



Mercedes will still be the benchmark

### 1 HAS MERCEDES MOVED THE GOALPOSTS?

There weren't any headline-grabbing lap times posted by either reigning champion Lewis Hamilton or Valtteri Bottas during the pre-season running at Barcelona. They were put in the shade by plenty of others and they only clocked the

eighth fastest lap time when all the sessions were combined.

Is this a chink of light for the others, or merely a false dawn? It appears to be the latter. Merc was confident enough in its pace that it didn't go chasing the spotlight.

Put simply, it didn't need to. Last year's car could be unpredictable, particularly when it came to using its rubber, and much attention has been paid to this area. The W09 is an improvement in all aspects, and showed enviable

reliability while it was in Spain.

The only thing that rival teams can cling on to as a potential speed bump for the champions is how it uses the new range of tyres, whether it can perform on the softest of the new Pirellis.

In every likelihood, Mercedes will be on top of this too.

To see a proper fight for this season's championship, fans are going to have to cross their fingers and hope that Bottas can step up and push Hamilton all the way.

### 2 IS RED BULL MERC'S GREATEST THREAT?



Both Red Bulls have shown promise

No team brings a full final spec car to testing, so the picture – even among the top teams – can be skewed. And sometimes, not all the cars will be run at full power as engine developments are brought on stream.

Red Bull had neither full grunt from its Renault powerplant or the full aerodynamic kit on the RB14 and yet it still has the others worried. Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen will be quietly confident ahead of the opening race in Melbourne this weekend.

Mercedes technical boss James Allison has admitted that he is looking towards Milton Keynes

as the biggest threat this season. "I think there's three quick teams and there's no doubt that Red Bull are going to be people that we're going to be fighting with this year," he surmised.

There are some concerns for Red Bull, and they mostly emanate from the Renault powerplant, which is not as strong as Merc even when it is on song and it wasn't the most reliable during the last campaign.

Despite that, optimism is high ahead of Melbourne this weekend. For the sake of F1, a rapid Red Bull would be a shot in the arm.

## 3 HAS FERRARI BITTEN OFF MORE THAN IT CAN CHEW?



Ferrari could have issues

There are a lot of contradictions at Ferrari right now. Sebastian Vettel says that it needs to find more pace if it wants to take the fight to Mercedes this year. Team-mate Kimi Raikkonen says that it could have gone faster in testing if it had wanted to.

Confused? It seems they are too. Ferrari has had envious eyes at its rival teams which could add to the confusion even more. It has gone further down the raised rear ride height route which worked so well for Red Bull over the past seasons. Then it has echoed

Mercedes in increasing the wheelbase. So it has included two unknowns on what was the second fastest package last year and ended up with a car that was 1-2 in the combined testing times from Barcelona. While there were doubts that Merc showed its hand, that is a

pretty strong starting point. The key factor for Vettel is going to be how quickly the team gets on top of the car. Insiders suspect that it has been on the limit already and its performance on the differing option tyres and with differing fuel loads have been underwhelming.

## 4 IS McLAREN IN THE MIRE (AGAIN)?

This is the start of the revival for McLaren? The former F1 powerhouse is entering its 10th season since it last lifted title silverware with Lewis Hamilton at the wheel. Incredibly it last won the constructors' crown in 1998. Its disastrous three-year relationship with Honda has been ripped apart, and it has gone for the relative stability of a customer deal with Renault. The French produced a race-winning powerplant in 2017 and there should be genuine optimism.

Are all problems fixed? Not really... The McLaren MCL33-Renault was unreliable in testing. Wheels fell off, there was an oil leak and issues with the battery. Sure, Fernando Alonso set the third best lap time when all the tests were combined, but he was on the hypersoft Pirellis and team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne was rapid too. It looked more like a morale-boosting one-shot special than anything that is likely to be a pointer to its potential.

The car is struggling in a straight line – much like it was in 2017. Twelve months ago, the fingers could be pointed at the Japanese for this problem. This year the foreboding digits could well be turning in the direction of Woking. The team itself is sidling away from the panic button, as you would expect. Racing director Eric Boullier said: "We are on top of [the car] and it is a new partnership with Renault, new

packaging, completely new packaging for the car as well. This is testing, give us time – it is fine." The trouble is, McLaren doesn't have any time left any more.



McLaren seems to still have trouble



Bottas, Raikkonen and Ricciardo must perform

## 5 CAN F1'S MALIGNED ACES GET BACK ON TERMS?

There are three drivers on the grid that need to step from the shadows, and they are three drivers in plum seats on the grid. Even at the halfway point of the 2017 season, there were question marks about Valtteri Bottas's tenure of the Mercedes seat alongside Lewis Hamilton after some events where he was simply nowhere near. It also put Nico Rosberg's ability into focus. Bottas needs to prove the sceptics wrong. Another man feeling the heat is Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo. He has gone up against the Max Verstappen bandwagon, which, like the driver,

shows no signs of slowing down. The amiable Australian scored more points than his Dutch team-mate last year, but there was still a perception that he underperformed. This campaign will be crucial for him to reassert his seniority in the Milton Keynes team. Then there is the Kimi Raikkonen question: is this a wasted drive, or a solid dependable number two? Many people think it is the former and the Finn hasn't won a race since 2013. Ferrari team-mate and title-chaser Sebastian Vettel thinks it is the latter. Given the fragile state of Vettel, Kimi could be just the perfect foil.

## 6 NICO HULKENBERG VS CARLOS SAINZ JR

What is the most exciting driver line-up on the grid? Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen at Red Bull have a strong shout here, but equally as exciting is the Renault pairing of Carlos Sainz Jr and Nico Hulkenberg. Both have acknowledged ability and have carved out F1 berths for the longer term while many others have fallen by the wayside. If one destroys the other this year, it is going to be hard to see a way back for the injured party...

And the Renault squad is a decent place to add to the backdrop of this intra-team squabble. It ended last season on a high and has shown similar solid pace in 2018 so far – even if the car hasn't always been the most robust, which is a bugbear which is also hanging over from its previous campaign. A cleverly packaged car has given the boffins some problems with getting enough airflow through the R.S.18. That could

be a contributing factor to the Barcelona hiccups and something that will be exercising its thought process between now and Melbourne. Renault has made big noises about new factory buildings and recruiting staff to bring it back to a championship-winning level. The team was only (re)created in 2016 from the skeleton of the Lotus project, which had left it with a pretty low base to start from. The green shoots of a revival are here.



Renault has good form

## 7 HAS HONDA FINALLY HIT THE SWEET SPOT?

If there was a dictionary definition of the word smokescreen, it could have featured a photograph of the 2017 Honda powerplants. But that word could also apply to 2018 too but for entirely different reasons. Toro Rosso has the Japanese engines and it has demonstrated superb reliability in testing so far. Sure, Brendon Hartley and Pierre Gasly might not be the most experienced drivers on the grid, but there is genuine optimism here. And its sister team, repeatedly (and often publicly) fed up of its alliance with Renault will be keeping a very close eye on developments in Italy. Could this be a precursor for Red Bull Racing to use the Honda motors

should that potential be turned into solid results? Smokescreens, you see... Toro Rosso is likely to be at the head of the chasing pack this season and, according to experts, there is still some refinement to be done and some chassis fine-tuning. Honda has got its act together. After the awful past 36 months, it has even greater motivation. A sleeping giant is one thing, but a wounded one is way more potent. Remember that Sauber had this deal too before reversing out of it. The people of Hinwil will be kicking themselves if the STR-Honda ends up at the sharp end this season.



## 8 THE MIDFIELD MAELSTROM

Force India set the bar very high last season but to perform beyond its means consistently is much harder than doing it for one or two seasons. It says that its performance has been masked so far because it wasn't going for lap times with an upgrade to come for Melbourne. Fans of the team must hope that is true to allow Sergio Perez and Esteban Ocon to perform. Haas, on the other hand, has to live up to the hype and 2018 will give it a strong platform. The car is modest in terms of its design, but that is a deliberate ploy to give it a more stable machine. Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen could be dark horses. On the other hand, Williams could be facing some dark days. It



Haas has run very quickly

has a new concept with the FW41 which shows the influence of ex-Mercedes man Paddy Lowe and the team has taken a long time to get on top of it so far. It also has an inexperienced line-up in Sergey Sirotkin and Lance Stroll. While Sauber could have gone further with its livery, it probably can't go much further forward with its new car, the C37. Even points will be a long shot for Marcus Ericsson and the promising Charles Leclerc.

# RACING REPORTS

**DONINGTON PARK: 750MC BY GRAHAM KEILLOH**
**MARCH 17**

Photos: Jonathan Elsey, Steve Jones



It was Wesemael's first event in cars

## WESEMAEL CHIPPER AFTER SHOCK RGB SPORTS 1000 POLE FOR CANCELLED RACE

**On-track running at Donington Park for the first 750 Motor Club meeting of the year was blink and you miss it. The entire weekend was abandoned after lunch on the opening day in sporadic blizzard-like conditions and the forecasts threatening more. Just over three hours of track action, and no races, had been completed.**

Yet there was still time for something extraordinary to happen, in the RGB Sports 1000 qualifying session. Christopher 'Chippy' Wesemael set the fastest time in his Mittell MC-53 on his debut for Mittell Cars, to bag pole position for the opening race that never was. Wesemael had replaced 2015 champion Scott Mittell, who instead is to compete in Bikesports, in the driver line-up.

In addition Wesemael took pole by four tenths of a second, ahead of reigning champion and the Mittell team's chief rival Billy Albone, driving a Spire GT3. While Wesemael's team-mates Paul Smith and Danny Andrew – the latter impeded by having a wiring issue and not wanting to push his new engine – were over a second off his advantage.

And most extraordinary of all, this was Wesemael's first car racing meeting

of any sort, the 23-year-old was making his bow straight out of karting.

He noted that the jump requires a lot of adaptation.

"It's been a little bit more difficult than I would like to admit," Wesemael conceded. "It's the high speed corners and medium speed corners that are a bit of an issue for me, just because I'm not used to the downforce and carrying all that speed."

"I got lots of help from everyone here at Mittell Cars. It's been going well."

Wesemael admitted also that the abandonment made his pole achievement bittersweet.

"Yeah I really would have loved to take the car out in the race," he said, "Especially the 25 minute-long race [where Wesemael was to start second behind Albone, based on second best times]."

"I was really looking forward to that, see if we can have a bit of a fight with Billy, and just see what happened really. Unfortunately we'll just have to wait until Brands now."

"I was a bit worried, I've done no starts at all in the car."

He admitted also to surprise at the qualifying result. "Yes, very surprised

actually. I had Scott on the wall with the pitboard and coming round I was about half a second behind Billy, and I saw the lap was a lot quicker than that one, so it just kind of all came together when it needed to really."

And while snow was blowing in the air throughout, Wesemael reckons the outcome wasn't explained by track conditions varying within the session, saying the grip level changed "not overly". But he did suggest that having unusual circumstances was to his benefit.

"With it being so cold and the snow blowing across constantly, especially the first section and Craner Curves is very slippery, I think might have played into my hands a little bit," he said.

"All these guys have lots of practice on a normal track, with it being a bit changeable all of us are on a bit more of an even playing field. So that was probably good for me."

His pole lap wasn't one of throwing caution to the wind either.

"No, being my first race here I hadn't really driven it in the dry at full revs until the qualifying session, so we were just building it up lap by lap, that's why my fastest lap was a lot



One of these trophies could've had Wesemael's name on it after his pole

quicker than the other ones that I did.

"I just followed the process that we'd worked on with Scott and Mittell Cars and just put it together at the end."

Indeed his opening two laps in the session were in the 1m52s range, and from then, aside from one breather on lap five, he chipped down consistently to his best time of 1m37.53s on lap seven.

Even with his tour de force Wesemael thinks championship ambitions are beyond him for now.

"I think absolutely all the boys here – Danny, Paul, Billy, all the frontrunners from last season and the midfield – everyone's really quick in this field," he noted. "It's going to be about trying to learn the tracks as fast as possible, and the car, just to try and keep up; really just see what happens. I'm not going to stand here and say 'I want to win the championship'. That would be great, but probably not that realistic at the moment."



Conditions were very difficult at times at Donington during Saturday

### Wintry weather forces meeting to be cancelled – and it may not be rearranged

The Donington Park meeting had to be abandoned due to the extreme weather, with only the qualifying sessions held in wet and intermittently snowy conditions on Saturday morning, before the decision to cancel the weekend's racing was made.

With the forecast indicating that more snow would fall overnight, Sunday's action was also cancelled as it was considered to be unfair on the competitors, organisers and marshals to be left waiting in freezing conditions once again.

The club's competitions secretary, Giles Groombridge, explained: "The decision was made by the MSA steward and the clerks of the course because

they're the people responsible for circuit inspection. The circuit must be free from snow and ice, the verges, all access roads and the paddock must be free from snow and ice. We also have a duty of care to all the marshals standing out in temperatures that were minus eight degrees with the wind-chill too."

Drivers agreed that it was the correct decision, especially after facing issues in qualifying when several cars spun off the circuit as ice began forming on the track surface.

Bikesports racer Adrian Reynard experienced difficult track conditions even before the worst of the weather hit. "I did the practice then the qualifying,

but there were a lot of people going off, changing up into fourth gear and spinning-up the rear wheels," he said.

"I looked at the forecast – it was variable so I left about two hours before they cancelled the meeting. I realised it wasn't going to get much better."

The club will attempt to reschedule as many races as it can, but Groombridge admitted that an entire meeting's worth of racing will be tough to fit into the remaining calendar.

"Potentially some of them could be rescheduled at other meetings," he said. "We might be able to squeeze one championship into our September Donington meeting."

# RACING REPORTS

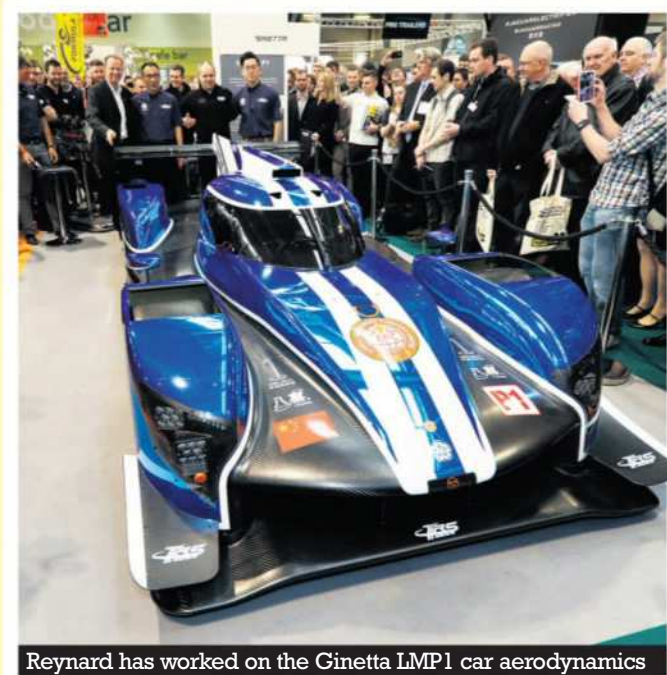
**DONINGTON PARK: 750MC BY GRAHAM KEILLOH**
**MARCH 17**

Photos: Steve Jones, LAT

Reynard (l) gets stuck in at Silverstone last year



## STAR DESIGNER REYNARD STILL ENJOYING HIS RACING



Reynard has worked on the Ginetta LMP1 car aerodynamics

There was a familiar name among those driving in the 750 Motor Club's Bikesports series at Donington. That of renowned constructor Adrian Reynard, taking part in a Radical SR3.

Reynard started out as a driver and built cars in order to race them, yet it is as a constructor that he has really made his name. The Reynard company's cars dominated Champ Car and Formula 3000 and have won races in many other series.

So what keeps tempting him back to this category, and taking part behind the wheel?

"I'm doing it because I enjoy it, and if I stop enjoying it I won't be doing any more of this!" Reynard said.

But he admits that it's not just that. Old habits die hard. "I like the series because the regulations in Bikesports are free enough for me to do just a few little experiments

with my car," he added. "I develop my own rear wing for it, and some other small features that I thought might help improve the lap times as my ability fades."

And for Reynard this freedom is the crucial distinction from the specialist Radical Challenge Championship.

"The Radical championship is far too prescriptive for me, and probably too competitive," he noted. "I like to support the 750 Motor Club, and I meet a lot of friends here as well."

Even so Reynard still has plenty keeping him occupied away from the driving seat, not least Ginetta's LMP1 aerodynamic programme that he joined recently. He confirmed that "the car is going extremely well on the track".

His company remains active also in NASCAR as well as with several IndyCar teams seeking to maximise the new aerokit for this year.

But he aims still to have time for his own racing, and this year that includes going back to the future by racing a couple of his old Formula Fords.

"When my Formula Ford 1600 comes back from New Zealand where I raced it at Hampton Downs I'm going to just rebuild the nose and radiator which were deficient," he explained. "A 44-year-old radiator didn't cool very well. And the rear uprights' bearings were deficient as well - I made all those mistakes in 1973.

"So I'll just make those a bit more reliable, and I might take it out towards the end of the year for the occasional Formula Ford 1600 race if it fits into a category. It was built in '73 and I think there's a pre-'72 championship, which it probably won't fit into.

"And I might drive a 1978 Formula Ford 2000 car which I used to drive in '78. I did race that last year at Brands once

on the Grand Prix circuit, but it had been a long time since I raced at Brands. I used to be able to learn circuits quite quickly but it takes me a bit longer these days!

"It's just a little hobby now, that I enjoy still doing some of the things I started nearly 50 years ago."

And he fully intends to keep competing in Bikesports.

"I like the SR3 to drive," he said. "It's a very comfortable car to drive, paddleshift and nice high revving engine. It's pretty quick and has a reasonable amount of grip. So I'll continue with the 750 Motor Club this year with that.

"I had a big push to win the championship in 2014, but I've been a bit less aggressive so I miss quite a few races now.

"I don't feel I need to prove to win, but it's nice [I can]. I've won a few races in this championship which is always nice to do."

**OULTON PARK: BARC BY PETER SCHERER**
**MARCH 17**

## LEGENDS BRAVE THE SNOW AT OULTON IN EXCITING RACES

Wintry showers played their part in the opening round of the National Legends.

The opening heat was red flagged when Belgian visitors Guy Fastres and Jean Poncelet rolled in a multiple shunt at Old Hall on the opening lap.

Jack Parker led from the restart and began to tussle with Miles Rudman. Will Gibson had been in the mix too until John Mickel snatched third cresting Hilltop and began attacking the lead duo.

With a lap to go Mickel was second through Old Hall and led at

Knickerbrook. But Gibson had followed him through and made the decisive move to clinch a late victory, with Parker completing the podium.

Steve Whitelegg's early break in heat two was eroded by a long safety car period. But he maintained his reduced advantage over a final two-lap sprint, with Parker holding off Rudman for third, after Connor Mills slowed and retired on the last lap.

It was almost dark when the grid formed up for the final. Initially the lead quartet paired off, with Mills and John Paterson pursued by Stephen Treherne and Gilles

Verleyen. While the lead duo scrapped, Verleyen closed in and managed to split them, before losing out to Parker and Gibson a lap later.

Mills briefly made a break at the front, as the four behind had their own fight. But Paterson spun at Knickerbrook on lap four, which gave Parker space to close in on Mills.

Parker briefly nosed ahead a lap later, but Mills soon reclaimed it to take a hard-fought win, while Gibson retook third from Sean Smith on the last lap, having lost it on the previous one.



Whitelegg (l) was a heat winner, with Legends attracting large grid

Photos: Rachel Bourne

**RACE WINNERS**

**Caterham Graduates**  
Mega/Classic/Sigma  
Race 1: Declan Dolan (Mega)  
Race 2: Declan Dolan (Mega)  
Sigma/Sigmmax VCT  
Race 1: Lee Collins  
Race 2: Lee Collins

**CNC Heads Sports/Saloons**  
Paul Rose (Saker RAPX S1)

**Legends**  
Heat 1: Will Gibson  
Heat 2: Stephen Whitelegg  
Final: Connor Mills

**MG Owners Club**  
Race 1: David Mellor (MG ZR)  
Race 2: Simon Kendrick (MGF VVC)



Rose was rapid in his Saker to storm to comfortable win

## ROSE BLOOMS DESPITE THE ARCTIC CONDITIONS TO TAKE SPORTS/SALOON WIN

Former CNC Heads Sports/Saloon champion Paul Rose won the opening round of the championship in his Saker.

Dave Harvey's Locosaki was the early leader in the restarted race, which had been red-flagged when Paul Dobson's rotary-engined Locost had a transmission failure, Philip Morris's VW Golf crashed heavily and Graeme Laslett's

Lotus Elise was caught up in the melee, all before the first corner.

Rose had been fourth into the first corner behind Harvey, Danny Bird's Spire and Garry Wardle's Porsche 997. He got Wardle into Cascades on the opening lap. Wardle then spun at Cascades a lap later, as Rose ousted Bird and edged close to the lead.

It only took three laps, from

where Rose built his lead up to 21 seconds by the flag.

Harvey had been clear in second, but had a last-lap scrap with the closing Bird after a lock-up at Old Hall.

Jon Woolfitt's turbocharged MK Indy and brother Paul's Lotus Exige had both been in formation in the top four, but both were caught by Steve Harris' Saker, which was

recovering from earlier contact with the Exige.

Harris tried to take both into Old Hall on lap four, succeeded, spun on the exit and retired with a broken splitter. Paul Woolfitt also pitted after a warning flag. Tony Ellis came through to claim a solid fifth in his Mazda-engined Gemini Elva, with Allan Davies completing the top six in his BMW M3.

## FEATURE

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Why young Brit Tom Williams swapped Jedburgh for Mexico. By David Evans

## THE KING OF LEON



Mexico was more appealing than the UK

**A**s the thermometer tipped from the 20s to the 30s, the question seemed a trifle superfluous.

Tom Williams adjusted his sunglasses and, ahead of his third straight day in a rally car, considered the question.

The teaser I'd put to him was, I thought, a sensible one: "Why Mexico and not the Border Counties?"

Guanajuato or Jedburgh?

Three days or one?

World Rally Championship experience or the opening round of the British Rally Championship?

Now, before I go any further, I won't have anything said against the Border Counties. It is an absolutely superb event run through such iconic – and now much underused – stages like Elibank, Cardrona and Yair; there's more history in those woods than Mexico is ever likely to muster.

But... (you knew that was coming) it's not a round of the World Rally Championship. And Rally Mexico is.

And the World Rally Championship is all about experience. Like Williams, Gus Greensmith was competing in Mexico for the first time and he reckoned Guanajuato's gravel roads were trickier to unpick than some of the most taxing Monte Carlo tests.

"There's so much to learn," Greensmith told *MN*. "The road is constantly evolving with every passage of every car and there are so many twisty, technical sections with loads of little bridges; there's so much to look out for. This is definitely an event you need to come and learn before you can think about competing at the front."

Want further proof? Step up and look at Finns Teemu Suninen and Esapekka Lappi. Suninen starred at Rally Finland, widely regarded as one of the toughest events to learn, last year. And

Lappi? Well, he won in Jyväskylä last season. Both of them were knocked sideways by their Mexican debut earlier this month. It was far harder than either could have thought.

What did they need more than most? Previous experience.

M-Sport managing director Malcolm Wilson admires Williams' determination to get out of the UK and get on with learning about the rest of the world.

Wilson said: "I've always said, the best thing a young driver can do is put their car on a trailer, gather some mates together and get out there and do the rallies – experience of these events is absolutely invaluable."

It took a container rather than a trailer, but Williams has totally signed up to that approach.

"The Border Counties was the same weekend as Mexico," says Williams. "And doing the Junior WRC this year, I'm looking for as much seat time as possible to make the most of that experience. The Border Counties was the same weekend as Mexico and dad and I talked about doing that rally, but when we priced up Mexico (*see sidebar*), it just didn't stack up."

"The Border Counties is a great event and if I was doing the BRC again this year, I would have happily signed up.

But Mexico is just one of those events you look at in the calendar and think, it'll be ages before we get out there. Until you start to do the research and look into getting the car and the crew out there. I was absolutely amazed at how reasonable it was to get out there. OK, we borrowed the container, but we booked the flights, the hotel and the van early and we got them all at a really good rate – I think the hotels were probably even cheaper than what we would have paid to stay around Jedburgh.

"We sent the car out in the middle of January and when we got over to Mexico, the container was already at the service park. We wheeled the car out, put up the easy-up and we were ready. It really was that straightforward."

Unfortunately for Williams and co-driver Phil Hall, the 1600cc Fiesta R2 turned out to be no great fan of the heat. They retired on the opening day with heat-related issues, but returned for the weekend with a new ECU which ran the car a little bit cooler.

But, with the finish – and a maiden WRC3 victory – in sight, disaster struck in the final stage.

"On the second to last stage the car kept cutting out," says Williams. "It kept blowing the ignition fuse, so in the end we put a paperclip in to by-pass the

fuse. It was a bit sparky, but we made the control with three minutes to spare and started the last stage.

"With just a couple of miles of the final stage left, the car cut out. The wire had melted and now we were really stuck. Phil and I knew the last part of the stage was downhill, but we still had about 500 metres to push the car to the top of the hill. We jumped out, started to push and suddenly we were being helped by loads of Mexican fans. It was incredible!"

"We rolled down through the finish, but unfortunately that was as far as we would get. We couldn't get the car to start to get it back to service, so our adventure ended there. We were both so disappointed to have come so close to winning our class in the world championship. But now, looking back, the result wasn't so important – what was really important was the experience we took of those roads and from competing on a WRC round on another continent."

David Williams, Tom's father, knows a thing or two about the benefit of experience. Williams Sr backed and mentored his friend Richard Burns.

David says: "People will look at what we've done by coming to Mexico and not staying in Britain to do events and say: 'Oh, they've got loads of money going all the way out there to do a WRC round.' But actually, we don't."

"We've done this on an absolute shoestring. We used to get the same thing when we were starting out with Richard, people saying his was a factory car in the Peugeot Challenge. It wasn't, we just made sure the car was always presented perfectly. By trade, I'm a designer and things have to look right for me."

"We're all disappointed Tom and Phil didn't get the result they were hoping for and deserved after all the effort they put in, but like they say, the real reward comes with the experience of going to Mexico." ■

**DAVID WILLIAMS ON THE COSTS OF COMPETING IN MEXICO**

"When we were looking at doing the Border Counties, we were looking at an all-in budget of £15,000. We have worked hard to try to secure sponsorship for that event, but it wasn't possible to lessen those costs with support."

"Going to Mexico cost us £35,000, but £20,000 of that was sponsorship. That's what made the difference for us. I'm painfully aware of just how much £15,000 is, it's a huge amount of money, but as a family we've all been working towards this year to get ourselves in the position that we can support Tom."

"And this really is a family effort. It was Tom, his mum and I who were loading the container at home in January and we were in Mexico unloading it. Obviously Phil [Hall, co-driver] came out to Mexico and we had three guys from MH Motorsport there to help us. The flights and accommodation were the biggest costs, but when we got there the actual cost of sleeping per night was, I think, cheaper than it would have been in Britain."

"But the big number and the big deal comes when you work out the cost per kilometre. The Border Counties would have cost us £115 per kilometre; Mexico without our sponsorship cost £106 per kilometre..."



There was heartbreak for Williams at the end of Rally Mexico

# FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

**Matt James and Hal Ridge gauge reaction from rallycross at the grand prix track**



Bakkerud was a fan of the layout

## THE FIRST STEPS TO A NEW ERA AT SILVERSTONE

**S**ilverstone entered a brave new era last weekend when it hosted its first rallycross event on the new purpose-built track on the Stowe circuit area, a precursor to the Speedmachine-branded World Rallycross Championship event at the end of May.

The inaugural meeting was the opening round of the British Rallycross Championship, which was the perfect curtain-raiser. It was a high profile meeting to allow organisers to have a run-through of the systems that will be used on May 26/27.

It was also a great opportunity for the circuit to be put into use for the first time, and several overseas visitors took the chance to get to grips with the layout ahead of the WRX meeting. Among them were EKS Audi racer Andreas Bakkerud and the Team Peugeot Total 208 WRXs of Sebastien Loeb and Timmy Hansen.

It was more like Siberia at Silverstone last weekend. The temperature barely rose above minus two degrees all day, and the snow was relentless. Despite that, there were some positive signs.

Swede Bakkerud was keen to get a closer look at the challenge. "People were already saying that the Silverstone track would not be as good because it doesn't have the same viewing for the fans – they said that the spectator stands were too far from the circuit and it was too flat," he says. "But then I got here and walked around the circuit: I think it is going to be a pretty interesting track for the World Rallycross Championship to watch from. The first turn, for example, is great and the fans can get close to the cars at the back of the track and where the jump is."

Peugeot Sport boss Bruno Famin was also present at the event, and he realised that the venue itself could be a huge boost for the sport.

"This is not my first experience of Silverstone, we won here in the World Endurance Championship with the Peugeot 908 HDi FAP. For rallycross it's my first time. Silverstone is a mythical place for motorsport and this idea to build

rallycross circuits in first class and world class circuits like in Barcelona and now Silverstone, I think is a very good idea.

"You have all the infrastructure, you have everything. It's good on the track, it looks nice. The grandstand is very good, you can see everything. Maybe the track could be a bit faster in a straight line – there are no real straight parts – but it's a great pleasure to race here in Silverstone."

The atmosphere at the event was superb and the facilities lived up to all that Famin required. However, there were some concerns about the circuit itself and particularly the surface. It wasn't all the fault of the circuit's creators either, as racer and multiple British rally champion Mark Higgins pointed out.

"It couldn't be a worse time of year to try out the circuit and the conditions were dreadful as well, so it was difficult for everyone," he says. "There is the clay on top of the surface, but the tyres just aren't digging through to anything so the organisers definitely need to get something a bit harder on there."

"I don't have much experience of rallycross, but it is not really a spectacle when you have to go at five miles-per-hour because of the clay surface. If we can get a hard-packed surface on it, then I think it will be great."

Timmy Hansen, who finished runner-up in the final (see report, page 28) agreed. "The track was very bad when it was raining and I think they have quite a lot of work to do on the circuit before we come here for the Speedmachine weekend. But the layout is fine, so as long as they put a good effort in, it can be a good race in the summer," says Hansen.

"The venue is beautiful, with the wing building, but on the track I'm missing a circuit. I think they need to build some walls and some kerbs to really make a venue out of the whole rallycross track. The jump is good and there is a lot of overtaking possibilities, so there is a lot of potential to do it great here, they just need to put their minds together."

The newness of the track was something that Sebastien Loeb says jarred slightly, but he also bemoaned

the lack of high-speed sections. Coming over the start line and towards the opening corner, the cars are at high speed, but the rest of the challenge is more technical.

"The circuit is OK but for me it's not fast enough," says Loeb. "Like most of the tracks, it would be more interesting if we could have some very fast sections where we have some fast corners, like in fifth gear with a straight behind, so we could maybe hope to have some more overtaking possibilities."

"Here it [overtaking] will not be easy, I think there are some opportunities in some places, but not easy. I don't know if it's possible to do some changes [before the World RX round], maybe the track is like this. Also, we don't have any kerbs at the moment, it's just like a natural track."

Despite the freshness of the track – which was always going to be the case as the organisers prepare for an event which is still two months away – Bakkerud says he enjoyed the challenge of the 972-metre circuit, which is made up of 60 per cent on the loose and 40 per cent on asphalt.

"In the wet, like we have had this weekend, the track is very muddy and greasy," says Bakkerud. "It is the material that they have used for the circuit and it is not what I like. I guess it changes from driver to driver, but with so much mud on the track you can't control the car – sometimes under braking, you are accelerating because there is such little grip. Sometimes, too, the car is rotating by itself."

"But if it is dry, I reckon there will be a lot of flow in the circuit and I like the jump, particularly because you have a corner right after it which makes it a real test, and I think the joker lap is pretty cool. Between turns two and three, you have to have a pretty good rhythm there to go quickly. The demands are high and I think you will really see a difference between the fast and the slow guys here."

The scene has been set. The dry-run has happened and the next thing is for the World championship to descend on Silverstone. With all the lessons learned from last weekend's curtain-raiser, the venue is ready to take the next step. ■



The high-speed jump was a spectacular section



Mark Higgins wasn't a fan of the Silverstone surface



Loeb tamed the new circuit and was the first winner



Poor weather didn't help the circuit to bed down

## SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Jakob Ebrej, Colin Casserley

## BRITISH RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP: SILVERSTONE

## GODFREY TOPS THE UK RUNNERS AS LOEB STEALS THE LIMELIGHT

## British Rallycross Championship

By Hal Ridge

Organiser: BARC/LHMC Where: Silverstone When: March 17 Starters: 79

**Long-time British Rallycross Championship Supercar racer Andy Grant takes great pride in the presentation and preparation of his ex-Will Gollop Ford Focus. But the season wasn't even a lap old when his orange machine received its first cracked bumper of the year, in the first round of the series at Silverstone on Saturday.**

Grant wasn't concerned about the minor contact: after all, it had been received without malice. For the opening third of that first qualifying race, Grant had fended off the attentions of one of the greatest drivers of the generation and the most successful rally driver of all time, Sebastien Loeb.

Unsurprisingly, driving a works-run Peugeot 208 WRX Supercar, Loeb moved into the lead on lap two and won the qualifying race, but the smile on Grant's face back in the paddock told its own story. Conditions early in the day on Silverstone's new rallycross circuit were treacherously slippery, as temperatures failed to rise above freezing for the duration of the encounter. The track only dried out later in the afternoon as the falling snow abated briefly.

Four World Rallycross Championship contenders entered the British RX opener to prepare for the forthcoming World RX round at Silverstone in May, and it was new EKS Audi Sport signing

Andreas Bakkerud who dominated qualifying, setting the fastest time in each of the three qualifying sessions to sit top of the Intermediate Classification. However, he was beaten in semi-final one by Loeb's team-mate, Timmy Hansen.

While he made a strong challenge for the lead of the final at the first corner, Bakkerud wound up third at the finish. Hansen also made a challenge for the lead at Turn 1, edging ahead of his team-mate, the pair running wide, allowing Bakkerud the inside line.

Loeb managed to maintain the advantage but Hansen dropped to third, fending off a challenge from Julian Godfrey, the multiple British RX champion fighting back from troubles in the qualifying races.

As Loeb edged clear to score victory, Hansen pressured Bakkerud for second in the early stages, before leapfrogging the Norwegian by taking an earlier joker lap. Godfrey had an untroubled run to fourth and top British RX points (the top three guest entries not eligible for points), racing a Spencer Sport-run Mitsubishi Mirage RX for the first time.

Steve Hill scored a solid result in fifth with his reworked Mitsubishi Evo X, while British RX Supercar newcomer Roger Thomas was sixth.

Triple British Rally champion Mark Higgins made his Supercar debut but was forced out of contention in the final by a broken driveshaft, while Kevin Procter retired on lap one with technical troubles.

Jack Thorne scored an emphatic victory in the **Supernational** category, racing a Super1600 specification Renault Twingo. A Turn 2 spin dropped him to



Loeb powered clear for a comfortable victory in the final while Godfrey (inset) took maximum British points

the bottom of the order, but in a stunning drive, by the end of the third lap he had moved back into the lead to head home fellow Super1600 racer Paul Coney and reigning Supernational champion Tristan Ovenden. Marius Solberg Hansen claimed a debut victory in the **Junior** Rallycross series, ahead of another rookie, Luke Constantine.

Simon Ovenden won the **Swift Sport** final, Keifer Hudson claimed **BMW Mini** victory and Chrissy Palmer

fended off World RX racer Kevin Eriksson to win the **RX150** final. James Harrold's return to **Retro Rallycross** with his VW Beetle also resulted in victory.

## Results

**MSA British Rallycross Championship (6 laps)** 1 Sebastien Loeb (Peugeot 208); 2 Timmy Hansen (Peugeot 208) +3.295s; 3 Andreas Bakkerud (Audi S1); 4 Julian Godfrey (Mitsubishi Mirage); 5 Steve Hill (Mitsubishi Evo); 6 Roger Thomas (Ford Focus). **Supernational Rallycross Championship (6 laps)** 1 Jack Thorne (Renault Twingo); 2 Paul Coney (Vauxhall Corsa) +1.086s; 3 Tristan Ovenden (Renault Clio); 4 Tony Lynch (Ford Ka); 5 Craig Lomax (Citroen C2); 6 Kirk Twyman (Renault Clio). **MSA Junior Rallycross Championship (6 laps) (All 1.3**

**Suzuki Swift)** 1 Marius Solberg Hansen; 2 Luke Constantine +0.693s; 3 James Constantine; 4 Tom Constantine; 5 Ben Sayer; 6 Morgan Wroot.

**Suzuki Swift Rallycross Championship (6 laps)** 1 Simon Ovenden; 2 Rob Shield +3.034s; 3 Tom Llewellyn; 4 Morgan Bailey; 5 Andrew Coley; 6 Dominic Flitney.

**BMW Mini Rallycross Championship (6 laps)** 1 Keifer Hudson; 2 Martin Hawkes +2.017s; 3 Bradley Durdin; 4 David Bell; 5 Rob Methold; 6 Leigh-Anne Sedgwick.

**RX150 Rallycross Championship (6 laps)** 1 Chrissy Palmer; 2 Kevin Eriksson +0.802s; 3 John Ward; 4 Nathan Heathcote; 5 Stephen Jones; 6 Dan Rooke.

**Retro Rallycross Championship (4 laps)** 1 James Harrold (Volkswagen Beetle); 2 Steve Cozens (Citroen AX) +0.653; 3 Gary Dixon (Vauxhall Astra); 4 Stewart Bowes (Mini Clubman); 5 Steve Bowie (Vauxhall Chevette); 6 Ian Biagi (Mini Clubman).

## BriSCA F1: BELLE VUE

## Dowson battles his way to the front

## BriSCA F1: Belle Vue

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Startrax Where: Belle Vue, Manchester When: March 18 Starters: 29

The recent poor weather might have halted many sporting events around the country at the weekend, but even Mother Nature could not stop John Dowson Jr from winning the opening BriSCA F1 final of the 2018 season at Belle Vue on Sunday.

Dowson has become the man to beat around the Manchester track: he won the last meeting of the 2017 season and all his four final wins have come at the Kirkmanshulme Road venue.

In the opening laps of the event, there were several incidents. One of those took out early leader Mark Sargent and Aaron Cozens and that allowed Luke Dennis to assume the lead.

Dowson nudged his way ahead before Frankie Wainman Jr barged his way to the front at the halfway point. A few laps later, Wainman tangled with a backmarker.

That left him with front-end damage which caused him to lose



Dowson tackled Wainman Junior

control of his machine on a turn. Dowson seized his opportunity and clattered into Wainman's car, causing the race leader to spin out of contention. Dowson held on to the lead for the remainder of the race with Dennis following him home in second. Lee Fairhurst recovered from an early race spin to claim third, crossing the line with a flat left-rear after colliding with a backmarker on the last lap.

"They should run more races here," joked Dowson. "We had a couple of bits of luck. I saw Wainman had some damage and was just waiting for the right time. I lost power steering midway through the race and was just hoping I could hold on at the end."

Dennis was delighted with his second place. "It was a bit hectic at the start," he said. "We rebuilt the engine over the winter and it has made a big difference, to get a

podium makes up for all the bad luck I have had in recent years."

Fairhurst, who went on to add a victory in the Grand National to his earlier heat race win, said: "I might have had that if I didn't get spun out early in the race, but I was pleased to recover for third."

## Result

1 John Dowson Jr; 2 Luke Dennis; 3 Lee Fairhurst; 4 Paul Hines; 5 Ben Hurdman; 6 Danny Wainman; 7 Frankie Wainman, Junior Jr; 8 Billy Johnson; 9 Eliot Smith; 10 Sam Makim.

## ROUND-UP

Yorkshire Sports Car Club and hard-working clerk of the course Martin Grimwood had to change venue twice for the **Stuart Butterfield Sporting Trial**, moving from Yorkshire to Cumbria due to landowner issues and then from Gale Hall to the BTRDA Gold Star venue Edenhall due to snow.

Richard Sharp followed on from the opening rounds to win the coveted trophy. He dropped just 11 points following a three-way tie at lunchtime.

Six hills were attempted four times in bitter wind and sleet showers with Sharp taking the win by four points from Bryan Walker and top live-axle runner Bob Packham, who was driving the venerable Kincraft built 40 years ago.

Walker was first to slip up in the afternoon dropping a four, followed by Packham on the final round. That handed the win to Sharp and his son Joe. Walker won the intermediate live class. Stuart Beare made the trip from Kent to take fourth overall 10 points back from another expert live-axle winner Mike Salton with class runner-up Brian Thornton completing the top 10 overall. Barry Hogg won the intermediate independent class in sixth from John Cole in ninth.

NPTCC Club Chairman Andrew Woodhead finished in eighth overall just behind Boyd Webster, who

was top all-conquering Crossle driver. The top seven overall were all driving different makes of cars.

The Stone Trough trial at Colstons near Melmerby was due to take place on the next day but overnight snow forced the cancellation of this event.

Multiple champion Steven Ferguson won the **Northern Ireland Autotest** at Cookstown in County Tyrone on Saturday.

He finished clear of Ashley Lamont by 14s at the end of a bitterly cold day. David Thompson's Vauxhall Nova took third ahead of Paul Blair, whose two penalties cost him the runner-up spot.

Reigning title holder Paul Mooney could only finish in sixth position after three pylons and a broken driveshaft.

## Results

**Stuart Butterfield Sporting Trial** Organiser: Yorkshire Sports Car Club Where: March 17 Where: Edenhall, Penrith Starters: 15. 1 Richard Sharp (Cartwright) 11 points; 2 Bryan Walker (Jedi) 15 points; 3 Bob Packham (Kincraft); 4 Stuart Beare (Sherpa Indy); 5 Mike Salton (Concord); 6 Barry Hogg (Hamilton); 7 Boyd Webster (Crossle); 8 Andrew Woodhead (Jedi); 9 John Cole (Crossle); 10 Brian Thornton (Kincraft). **Dungannon MC Autotest** Organiser: Dungannon Motor Club Where: March 17 Where: Cookstown, County Tyrone Starters: 20. 1 Steven Ferguson (Mini-Nova Special) 559.8s; 2 Ashley Lamont (Westfield) +14.1s; 3 David Thompson (Nova); 4 Paul Blair (Striker); 5 Robin Lyons (Mini); 6 Paul Mooney (Mini-Nova Special); 7 James Wilson (Mini Special); 8 Jamie McMillan (Nova); 9 Mark King (Nova); 10 Peter Grimes (Mini-Nova Special).

Photos: mkpics.net, Hal Ridge

## Hot Rod season loses two rounds for 2018

The National Hot Rod season will drop down to 12 rounds after the opening two meetings of the season were axed due to poor weather.

The first round of the second half of the 2017-2018 contest was due to take place at Birmingham Wheels on March 3, but that fell victim to snow. The round at Hednesford Hills, due to take place on Sunday last week, was also snowed off.

NHR boss Deane Wood said that the events would not be rescheduled. "You could come up with dates, but you would never get something that would suit everyone," he said. "There will always be someone who gets disadvantaged by a rearranged meeting and we wanted to avoid that."

"Then there is the dropped scores situation – drivers have to drop two rounds anyway, so we are going to allow the drivers to use one of the two cancelled events as one of their dropped scores."

The championship, which is being led by Chris Haird, will resume at Northampton International Raceway on Good Friday (March 30).



Hot Rods are down to 12 rounds

By Matt James

## A new closed-road hillclimb will take place at Watergate Bay in Cornwall in September this year.

The event has been jointly organised by Truro and District Motor Club, Newquay Auto Club and Plymouth Motor Club. It will start outside the Watergate Bay Hotel and run on the B3276, the stretch between Padstow and Newquay, over a distance of 720 metres.

It is the first hillclimb to take advantage of the new closed-road legislation which allows motor clubs to organise events with the blessing of the governing body, the Motor Sports Association, and the local councils.

A maximum of 90 cars will be able to compete on the September 15/16 hillclimb. The event is the brainchild of Dave Brenton, competition secretary at Truro DMC. He will also be deputy event director of the Watergate Bay Speed Hillclimb.

He said: "We've had great help over the past five years from Ian Davis, the MSA's Regional, Rallies and Cross Country executive, and excellent support for the event from local businesses and landowners. We hope the event will provide a real end-of-tourist-season boost to the local economy."

Simon Blunt, MSA general secretary, said: "Within a year of announcing the success of our campaign for closed roads, we've been able to issue a permit for the third event, the Watergate Bay Speed Hillclimb, which shows a really encouraging early uptake from our event organising clubs."

"What's particularly exciting is that the three events represent different types of motorsport in various parts of the country. We look forward to being part of each one, and to receiving even more applications for new events in other areas of England and also in Wales."

All proceeds from the event will go to local charities.

# CLOSED-ROAD HILLCLIMB PLAN FOR CORNWALL



Challenge: the course

Coastal road to be closed off for hillclimb on a public road



The new event will use road next to Newquay airport

## New American series to head to the UK

The promotor of the World Rallycross Championship, IMG, has launched a new American rallycross series – and it will have an overseas round in the UK.

The Americas Rallycross Championship will run over four rounds in 2018. The first event will join the British round of World RX at Silverstone on May 25/26, while additional ARX rounds will run at the Canadian and American rounds of World RX in Trois-Rivieres (August 4/5) and Austin (September 29/30).

The fourth event, which will also be held in America, is yet to be announced.

In a breakaway from the American-based Global Rallycross Championship, manufacturers Volkswagen of America and Subaru of America have already signed up for the series.

VW is expected to field Supercars for former GRC champions Scott Speed and Tanner Foust run by Andretti Autosport, while the Vermont Sports Car-operated Subaru programme will run former World Rally drivers Patrik Sandell and Chris Atkinson.

The GRC revealed last month that it wouldn't include a headline Supercar category in 2018. MN understands that



American Rallycross Championship will have four rounds

the manufacturers previously involved in the series – Volkswagen, Subaru and Honda – had withdrawn their participation prior to the announcement.

"Volkswagen of America, in conjunction with our technical partner Andretti Autosport, intends to enter ARX in 2018

with a factory-supported supercar rallycross team," said Volkswagen experiential marketing director, Greg Lucia. "We are very excited about the future of rallycross in North America and look forward to finalising all details with IMG and working closely with them to help make ARX a success."



The jump at Silverstone thwarted Higgins in the BRX final

## Higgins confirmed for full British RX season

Triple British Rally champion Mark Higgins has announced an expanded deal to race in the full British Rallycross Championship this year.

Higgins had originally planned to contest at least the opening two rounds, but his full campaign has now been confirmed. He will be backed by Eddie Stobart. The logistics firm previously supported the Manxman to a pair of British Rally crowns.

"It's fantastic to be back in Eddie Stobart colours after such a successful relationship, winning two British championships together 12 years ago," said Higgins, who is driving

a Peugeot 208 Supercar prepared and run by students from Bolton University's NCME this year.

Higgins qualified for the final at Silverstone's opening round last weekend and was classified seventh after breaking a driveshaft.

"Silverstone was a positive weekend despite the result," added Higgins. "The car was working well, we qualified well and had good starts all day. In the final I knew what we had to do and was keeping it nice and neat behind [Julian] Godfrey, waiting for the joker, but unfortunately just landing off the jump it looks like a driveshaft broke and that was the end of it."



Harris will return to British Rallycross at Lydden Hill at Easter

## Harris to return to British RX at Lydden Hill

British RX Supercar racer Jake Harris will return to the series for round two at Lydden Hill on Easter Monday, racing his father Steve's Citroen DS3 Supercar.

He will be using the same car he used full-time last year. Having missed the opening round at Silverstone last weekend, Harris will be joined by brother Brett at Lydden Hill, who will race in the RX150 class. The pair are expecting to compete in selected events this season.

"I'm really happy to be racing

the DS3 at Lydden, I can't wait to get back on track," said Jake Harris.

Dad Steve Harris, a Supercar racer until the end of 2016, is also planning to race in selected events. Harris Sr and LD Motorsports owner Liam Doran collaborated to buy the Mini RX project from JRM Racing at the end of last year. LD Motorsports is working on the development of the Prodrive-built cars, including the installation of a two-litre 'custom' engine.

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

## MN SAYS...

# Stage set for an epic struggle

Melbourne on Sunday morning will answer a lot of questions

The lap times have been studied, the long-run pace dissected and the tyre options equalised. But, it seems, there are plenty of unknowns heading in to the opening grand prix of the season in Australia this weekend.

What is certain is that if either Merc's Lewis Hamilton or Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel claims the crown, it will elevate them to the same level as the legend Juan Manuel Fangio. That in itself is motivation enough, and you can argue that both men deserve that prestige. Those pesky Red Bulls have the smart money at the moment as being the biggest obstacle to the multiple champions, and that should add a fresh element of excitement. And how much work has McLaren done to put itself back in the game? There is only one way to find out: wake up early on Sunday.

● Silverstone's maiden rallycross meeting on Saturday was a huge success. Sure, Sebastien Loeb's presence in the factory Peugeot sent a lot of people through the gate, but the reaction to it was huge. It will only grow, and the World Rallycross Championship event in May will be one of the events of the season. Make sure you are there.

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



## LETTERS



Motorsport News, March 14

### Penalty precedent

The stewards' decision to penalise Sebastien Ogier 10 seconds brought Rally Mexico into a state of farce.

The regulations for this event did not contain a specific penalty for hitting a chicane or other stage 'furniture'. If the rally organisers had wanted to change the regulations during the event, then they needed to issue a written amendment which every competitor would have to sign. The organisers did not do so in respect of stage penalties.

What happened was a Citroen driver clipped a flower pot on the apex of a corner on the Leon street stage – he got no penalty. A Hyundai driver clipped three elements of the chicane on the first running of the Las Minas stage (SS21) – no penalty.

The organisers then requested that competitors remain in their official running order for the powerstage and that they should not hit the chicane. To my understanding this was not a written amendment.

A Toyota driver and a Hyundai driver ran out of sequence on the power stage – no penalties. Ogier, having checked before the powerstage that there would be no penalty for hitting the chicane, nudged one of the elements of the chicane on the powerstage. Retrospectively the stewards applied a 10-second penalty, which lost him four championship points.

I believe Ogier took trouble to abide by the regulations. It is my view that neither the event organisers nor the stewards followed the correct procedures. This is not good for the stature of the World Rally Championship.

**Andrew Bodman**  
Via email

### Too many events

After reading Jack Benyon's recent article about 'Why rallying must cut the number of events' here are my thoughts.

I think this has been a problem for many years, Jack, and you are right in bringing this to the fore.

If neighbouring motor clubs got together and created one fantastic rally instead of trying to organise two or even three different events in the year and then the costs could be spread equally between the clubs and any profits can be put back into each club to generate and help with further recruitment and training for marshals. This would be on top of what the governing body, the MSA, currently does.

The forests roads would also be in tip-top condition due to reduced usage and the costs to repair them would be less. Maybe this would not be good news for Rally4Wales as it would only have one event to redo the roads afterwards as opposed to two, however it would (potentially) rejuvenate entries and rallying in the United Kingdom.

**Chris Evans**  
Via email

## YOUR PICS



LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

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

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



This Mini charger got things slightly wrong on his hillcimb charge, by Stephen Lister



Jamie Jukes on Epynt, from Richard Salisbury



Snetterton Stages, taken by Justin Williams



The Torbay Trial, by Duncan Stephens



Chris Collier was at Silverstone's RX



Richard Salisbury was on the Tour of Epynt



Frozen Legends, from Paul Williams



Neil Kirby, taken at a Silverstone test



A hillclimbing monster, from Stephen Lister

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## TV GUIDE



Some of the archive footage included in the **Great History of the 24 Hours of Le Mans** series is simply breathtaking and transports you back in time to a very different era. In this week's first instalment the focus is on 1981 (Wednesday, 2200-2230hrs).

That was a significant race as it marked the start of a period of unparalleled domination for Porsche after the manufacturer lost out to Rondeau the previous year.

For something a bit different, immediately after



Porsche was back on form in the 1981 Le Mans 24 Hours contest

## LIVE TV

### NASCAR Cup: Martinsville

■ **Race:** Sunday, 1730hrs, Premier Sports

are highlights of the third round of the **Rally X on Ice** series (Wednesday, 2230-2330hrs). With the likes of IndyCar champion Josef Newgarden and a host of World Rallycross stars taking part, the series has attracted a stunning entry and the penultimate event at Al in Norway marked a crucial

point in the season. But if you merge those two disciplines together you get endurance rallying – and there's some of that on the box this week too. The **Le Jog** rally is a notoriously tricky contest and on Saturday (1600-1700hrs) you can catch an hour's worth of highlights from the event that took place late last year.

## LIVE F1

### Australian Grand Prix Sky Sports F1 HD

■ **Drivers' press conference:** Thursday, 0400-0500hrs  
 ■ **FP1:** Friday, 0030-0245hrs  
 ■ **FP2:** Friday, 0445-0745hrs

■ **FP3:** Saturday, 0245-0410hrs  
 ■ **Qualifying:** Saturday, 0555-0740hrs  
 ■ **F1 Show:** Saturday, 0740-0810hrs  
 ■ **Race:** Sunday, 0610-0830hrs  
 ■ **Highlights:** Sunday, 0910-1125hrs

### Australian Grand Prix Channel 4 HD highlights

■ **Qualifying:** Saturday, 1300-1450hrs  
 ■ **Race:** Sunday, 1430-1715hrs



Season begins in Melbourne

## LISTINGS



Fiesta season begins at Brands Hatch meeting this weekend

### RACING SATURDAY

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**  
**BRSCC meeting:** FF1600, Porsches, ST-XR Challenge, Karts  
**Starts** racing from 1305hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000  
 ■ **Kirkistown, N Ireland**  
**500MRCI meeting:** Ford Fiesta Zetec, FF1600, Saloon/GT, Formula Vee, Ginetta Junior **Starts** racing from 1300hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £15 child free **Web** kirkistown.com

### SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**  
**BRSCC meeting:** F1000, Mazda MX-5, Mazda MX-5 Super Series, BMW Compact, Fiesta, Fiesta Junior, Multi Marques, 206 GTi, Nippon Challenge, Toyota MR2 Classic, Toyota MR2, Tricolore Trophy **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1230hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1050hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000  
 ■ **Silverstone, Northants**  
**BARC meeting:** Classic FF1600,

Clio Cup Junior, Mighty Minis, Junior Saloons, Hyundai Coupe, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1205hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0930hrs **Admission** £15 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

### RALLY SATURDAY

■ **Dolgellau, Gwynedd**  
**Rally North Wales**  
**Starts** 0801hrs **Admission** free **Web** rallynorthwales.co.uk  
 ■ **County Tipperary**  
**Limerick Forest Rally**  
**Starts** 0920hrs **Admission** free **Web** limerickmc.ie

### SPORTING SCENE SUNDAY

■ **Blyth, Linc**  
**BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship**  
**Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** clubmansrallycross.weebly.com

Listings correct at time of press

## NEXT WEEK

## OUT WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

# WHO WILL BE ON TOP DOWN UNDER?

### FULL REPORT FROM THE F1 SEASON OPENER IN AUSTRALIA



## BRITISH GT AND F3 PREVIEW



A LOOK AT THE LIKELY FRONTRUNNERS AHEAD OF THE SEASON



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WHAT HAPPENED WHEN F1 CHAMP TRIED TEAM BRIT'S ADAPTED ASTON



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# MOTORSPORT NEWS

Autosport Media UK Limited, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG, UK

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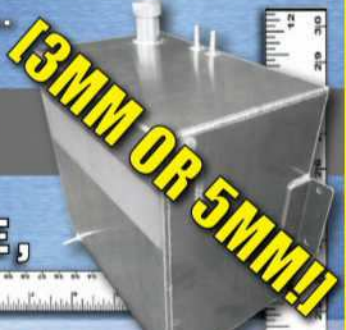
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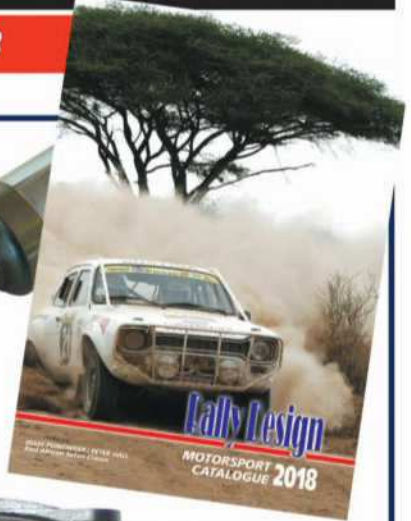
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