

AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX ACTION P4

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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ROSBERG WINS IN OZ...



... BUT FERRARI THREAT IS REAL

PLUS

BREEN

IN CIRCUIT OF IRELAND ATTACK
Event winner to return with R5 Citroen p16



POWER THRILLS AT GOODWOOD

Report from the 74th Members' Meeting p20



MOTORSPORT NEWS ISSUE **KT3019** MARCH 23 2016

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Italians rattle Mercedes in Australian GP

AGGRESSIVE FERRARI TO STRIKE BACK



By Rob Ladbrook

Ferrari head Maurizio Arrivabene says the team will not ditch its aggressive approach to races this year, after narrowly missing victory in last weekend's Australian Grand Prix.

Ferrari enjoyed a strong start to the season in Melbourne, proving that the Maranello squad has eroded the performance gap to world championship dominator Mercedes over the winter.

Despite drivers Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen sharing the second row of the grid behind the works Silver Arrows of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, both Ferraris leapfrogged the Mercedes in the opening corners, with Vettel leading the majority of the first half of the race.

Ferrari adopted an aggressive tyre strategy, opting to fit two sets of super-soft Pirellis to both Vettel and Raikkonen's cars, committing both drivers to a two-stop strategy.

The red flag stoppage, caused by Fernando Alonso's frightening accident (see *Racing News*), unseated Ferrari and instead played into the hands of Mercedes, which switched to medium tyres after the stoppage to run long.

Despite losing the race, Arrivabene was adamant that Ferrari wouldn't back off as it aims to fight for this year's world championship.

"Our pace for the first part of the grand prix was good, before the race was red-flagged, but we shouldn't use that as an excuse," he said. "This only shows that you shouldn't count your chickens before they are hatched.

"We were confident [of winning the race] before the red flag. On the pitwall we were confident in all honesty. At certain points we were looking at the gap, we were looking at our strategy prediction and we were quite comfortable. But certain decisions can be right or wrong. We looked at the gap

we were gaining [on the super-softs] and at the time our idea was to go with our strategy and keep on, but the red flag came and we didn't win the race.

"Today's race serves as a reminder to us to push even harder, with even more humility and dedication, starting already at the next race in Bahrain."

Fight is on

Despite Vettel emulating his third place of last year's season-opener in Australia, Ferrari's spirits have been buoyed by the clear progress the team has made over the winter.

Vettel led a total of 31 laps from the start, with his fastest race lap being a comfortable 0.5s quicker than race winner Rosberg's. Ferrari's radical reworking of its SF16-H, which included a move back to conventional pushrod front suspension and sweeping upgrades of its power unit, has closed the gap to Mercedes, if not surpassed it on the basis of long-run pace.

Vettel said the team could take great encouragement for the season ahead after its performance in Melbourne. He



Hamilton and Vettel fought

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: LAT

and vow not to back off



“It’s a reminder to push even harder”

Maurizio Arrivabene

said: “I think we are a lot closer [to Mercedes]. Last year this was one of our worst tracks so there are plenty of positives to take from this.

“Surely the red flag didn’t help us, and equally we benefited from the start, but sometimes things work in your favour and sometimes they don’t.

“We had a great race. We went an aggressive route – maybe in hindsight we could have done something else – but we are a team, we win and lose together.

“We expect more from this year. Last year was a bit of an unknown. I think we were happy to be on the podium here after the season Ferrari had in 2014. This year we come in with more expectations. Naturally when you finish second in the Constructors’ Championship you want to challenge for first. I think we managed to close the gap more than anyone else.

“There has been a lot of work back at Maranello on this car and I think we have the right car to allow us to put pressure on these guys [Mercedes]. We know that the benchmark is still high, but

things are coming together. We are definitely a lot closer.”

One blot on Ferrari’s copybook was the retirement of Raikkonen, who was in contention for a podium when he had to pit with a fire in his car’s air box. The Finn said: “I don’t know exactly what happened, but I don’t think the problem was related to the engine as that was still running. It’s unfortunate for the whole team.

“After the winter we had a rough idea that we should be pretty OK this year. Qualifying was a funny day for everybody, so we knew the time gap to the Mercedes wasn’t real. The car has been handling very well, it’s fast and you get a good feeling from it. We still have some work to do though.”

Mercedes’ fears

Mercedes knows it has a fight on its hands with Ferrari this year, after having to battle back from a series of problems during the race to win.

Despite dominating qualifying, both cars made tardy starts, and then lacked race pace when their super-softs experienced excessive graining during the

first stint. It prompted the team to switch both drivers to a one-stop strategy, but both cars benefited from fresh medium tyres during the red flag period.

Hamilton said he had been impressed by what he’d seen from Ferrari, and said his second place finish was hard-earned.

“I feel I achieved quite a lot today, and I’m really happy because it was damage limitation,” said Hamilton, who survived a first corner brush with Rosberg and dropped as low as seventh during the race.

“It was difficult to know how long the tyres were going to last. It was so slippery at times. We thought Ferrari were going to be close. I knew they would have been quicker in qualifying if they’d had another lap. Nico doesn’t seem to think he had problems following them, so that’s interesting. But when Sebastian was following me it was exciting because I was in a race.

“Ferrari is obviously there and in the battle as you’ve seen today, so hopefully we have some exciting races ahead of us.”



Both Ferraris vaulted ahead of Mercedes at the start and stayed there until the red flag period

MERCEDES’ PROBLEMS

Mercedes has revealed that it nearly suffered a retirement of its own during the race in Melbourne, with race winner Nico Rosberg’s car being described as “marginal” after the flag.

Rosberg led team-mate Lewis Hamilton home for a Mercedes one-two after a tight strategic battle with Ferrari, but team head Toto Wolff said the German was close to retiring with braking issues mid-race.

“It was an unconventional race in that we suffered some little dramas,” said Wolff. “We had a problem on Nico’s car with brake caliper temperatures, which kept creeping up almost to a stage where we thought about retiring the car. That was two thirds into the race. We caught some debris in the caliper, but then it stabilised and

started to creep down again.

“It was difficult for the team to handle and then 15 laps from the end our calculations showed the tyres wouldn’t last, that five laps from the end the left-rear could fall off the cliff. The temperatures kept dropping every lap and our tyre guy said ‘Five laps from the end, that’s it’. We lost a lot of grip on the rear-left, but it’s just one of four tyres and Nico made it survive.”

Rosberg nearly had to retire with braking issues



AUSTRALIAN GP REPORT



BY ANTHONY ROWLINSON

THE FIGHT IS ON

Australia

Nico Rosberg led a Mercedes 1-2 but Ferrari could have won

If the 2016 Australian GP is anything to go by, Formula 1 fans are in for a corker of a year. On paper, the result of a Mercedes 1-2, with Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari in third, made the first race of '16 look like opening round of '15. The reality is far from that.

Mercedes and Ferrari will be true rivals this season; Red Bull has a great car that will benefit from an improving Renault/TAG Heuer motor and Toro Rosso are right now third-fastest team. So expect a true fight for the title and some surprising results, such as Carlos Sainz/Max Verstappen podiums and a late-season win or two for Daniel Ricciardo.

And let's all be thankful that Fernando Alonso, maybe the greatest driver of his generation, will be competing in the Bahrain GP...

Qualifying

When both Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen parked up their Ferrari SF16-H cars with five minutes of the 2016 Australian GP Q3 left to run, we should have known what was coming. Vettel, as third fastest qualifier, was a compulsory attendee at the FIA's post-session press conference and he duly arrived, right on time. But unlike

poleman Lewis Hamilton and P2 Nico Rosberg alongside him – whose Mercedes were the only cars still circulating in the dying minutes of Q3 – Vettel was dressed in team top, jeans and trainers, rather than the still-sweaty race suits worn by Nico and Lewis.

How come? He'd had time, on account of the new-found knockout vagaries of the revised-for-2016 qualifying system, to slip into something more comfortable.

That said it all about a system intended to create more unpredictability and grid variation, but which succeeded in delivering precisely the opposite: a grid in near two-by-two team formation, arrived at with less drama, but more confusion, than the outgoing (uncriticised) system it replaced!

Vettel, smart boy that he is, knew precisely the point he was making by turning up in civvies and lest anyone misunderstand, he spelled it out: "I had time to get changed, yes," he said, when asked about his attire. "What happened was no surprise and I don't think it's very exciting. People want to see Lewis, Nico, Kimi... all of us fighting over grid positions and pushing to the end when the track is supposed to be at its best. It was a bit crazy in the beginning –

managing traffic – but for people in the grandstands, there was nothing to see. The fact that we called it off in Q3 was because we had a good time with our first lap, so we saved the tyre for Sunday."

He was far from alone in his view. The paddock echoed to a chorus of disapproval as Q3 drew to a close. Some, such as Red Bull team boss Christian Horner, predicted immediate change, via a fax vote of the decision-making F1 Strategy Group. Others, such as Mercedes non-executive chairman Niki Lauda went further, demanding immediate action: "This is the biggest nonsense I have ever seen," he said. "I was not even sure if I should congratulate our drivers on our front row. We have to call a team principal meeting and ask the FIA to change the format with immediate effect. For Bahrain already."

Knee-jerk reactions like this are not uncommon in F1, especially at a time when the political atmosphere within the sport remains febrile and, as *MN* closed for press, there were suggestions the sport might pause before reverting immediately to the former three-session knockout system that has served it well in recent seasons.

After all, the 2016 version was not entirely without merit, on the evidence of Melbourne alone. Q1 and Q2 – both of which are now 'devil take the hindmost' elimination sessions with a car falling out of contention every 90 seconds – were tense and entertaining. They provided moments of proper knockout drama, such as Renault rookie Jolyon Palmer elevating himself from the Q2 'drop zone' to P14, outqualifying his highly rated teammate, F1 returnee Kevin Magnussen, by half a tenth in the process.

Earlier, in Q1, Red Bull and Daniil Kvyat found themselves caught out by the new procedures, ending up only 18th fastest. Team-mate Ricciardo's P8 was more representative of the Renault-driven (TAG Heuer-branded) RB12's pace, as it continues to lack grunt compared to Mercedes- and Ferrari-powered rivals.

By the end of Q3, however, with Ferraris in the garage and only two Mercs still lapping, the grandstands had 'declared'. Sports-mad Melburnians know a good show from bad and they'd started to vote with their feet, leaving before the end of the session.

Aside from the non-drama of a qualifying hour that started with a bang and ended with a whimper, what had they seen?

Hamilton's 50th pole position, for a start. Lewis's was one of the few undimmed smiles in the paddock on Melbourne Saturday. The Mercedes W07 has picked up where its predecessors left off and, while Ferrari look more competitive this season, the sheer speed of the silver car is not in doubt: its pure qualifying pace was at least half a second per lap quicker than anything else. "There were some sexy laps out there today," Lewis beamed. "The car felt good with a beautiful rhythm. It felt like James Brown at the end of the lap."

Another star was Verstappen, who placed P5. After Toro Rosso's excellent winter testing performance, the position wasn't so much of a surprise as confirmation of true competitiveness from the supposedly second-string Red Bull squad. Carlos Sainz, in P7, had caught the eye in free practice with several dynamic-looking laps, but it was hot-shot Verstappen

who posted the time when it mattered.

The McLaren-Hondas of Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button, meantime, at last looked semi-competitive, with their respective P12 and P13 placings, even if the Honda power unit has a trailing-throttle note that sounds like ball bearings rattling down the exhaust pipe.

And an honourable mention, too, for Indonesian rookie Rio Haryanto, for his P21 time. He did well to keep his composure after a Q1 pitlane shunt with Romain Grosjean, even if he was later penalised three positions.

Race

After two days of gloom and despair – mostly on account of negative reaction to the new-look qualifying regs, but in part because of the unseasonably tempestuous Melbourne weather – the 2016 Australian GP was just the tonic F1 needed.

A thrilling race, filled with incident; good news stories up and down the paddock, the prospect of a real championship battle ahead – all laced with relief that Alonso survived unscathed one of the scariest-looking shunts in recent seasons. Such had been the rumpus over qualifying, it was a relief, indeed, finally to get the 2016 *race* season underway and discover whether Ferrari's Sunday pace was strong enough to rival that of Mercedes.

In the event, there was no need to wait for a 57-lap strategy battle to play out, to find an answer: poleman Hamilton started slowly, allowing Vettel to surge through from P3 into the lead, squeezing out Rosberg and allowing Raikkonen to follow him. Ferrari first and second: game on!



Rosberg started 2016 as he finished last season by taking victory

'Sixth was remarkable for Haas on its debut'
MN Awards handed out, p7



ROUND 08

Photos: LAT



15th F1 win for Rosberg

Vettel surged between the Mercs to lead at the start

This was a hard, aggressive start to the season, as three world champions and one champ-wannabe scrapped over millimetres into Turn 1 and emerged unscathed, to leave a pair of Ferraris out front and Mercedes cast as chasers. "It was a bit tight into Turn 1," said Vettel, "but in the end we made it and even had both cars running at the front, so I couldn't ask for more, really."

He stayed there, with Raikkonen behind, for 12 laps and would later lead for another 19. So on the evidence of this somewhat atypical circuit (low grip, low wear, low lateral loadings) the SF16-H unquestionably has the pace to bother Mercedes, should the silver team function anything less than perfectly.

Both Ferraris and both Mercedes started on the used supersofts they had carried through from qualifying and they had been tipped to progress with two sets of softs, stopping at around laps 16 and 37.

But on lap 17 everything changed. Approaching Turn 3, Fernando Alonso, running 13th, jinked his McLaren-Honda out of the slipstream of Esteban Gutierrez's Haas. Alonso's front-right clipped the left-rear of Gutierrez and what followed was one of those heart-in-the-mouth accidents that freeze time and result in a mass collective outpouring of relief, at the sight of a battered-but-unharmed driver emerging from a crumpled, smoking heap of carbon that used to be a racing car.

Alonso's MP4-31 had lost both front wheels by the time it reached the T3 gravel trap, whereupon it lifted, double-rolled, smashed down, continued gyrating, before coming to a thudding halt against a tyre barrier. Alonso wriggled out of his upturned chassis to emerge clearly shaken, but upright and

mobile. Within moments he and Gutierrez, who had also spun out, harmlessly, had found each other and embraced. They knew it had been a racing incident, with no malice or fault to be found or attributed.

"You are not exactly aware where you are," said Alonso. "You want to stop and it doesn't stop, it keeps going and going and going. It was quite scary. You are just flying and then you see the sky, the ground, the sky, the ground and you don't know. When I stopped I saw a little space to get out of the car and I went out quickly just to make sure that people at home were not too worried about me."

The crash triggered an initial yellow flag, swiftly upgraded to a race-stopping red as the amount of carbon wreckage left behind by the bodywork-shedding McLaren was too great to clear safely under yellows.

The break allowed all teams a 'free' tyre change and it was here that the complexion of the race changed. Mercedes opted to run its pair 'long', fitting mediums to both drivers, having estimated (correctly) that these would run happily to the flag. And as the post-red flag stops played out (for those that made them), Rosberg assumed the lead on lap 35 and was never headed thereafter, despite late-race tyre-life worries.

Ferrari, by contrast, had put supersofts on its pair, necessitating one further stop. That became moot for Raikkonen, who retired from third with a fiery mechanical failure on lap 21. But the strategy might have cost Vettel a win. After his final stop on lap 35, Seb ran fourth behind Rosberg, Ricciardo (on a Ferrari-style strategy) and Hamilton. Ricciardo's final stop (for supersofts, on lap 42) allowed both Hamilton and Vettel through, with Seb close enough, and on

faster, fresher rubber, to trouble Hamilton all the way to the flag. They finished just 1.5s apart, with Vettel having previously been close enough to try a DRS pass before making a small error.

"There were a lot of positives for us," Vettel reflected. "Last year, this was one of our worst tracks, so this is a lot better. We went for an aggressive route - maybe with hindsight we could have tried something else, but I'm not willing to blame anyone or anything. We know that we can up our game and put pressure on."

Fighting talk indeed, and cause for optimism for the season ahead - as there was elsewhere. Both Toro Rossos looked feisty - Verstappen even managing a spin after tagging the rear of Sainz - and Red Bull proved they can never be written off. Williams also had a solid double-points weekend.

And then there were debutants Haas, to provide the feel-good story of the event. Sixth for Romain Grosjean, after a fleet one-stopper, that had always been planned, red flag or no. The last team to score on its debut was Toyota, in 2002, and somehow you suspect unflashy, well-resourced Haas may go on to achieve much greater things. "This is a win for us," shouted an emotional Grosjean, in a non-banned radio communication as he crossed the line.

Well, not quite, Romain - but it wasn't half good. A bit like the whole race.



Ricciardo showed Red Bull pace

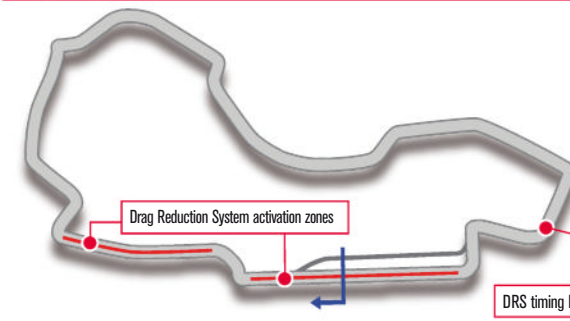
RACE FACTS

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AUSTRALIA

Circuit: Albert Park, Melbourne **Laps:** 57
Race distance: 187.83 miles **Lap:** 3.295 miles
Lap record: Michael Schumacher 2004, 1m24.125s
2015 winner: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)



TYRE CHOICE

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RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 1/21

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Nico Rosberg	GER	Mercedes	1h48m15.565s
2	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	+8.060s
3	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	+9.643s
4	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	+24.330s
5	Felipe Massa	BRA	Williams-Mercedes	+58.979s
6	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	+1m12.081s
7	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Force India-Mercedes	+1m14.199s
8	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Williams-Mercedes	+1m15.153s
9	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	+1m15.680s
10	Max Verstappen	NED	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	+1m16.833s
11	Jolyon Palmer	GBR	Renault	+1m23.399s
12	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Renault	+1m25.606s
13	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	+1m31.699s
14	Jenson Button	GBR	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap
15	Felipe Nasr	BRA	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap
16	Pascal Wehrlein	GER	Manor-Mercedes	-1 lap
R	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	L38/drivetrain
R	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	L21/fire
R	Rio Haryanto	INA	Manor-Mercedes	L17/gearbox
R	Esteban Gutierrez	MEX	Haas-Ferrari	L16/collision
R	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Honda	L16/collision
NS	Daniil Kvyat	RUS	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	LO/electrical

Winner's average speed 104.10mph Lap leaders: Vettel 1-12; Raikkonen 13-15; Vettel 16-34; Rosberg 35-57

FASTEST LAP! DANIEL RICCIARDO 1m28.997s

ON LAP 49 (AVERAGE SPEED: 133.30mph)

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m23.837s	12	Button	1m26.304s
2	Rosberg	1m24.197s	13	Palmer	1m27.601s
3	Vettel	1m24.675s	14	Magnussen	1m27.742s
4	Raikkonen	1m25.033s	15	Ericsson	1m27.435s
5	Verstappen	1m25.434s	16	Bottas*	1m25.961s
6	Massa	1m25.458s	17	Nasr	1m27.958s
7	Sainz	1m25.582s	18	Kvyat	1m28.006s
8	Ricciardo	1m25.589s	19	Grosjean	1m28.322s
9	Perez	1m25.753s	20	Gutierrez	1m29.606s
10	Hulkenberg	1m25.865s	21	Wehrlein	1m29.642s
11	Alonso	1m26.125s	22	Haryanto**	1m29.627s

* 5-place grid penalty for replacement gearbox. ** 3-place grid penalty for causing a collision.



Palmer just missed points on his debut

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Nico Rosberg	25
2	Lewis Hamilton	18
3	Sebastian Vettel	15
4	Daniel Ricciardo	12
5	Felipe Massa	10
6	Romain Grosjean	8
7	Nico Hulkenberg	6
8	Valtteri Bottas	4
9	Carlos Sainz	2
10	Max Verstappen	1

CONSTRUCTORS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Mercedes	43
2	Ferrari	15
3	Williams-Mercedes	14
4	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	12
5	Haas-Ferrari	8
6	Force India-Mercedes	6
7	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	3
8	Renault	0
9	McLaren-Honda	0
10	Sauber-Ferrari	0
11	Manor-Mercedes	0

NEXT RACE

Can Ferrari maintain the pressure on Mercedes?

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GP EXTRA

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

STAR TEAM



HAAS

We could have given Star Driver just to Romain Grosjean but, in truth, sixth for a team on its F1 debut is about much more than just one man. OK, the Haas VF-16 wasn't particularly rapid and does benefit from Ferrari input, but to be competitive and reliable enough to score six points – more than the last three new outfits combined – was no mean feat, and was a fillip for F1.

MOTORSPORT NEWS

SAFETY PRIZE

F1/FIA

The halo idea might have attracted some criticism, but the fact that Fernando Alonso was able to walk away from his wrecked McLaren after the clash with Esteban Gutierrez underlined how important the FIA's safety work has been. Without its constant pushing for improvement, the outcome could have been rather different.



AUSTRALIA STATS



50

Hamilton's pole position was the 50th of his career. That is still 15 short of Ayrton Senna, with Michael Schumacher the top polesitter with 68.



15

Rosberg's Australian GP success was his 15th F1 win, matching the tally of Jenson Button. Rosberg is now just one victory behind Stirling Moss, the most successful F1 driver not to have secured the crown.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"To introduce this was totally wrong. It was like digging in the toilet."

Niki Lauda pans qualifying changes



FASTEST LAPS

DRIVER	TIME	LAP
Daniel Ricciardo	1m28.997s	49
Sebastian Vettel	1m29.951s	23
Nico Rosberg	1m30.557s	21
Lewis Hamilton	1m30.646s	48
Kimi Raikkonen	1m30.701s	21
Max Verstappen	1m31.516s	44
Carlos Sainz	1m31.671s	23
Jenson Button	1m31.684s	33
Felipe Massa	1m32.288s	39
Kevin Magnussen	1m32.452s	45
Fernando Alonso	1m32.553s	14
Pascal Wehrlein	1m32.673s	34
Felipe Nasr	1m32.711s	48
Valtteri Bottas	1m32.725s	51
Sergio Perez	1m32.780s	39
Nico Hulkenberg	1m32.833s	49
Romain Grosjean	1m32.862s	48
Jolyon Palmer	1m32.955s	14
Esteban Gutierrez	1m32.998s	4
Rio Haryanto	1m33.847s	15
Marcus Ericsson	1m33.892s	15

MOTORSPORT NEWS

WOODEN SPOON



NEW QUALIFYING

Coming up with something bad enough that all the teams unanimously agree to scrap within 24 hours of its debut is rather special, but F1 managed that with the pointless qualifying format change. Its failure was predictable, but having no cars on track during the closing moments of the session – when it should surely reach its climax – sealed its fate. At least F1 has got rid of it in time for Bahrain... we hope!

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Max Ver-slappin'

Toro Rosso driver Max Verstappen was left angry at the team's decision to ignore his calls to pit during the Australian GP. Verstappen radioed his engineers to warn that he was struggling with tyre wear, only for the team to pit team-mate Carlos Sainz Jr first. Verstappen sent a series of angry messages back to the team saying: "How many times have I said I had problems with the tyres? I wanted to pit first!" Verstappen then stopped for the second time when the team wasn't expecting him, and he then had a brush with Sainz that dropped him to 10th, having run third early on. "It was a disappointing race in general, and a lost opportunity," said Verstappen.

Rule swap

The FIA made a last-minute U-turn on the new, stricter pit-to-car radio rules ahead of the Australian Grand Prix. Many teams and drivers expressed concern that the new rules, which can any data on car condition or performance from being communicated during a race, were too restrictive. The FIA relaxed the rules to allow conversations on race strategy between drivers and their engineers.

Williams' points

Williams' Rob Smedley says the squad was satisfied with a double-points finish in Melbourne, but hinted there's a lot more to come from its car thanks to upgrade packages. Felipe Massa and Valtteri Bottas both had quiet races on their way to fifth and eighth respectively. Smedley said: "Australia is a strange race as you come here with lots of unknowns, but we scored decent points. Now we have to develop the car with upgrades coming and we need every bit of performance to get ourselves in a better position."

Bull bounce back

Red Bull team head Christian Horner says the squad will fight back in Bahrain after a mixed Australian GP. While Daniel Ricciardo fought to fourth place, team-mate Daniil Kvyat didn't get to start the race after a hybrid system failure halted him on the formation lap. Horner said: "It was a long shot for the podium but it's encouraging to see the pace of the car in race trim. Daniil had a CU-H [electrical] failure and seems to be cursed in Melbourne. But he'll be back in Bahrain."

Button's blame

Jenson Button has put his disappointing Australian GP down to "imperfect strategy calls". While Alonso crashed out, Button finished 14th in his reworked McLaren-Honda. "The red flag hurt us as we'd already made our first stop, then the super-softs only lasted 10 laps after the restart!" he said. "We ended up at the back of the queue."

TEAMS DEMAND A QUALIFYING CHANGE

New format slammed and a return to tradition is suggested for Bahrain onwards

Teams, drivers and fans disliked format

By Rob Ladbrook

Formula 1 teams will lobby for the sport to revert back to its old qualifying format for the Bahrain Grand Prix onwards, after the new system was met with scathing criticism in Australia.

Teams, drivers and fans alike slammed the new qualifying format after its trial run in Australia proved disastrous. The new rules dictated that cars would be eliminated from qualifying at 90-second intervals during each of the three sessions – a system that left many confused and

drivers being eliminated while in the pit garages. Teams also struggled to service cars in the timescales, leading to a flurry of activity early on and quiet ends to sessions.

Qualifying three was the biggest failure, with many of the fastest cars choosing to do a single quick run and then save tyres for the race. It meant all times were set with four minutes of the session still remaining. Sebastian Vettel even had time to be weighed and change out of his race suit before the clock had ticked to zero.

After scathing criticism on Saturday, teams held crunch talks in Melbourne

on how to address the situation as quickly as possible. Mercedes' Toto Wolff said teams were united in their calls to revert back to the traditional qualifying format from Bahrain onwards, but any such move must first be ratified by both the FIA's F1 Commission and its F1 Strategy Group – the factions that imposed the new format in the first place.

Wolff said: "There was a meeting, with a unanimous decision taken to go back to the old format from Bahrain onwards. It needs to be ratified

by the F1 Commission, but I would like to see who puts his hand up for [Saturday's] qualifying.

"There were some teams that thought [retaining the knockout format] for Q1 and Q2 would shake things up and be interesting, but fundamentally common sense prevailed. We are now back to something we understand, where we have regulations and not reinvent something new. "We would look really silly if there was a new compromise for next week, and then again we didn't like it."



Toto Wolff

WHAT THE PADDOCK (AND YOU) SAID



Ecclestone: mistakes could be punished

The new F1 qualifying format didn't go down well in Melbourne. Here are some of the best views on it.

Bernie Ecclestone

"I wasn't enthusiastic about it from day one. It was pretty crap. But this is what we've got until we can change it. The only thing about this format is the quick guys could have run off the road or done something silly and we would have had a mixed-up grid."

Sebastian Vettel

"It was s**t... I don't see why everybody is surprised. We all said this would happen [cars not running]. We were told to wait and see, we waited and we saw, and it wasn't exciting."

Lewis Hamilton

"It was good that we tried something new, but it's trial and error, maybe not just go back to the old way."

Christian Horner

"Qualifying didn't work for me and we should apologise to the fans. We have not really put on a show. To have Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen in fast cars not taking part with five minutes to go is wrong."

What you said

We ran an online poll via our @MNewsRacing Twitter account following qualifying asking what you thought the next best step would be, and it revealed some surprising information.

GO BACK TO THE OLD SYSTEM 53%

TRY REWORKING THIS ONE 16%

TRY SOMETHING TOTALLY NEW 31%

Public opinion was divided

Of the 116 responses we gained, the majority of you agreed that a move back to the old system was the way forward, with only a handful suggesting the new format could work with some modification. However, a third of people remained open to trying something new for qualifying, proving that there is an appetite for change on grand prix weekends.

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'Goodwood still delivered'

Member's Meeting, p20



Photos: LAT

ALONSO ESCAPES MONSTER SMASH



Car was just wreckage



Fernando Alonso was able to walk away unharmed from an horrific crash with Esteban Gutierrez in the Australian Grand Prix.

The double champion clipped the back of the Mexican's Haas when trying to pass him into the braking zone of Turn 3.

The impact sent the McLaren flying through the air before it then rolled over after hitting the ground and clattered against a barrier.

Alonso was able to get out of the wreckage unaided and was given the all-clear by doctors at the circuit's medical centre.

"I feel good," said Alonso. "Obviously I'm trying to put everything in place again in my body. It was a big, big crash."

"I tried to take the slipstream of Gutierrez into the braking point, and it was a combination of factors that we ended up with a crash. I'm thankful for the safety of those cars and that I'm alive talking to you. This is the most important thing."

"You are not exactly aware where you are. You are just flying and then you see the sky, the ground, the sky, the ground and you don't know."

"Everything [felt like it] happened slower than [it looked on] the outside. You want to stop and it doesn't stop, it keeps going and going and going. It was quite scary."

When asked who was to blame for the accident, Alonso said: "It's a racing incident. We both tried to fight and

sometimes we forget that we are at 200mph and every little crash can be much bigger."

"It's disappointing because we start the championship with zero points and we've probably damaged the power unit so we have to take the second one immediately – but that's not the most important thing."

Gutierrez said his only concern had been that Alonso was alright.

"Thankfully we are alright. It was a very, very scary moment," he said. "The first thing I saw in the mirror, I was really worried. I jumped out as quick as I could and ran to him. It was a really big relief he was OK."

The stewards deemed the collision a racing incident and no action was taken.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Pipo Derani took a last-gasp victory in the Sebring 12 Hours last weekend, which featured a lengthy rain delay. Derani was fourth when the race was restarted in the closing stages but pulled off a series of great moves to take a second IMSA SportsCar Championship win in the Extreme Speed Motorsports Ligier JSP2 he shared with Scott Sharp, Ed Brown and Johannes van Overbeek. The Action Express Chevrolet Corvette DPs of Dane Cameron, Eric Curran and Scott

Pruett (who drove both cars) and Christian Fittipaldi, Joao Barbosa and Filipe Albuquerque finished second and third, despite them leading for the majority of the race... Jimmie Johnson took his second NASCAR Sprint Cup win of the season at Fontana last weekend. Kevin Harvick had dominated the race but lost out in the final stages after Kyle Busch crashed two laps from the end and sent the race into overtime. Denny Hamlin took the final podium place...



Derani won at Sebring 12H

Ratcliffe escapes nasty Mugello accident

Optimum Motorsport driver Ryan Ratcliffe escaped unscathed from a massive accident when challenging for the Mugello 12 Hours race last weekend.

The Audi R8 LMS GT3 crew led much of the race before a fuel glitch brought the car to a halt on the track towards the end.

Ratcliffe was hit by an unsighted Porsche 991 but both drivers were uninjured.

Optimum team principal Shaun Goff said: "It was very painful to go out the way we did, having led the race in such a convincing way. However, Joe [Osborne], Flick [Haigh] and Ryan did everything to the highest level to ensure that race was ours to lose."

The race was won by the Renault RS01 FGT3 of Luc and Max Braams, Nicky Pastorelli and Miguel Ramos.



Haas took points on its grand prix debut with Grosjean

Haas: just being competitive was the aim

Haas team boss Gunther Steiner has said that being competitive against other cars was more important than taking points at Australia last weekend.

Romain Grosjean was able to benefit from the race being red-flagged when Fernando Alonso and Haas driver Esteban Gutierrez collided to fit new tyres and finish sixth, holding off a string of other cars.

The result means the team is the first new outfit to claim points on its debut since Toyota also finished sixth in 2002.

"You aim high and you want points, but after qualifying [19th and 20th] we didn't expect to finish sixth," said Steiner. "A

deserved sixth, on merit, because the speed is there, it is pretty cool. This is beyond our expectations."

"Being competitive with the other cars – that is more satisfying than taking points. We were there and we could do the same times as a Force India, which isn't bad."

Grosjean added: "It feels like a win for all of us. Everyone has done a top job. We did 100 per cent of what we could do."

"We don't have the best car, we're not standing on the top step, but we've done the best we could have done. The morale boost we will get from this top result will help everyone get more confidence."

F1 RACING'S EDITOR

ANTHONY ROWLINSON

"Magnussen has an interest in F1 history"



Kevin Magnussen has a sense of humour. I know this because on the Friday afternoon of the Australian GP weekend I tweeted a picture of a half-peeled banana in reply to a Renault Sport shot of K-Mag walking through the paddock in his top-down race suit.

Seemed to me Magnussen, dressed in yellow and off-white, looked like a ripe Fyffe. Happily, so did he and he went on to retweet the shot of himself alongside his fruity doppelganger, with the result that for a couple of hours it became a bit of a 'thing' on Twitter.

Enough with the fruit already! How about another not-immediately-apparent K-Mag characteristic? He has a strong interest in F1's history, both the cars and the men that drove them. His racing hero, for example, is none other than Stirling Moss. Somewhat of a surprise for a 23-year-old, who might be expected to idolise a Schumacher, a Hakkinen or even an Alonso. But no, for Magnussen, it's Sir Stirl all the way: "The big one for me is Stirling Moss," he confirms. "He was just a real racer. He raced every weekend he could – more than 80 races

a year. And he was earning like £300 per race, so he did it only because he liked racing. That was his life and he was having so much fun with it. It was the same with Jim Clark and Graham Hill and all these guys. I love the fact that they were in it only because they loved it."

It emerges, as we chat, that Kevin has met his idol and, contrary to urban legend warning against such encounters, he found himself suitably star-stuck: "He's such a legend. And still totally up to date. He was asking me really strong questions about the rules and technical details. He's completely on it."

It's refreshing and rare to hear an F1 youngster talk with passion about his racing forebears, not because the past was any better or worse than the present; simply that it displays a sense of perspective that has surely stood him in good stead through a troubled start to his F1 career.

He entered with a bang with a second place for McLaren on his debut in Melbourne, 2014, but was dropped to a reserve driver role at the end of the season. Last year was spent in the shadows, and his deal with Renault was truly last-gasp as the takeover of the outgoing Lotus team was confirmed during the off-season.

Not that any of that matters now. He's just delighted to be back in the game – and with a team whose values perfectly match his own: "It's just pure racing at Enstone, like a massive F3 team. It's all about racing. There's no bulls**t, just a focus on performance and everything is about F1, which I really enjoy. They are there for the race car and the drivers and the team, and they just want to win. I really enjoy that."



Ba, ba, ba, ba, banana...

RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, LAT

IN BRIEF



Sharp's London launch

Sharp launch
Porsche Carrera Cup regular Tom Sharp unveiled the livery for his new car last week, in a ceremony held underneath the London Eye (above).

Florescu is in

Romanian driver Petru Florescu will remain at Carlin for a second season in Ford MSA Formula this year. He finished 11th in the standings in 2015 and completes Carlin's four-car line-up. He is joined in the team by James Pull, Devlin DeFrancesco and Max Fewtrell.

Electric GT

An all-electric GT series has been launched for 2017. The Electric GT World Series has targeted 10 two-driver teams, with races on permanent race tracks in America, Asia and Europe. It is being based around the Tesla Model S P85+, which will be made lighter and get updated suspension, brakes and cooling.

Biker goes Radical

French Superbike star Sylvain Guintoli will race in the first round of the new Radical Challenge Championship at Snetterton this weekend. The 2014 World Superbike champion will share a Radical SR3 RSX with James Abbott. Three-time Radical champion Bradley Smith is also on the entry, along with former BRDC F4 racer Jack Lang.

Kart calendar

The calendar for the revived MSA British Junior and Senior Kart Championships has been confirmed by promoter Super One. The three-round series kicks off at Whilton Mill on May 28/29, before then visiting Sherington on July 16/17 and concluding at PF International on September 23-25. The champions will win works drives with Vortex for the CIK-FIA World Championships in Bahrain in November.

TKM success

The TKM Clubman Championships have been a victim of the success of the Junior and Senior TKM classes. While these have attracted a 65-kart entry, the Clubman categories have struggled and will be cancelled.

TOP BRANDS EYE FORMULA E ENTRIES IN THE FUTURE

BMW and Nissan in talks to join



By Scott Mitchell

BMW and Nissan are in talks with existing Formula E teams to join the electric single-seater championship as early as next season.

Nissan, which culled its LMP1 programme late last year, is conducting a "fact-finding" mission into the series as part of an evaluation of its long-term motorsport strategy.

Approval is needed from the Renault-Nissan Alliance – the partnership that oversees the interests of the two brands and six others within the group – to allow the two makes to compete in the same

category, in which the French marque currently leads the drivers' and teams' championship.

A BMW spokesman said it does not comment on speculation but reiterated its supply of i3 and i8 course cars since season one has been a way of keeping close tabs on the category.

Should Nissan or BMW commit to entering FE for the 2016/17 campaign, neither would have an immediate influence on powertrain technology.

The German marque has made it clear the championship's dependence on mid-race car swaps is a deterrent. A new chassis, bigger battery and advanced

battery cell technology should allow the series to move to one car per driver for the fifth season.

One option for BMW would therefore be to partner an existing team while developing technology for a fully-fledged entry for the 2018/19 campaign.

Nissan's situation is simpler. As no final decision has been made, the short lead-time means a commercial tie-up would be its only realistic chance of being part of the 2016/17 grid.

Those additions would mean manufacturer presence in nine of the 10 Formula E entries. Renault, DS (PSA Peugeot Citroen's luxury brand), electric

vehicle specialist Venturi, Indian make Mahindra and emerging Chinese EV company NEXTEV are involved already. Abt has an affiliation with Audi, and the Volkswagen Group is thought to be evaluating greater involvement. British marque Jaguar will join the series in season three.

Two of the remaining three independent teams – American outfits Andretti Autosport and Dragon Racing – have long since started the process of producing their own powertrains. The final independent, Anglo-Japanese outfit Team Aguri, is close to confirming a Renault powertrain supply.



Rees was a winner in Carrera Cup GB, but will now step up

Carrera Cup winner Rees makes the move to Porsche Supercup

Porsche Carrera Cup race winner Paul Rees will graduate into the Supercup Championship this year with the MOMO Megatron team.

Rees finished third in the 2014 Carrera Cup GB points, but was forced to miss races last season due to injury. He last contested the Supercup during a one-off round at Austin in Texas back in 2014.

"I'm thrilled to remain with the Porsche family,"

said Rees. "I've been racing Porsches in Britain for the last two years so it's time to move up, and the Supercup is an exciting championship with a great calendar."

"I get on really well with the [Megatron] team. Chris Crawford will engineer my car and he brings a lot of experience having worked with the Konrad Motorsport team."

Megatron ran Briton Ben

Barker to a top 10 finish in the Supercup points last year. Rees added that the Luxembourg-based team was a good fit.

"The package Megatron provided Ben with last season was good and when I raced with them in Austin the car was quick and we were bang on the pace. I've won in the Carrera Cup and I really think I can run at the front in the Supercup," said Rees.

Pattison returns to Clio Cup with Cooksport

Renault UK Clio Cup race winner Lee Pattison will return to the series this year with Team Cooksport.

Pattison was runner-up in 2010 and last raced in the category in a one-off appearance at Knockhill last year. He has also competed in the Mini Challenge.

"I used to race Lee in 2013 so I've known him quite a while and

he's a very experienced Clio driver," said team boss Josh Cook. "We had him back in a seat in 2015 and from the word go, having been out of the car for a while, he was right on the pace."

Cook added Pattison will be a "valuable asset" as he will be a good guide for the squad's other drivers Rory Collingbourne and George Jackson.



Fletcher will join BTCC

Actor Fletcher joins the BTCC 2016 line-up

Emmerdale actor Kelvin Fletcher will step up to British Touring Cars this season at the wheel of a Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet Cruze.

The 32-year-old, who has previously raced on the BTCC support package, in Porsches, will join Hunter Abbott in the front-wheel-drive cars.

Fletcher said: "Signing with

such a solid team as Power Maxed Racing will no doubt make the transition to the BTCC a smooth one. I have watched the BTCC for a long time: it has been a lifelong dream to race against my childhood heroes."

BTCC race winner Aron Smith and Clio graduate Mark Howard are due to join the grid in two Team BKR VWs as well.

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'Can BRDC F4 be the new British F3?'
Season preview, p14



TURKINGTON JR JOINS THE MINI CHALLENGE



Turkington has tested the Mini

James Turkington will enter the Mini Challenge this season for his first full season of British racing.

Turkington, the 22-year-old younger brother of two-time British Touring Car champion Colin, has signed to race a new Gen3 F56 Challenge car with the ExcelR8 team.

The Portadown resident has previous tin-top experience from Irish racing, making his

competition debut in a Ford Fiesta Zetec in 2013 before moving up to the SEAT Supercopa Ireland last season. He has only raced on British soil once, at Brands Hatch in 2013 at the wheel of a Fiesta.

Turkington got his first run in his new Mini at Donington Park last week. He said: "The car was great fun. I thought a lot about what to race this year and Colin had driven one of the older-

generation Mini Challenge cars before so suggested I had a look. The championship is really competitive and the new car seems to have taken off in a big way.

"Having raced the SEAT last year I'm used to a 300bhp front-wheel-drive format. The Mini has around the same power, but sitting on the right and using the sequential gearbox took some adjusting to.

"I have no real targets this year. I just want to enjoy my racing. People often say does Colin guide me. Yeah we have a few chats and banter over the table at breakfast, and he feeds me some good advice, but this was my choice. Touring cars one day would be a dream, but it's not the be-all and end-all for me. I'll see how this year goes before making any further plans."

Adam adds European Le Mans Series entry

British GT champion Jonathan Adam is planning to race in three championships over the same weekend this April after adding a full European Le Mans Series campaign to his schedule.

Adam will share a Beechdean Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage GTE with fellow British champion Andrew Howard and Alex MacDowall in this year's ELMS, which begins at Silverstone on April 16.

Scotsman Adam also has campaigns signed for British GT (with TF Sport) and the FIA World Endurance Championship with the factory AMR team. All three championships race on the same weekend, with ELMS supporting the WEC at Silverstone and

Adam will race GTE car



British GT kicking off at Brands Hatch.

Adam said he was planning to still do all three events. He said: "It will be absolutely crazy.

"I'm hoping to do all three championships across the two days and not miss anything. It'll be a challenge, but with helicopter transport between Silverstone and Brands it's doable looking at the timetables.

"The ELMS race is on Saturday, along with British GT qualifying. I'll have to split my stints in the WEC on Sunday with the British GT race."

● Adam will also contest this year's Blancpain Endurance Cup after joining the Motorbase Performance team. Adam will share a Vantage GT3 with Ahmad Al Harthy and Devon Modell.



Rivett will again link-up with the WDE team for this season
Rivett plots title assault after Clio deal

Three-time Renault UK Clio Cup champion Paul Rivett will again compete in the series this year with WDE Motorsport.

The 37-year-old finished fourth in the standings in 2015 but is determined to add another title this season.

"I've got a new sponsor on board this year and I'm really looking forward to it," he said. "I feel there's another title in me and I'm more hungry than ever. I've won a title with each generation of car [since his debut in 2001]

and it would be great to now win with the fourth.

"As well as the driver's title we'll aim to go for the teams' too. We've got a good line-up and there's no reason why we can't win it."

WDE boss Wayne Eason added: "This is the most confident and positive I've seen Paul about the year ahead since I've started working with him. His enthusiasm for it rubs off on people and he's so good at what he does so we're over the moon to have him back out."

Wrigley lines up late entry for a Ginetta GT4 Supercup campaign

Tom Wrigley heads a list of drivers who have confirmed late deals to race in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this season.

The 23-year-old took two victories in 2015, finishing sixth in the points, and will again drive for Rob Boston Racing this year.

"It's quite last minute so we are not going to get any testing before the first weekend," said Boston.

Boston added there's a chance he may run a second driver:

"There are a couple of guys we are speaking to so we might run another Pro driver."

Meanwhile, multiple Hot Rod champion Carl Boardley will also contest a full season for the first time since 2013, having starred in the final round last year when he took a podium.

Mitchell Hale will also be back after contesting a part season in 2015, which was halted by the withdrawal of SV Racing. He will now drive for Century Motorsport. Rob Wheldon and Callum Pointon will also return.

In the Amateur class, Colin White will defend his crown, along with James Guess, Mike Newbold and John Wall.



Wrigley will return in G55

FORMULA E REPORTER

SCOTT MITCHELL

"Making the cars last is the focus"



Since its debut in 2014, Formula E's been gathering plenty of momentum. Its driver line-up rivals the World Endurance Championship and cool street tracks are providing fantastic entertainment. The cars are difficult to drive, different to look at and – as of season two – have different technology in the back, thanks to the rules opening up to allow so-called 'manufacturers' to develop their powertrains (that's the motor, inverter and gearbox).

I write 'so-called' because the term manufacturer is given to any team homologating its own technology and there are three independents doing exactly that. Soon I won't have to write 'so-called', because the incoming Jaguar and serious interest shown by BMW and Nissan proves FE has a manufacturer appeal like no other series right now.

Any conventional series would kill for any one of the factors above. But Formula E is not conventional. From the beginning it has been pushing to spread the word of electric vehicles. OK, you could argue its carbon footprint travelling the world doesn't help. But it wouldn't need to do it if the message didn't need shouting loudly.

And there are green credentials beyond the zero-emissions racecars. For example, a link with British company Aquafuel allows the series to replace diesel with carbon-neutral glycerine (which can be farmed from salt-water algae) as fuel for the generator that charges the race batteries.

But the greatest difference Formula E should be making regards EV technology. That's why manufacturers care about it.

Downscaling season-by-season power and energy targets and postponing open battery competition felt to me like FE was underdelivering in its most important area. But digging deeper reveals long-term sensibility.

Battery cell technology is limited and that means range and charging is fundamentally an EV's biggest issue. But it's an area that improves at a good rate – on average, by eight per cent a year.

Introducing a new one-make battery for season five will allow the series to tap into industry advancements. A new chassis will allow battery design to be more aggressive (the current battery was crammed into a pre-determined space at the last-minute).

Single-car races, achievable for season five, will be a huge step, and a bigger achievement than making the cars faster. The technology exists to deliver 1 Megawatt (that's 1341 bhp), so power potential's not the issue. Making any significant power output last is the focus.

A battery arms race would probably help speed up the process, but lifting the championship's cost caps just to save face would have disastrous long-term consequences.

It's a nascent series and requires an element of patience. A few steps back to take a giant leap in the not-too-distant future is not a bad trade-off. Especially if it helps Formula E make the sort of tangible real-world contribution that should underpin its very existence.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

RACING NEWS

Photos: McLaren GT, Jakob Ebrej

Hollywood joins Beechdean for GT

Beechdean Motorsport will field two British GT4 cars later this year, with reigning class champion Jamie Chadwick returning to partner celebrity baker Paul Hollywood.

Beechdean, which has won the GT4 drivers' title for the past two seasons, will run a second Aston Martin Vantage GT4 for Chadwick and *Great British Bake Off* star Hollywood for the final three meetings of the year, from Spa-Francorchamps onwards. It is only a limited campaign due to Hollywood's work commitments and Chadwick's school studies taking precedence.

Team head Andrew Howard said: "The deal has come together nicely as Paul has commitments and it's a big year for Jamie too with exams.

"The plan was to do the full championship with Paul, but that's not possible. We will be looking to race the car more outside of British GT though, as and when Paul can slot events in."



Hollywood joins GT4

Giddings back with JWB Aston Martin

Former British GT4 champion Jake Giddings will fight for a second title this year after rejoining JWB Motorsport.

Giddings, 21, will share the team's Aston Martin Vantage GT4 with Kieran Griffin. The pair finished 10th in the points in 2015.

Giddings lifted the GT4 title in 2014 alongside Ross Wylie when racing for Beechdean Motorsport.

Giddings said: "Kieran is in his second year now, and now much more aware of the quicker GT3 cars on track and what he needs to do.

"We've got a few upgrades on the car, including a different spec gearbox. Last year was tough, but we learned from it and we want a few more podiums this year."

TEENAGERS GET GT4 SHOT WITH McLAREN

Single-seater stars Haggerty and Mitchell will enter British GT with new 570S GT4



New car has a carbon chassis and 3.8-litre engine

By Rob Ladbrook

Single-seater drivers Ciaran Haggerty and Sandy Mitchell will graduate to the British GT Championship this season to spearhead development of McLaren's new 570S GT4 challenger.

BRDC F4 graduate Haggerty and MSA Formula race winner Mitchell will join the factory-blessed Black Bull Ecurie Ecosse team to race the 570S GT4, which was unveiled during the British GT media day at Snetterton last week.

The new car runs a 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 engine and will be the first homologated GT4 car to run with a carbonfibre tub, which is carried over from the baby McLaren's road-going version. A non-homologated Sprint-spec car will also be built. The McLaren factory has developed the car in partnership with CRS GT.

Ecurie Ecosse will field the GT4 entry for



Haggerty (left) and co-driver Mitchell

the full season, helping McLaren in development of the car before its general release later this year.

Former Scottish Formula Ford 1600 champion Haggerty, 19, finished fifth in last year's BRDC F4 points, while former British karting champion Mitchell was seventh in the MSA Formula points with two race wins during his maiden car racing campaign. Both are on the Ecurie Ecosse Young Driver

scheme. Mitchell will become the youngest driver ever to race in British GT, having only turned 16 this month.

"This is a huge break for both my career and Sandy's," Haggerty said. "It's been a hard winter putting a GT deal together but to get a chance to run with a manufacturer like McLaren with a new programme is a dream.

"I've not tested the GT4 yet, but I did do eight laps in the 650S GT3 last year. It's a very different driving style to single-seaters. You have to get used to the braking and the extra dive and roll of the car due to the weight difference, and also using systems like ABS and traction control.

"Sandy's a top driver and between us we'll make one of the strongest pairings in GT4. McLaren wants this season to be all about development for the 570S GT4, so there's not huge pressure, but we both want to perform to our best and fight for wins."

TECH SPEC

McLaren 570S GT4

Chassis: Carbonfibre Monocell II chassis with aluminium front and rear frames and crash structures

Engine: McLaren M838TE 3799cc twin-turbo V8

Power: TBA

Transmission: Seven-speed sequential, dual clutch SSG gearbox

Suspension: Penske two-way adjustable dampers with coilover springs front and rear

Wheels: OZ cast magnesium 9x18 front 11x18 rear

Dimensions: Length: 4606mm Width: 2095mm Height: 1179mm Wheelbase: 2674mm

Price: £159,900

Cayman GT4 Clubsport delays force teams to source alternatives

Both the Simpson Motorsport and Lanan Racing teams will begin the British GT season with Ginettas after delays in receiving their new Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport cars.

Motorsport News understands that delays in production of the new Cayman GT4 Clubsport, which is being built by Porsche AG and prepared for homologation by Manthey Racing, has led to delivery times

being pushed back from their original March date to late April, just before British GT's second round at Rockingham.

Lanan has entered a single Cayman for Joey Foster and Alex Reed, but has rented the Fox Motorsport Ginetta G55 GT4 for the first round. Simpson has rented a G55 from the factory for Nick Jones/Scott Malvern, with Jones also racing a G57 in last weekend's Barcelona VdeV race.

Lanan's Graham Johnson said: "It's hugely disappointing and frustrating, especially as I now have to try and sell our second car based on it doing only seven eighths of the championship."

Jones added: "It puts us way behind on testing, but we're staying positive. Ginetta has been very helpful in getting us a car."

Porsche was unavailable for comment when contacted by *Motorsport News*.



Simpson's Cayman won't arrive for Brands, nor will Lanan's



GT4 is growing but won't replace GT3, according to Ratel

British GT won't lose GT3 as its top class, despite growth in GT4, says series chief Ratel

British GT boss Stephane Ratel insists the series won't become a GT4-only category in the future, despite its entries outweighing GT3 for this season.

Championship bosses released the 33-car entry list for this campaign, with GT4 cars outnumbering GT3 18 to 15. Among the GT4 entries are works-supported cars from

Ginetta, Lotus, Aston Martin, Toyota and McLaren (*see above*).

Ratel said he was pleased with the growth in domestic GT4, but added that GT3 would always have a future in Britain.

Ratel said: "It's satisfying that GT4 has grown and I think we just reached a critical number with it. When you have 12 cars suddenly a class becomes

appealing and interest grows, especially when people see new manufacturers.

"But British GT will always have GT3. It won't go GT4-only, I don't think. We are a market-driven form of racing. Customers race what they want and what they can afford. Perhaps GT3 is becoming more international, with Blancpain and big races like

the Nurburgring 24 Hours, Dubai and Adu Dhabi. GT3 is the only place now where young drivers can get manufacturer deals, and GT4 is a perfect feeder for that as it lets drivers learn at lower cost in front of manufacturers. But there will always be people who will want to race GT3 in Britain to learn before going to somewhere like Blancpain."

IN BRIEF

Brothers united
Brothers Ryan and Jonny Hadfield will race against each other in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this year with their R&J Motorsport team. Ryan finished 13th in the category in 2015 while Jonny will step up from Ginetta Juniors.

Mackay's Lotus
Reigning Scottish Formula Ford 1600 champion Adam Mackay completed a double winning debut in the Lotus Cup races at Snetterton last Saturday. The 18-year-old Ecurie Ecosse Young Driver is looking to use the championship as a stepping stone to GT racing. "I'm using the series to learn all the UK tracks, and Spa, while the endurance format of the series will also be helpful," he said.

Milner busy
Former British Rally Champion Jonny Milner had to burn the midnight oil at Oulton Park, hanging the engine overnight in daughter Katie's Citroen Saxo. She rewarded his hard work by taking eighth and ninth place in her two Junior Saloons outings.

Webster to Max5
Former British GT4 race winner Chris Webster returned to the Max5 Championship at Oulton Park last weekend and is planning to contest the whole season. "I made my Max5 debut in a Mk1 at Mallory in 2012 and did a few races in 2013 and 14, before the GT4 Aston Martin drive last year," he said. "I enjoyed the GT racing a win at Donington was a real bonus and the highlight, but it was never going to be a full-time aim and being back in the Max5 with a new Mk3 is good enough for me." He took two third place finishes at Oulton Park.

Hutchison bow
Ex-karter Finlay Hutchison made his car racing debut in the Max5 Championship at Oulton Park, as he starts to gain signatures for his forthcoming Formula Renault Eurocup debut with Mark Burdett at Monza. "I think I have got a BMW Compact race next and an MG in something else, but it's very busy over the next few weeks," he said. "I was surprised how nervous I felt at the start of my first race, trying to stay out of trouble until the brake pedal went to the floor at Island Hairpin." He finished in fourth and sixth places in class in his two races.

Spencer's repair
Reigning CNC Heads North West Sports/Saloons champion Joe Spencer was back on the grid for the opening round at Oulton Park, despite having the front half of his Stuart Taylor Locosaki rebuilt after a shunt with team-mate Dave Harvey at Mallory Park's Plum Pudding meeting on Boxing Day last year. He still managed to take pole and a comfortable lights-to-flag win.

DRIVERS SURVIVE SERIOUS GOODWOOD CRASHES

Car reaches spectator tunnel, but major injuries avoided



Two serious accidents marred the 74th Members' Meeting at Goodwood last Sunday.

In the day's opening race, the Brooks Trophy for grand prix cars of the 1954-1960 era, Stephen Bond's Lotus 18 was tipped into a series of cartwheels (above) after contact with Richard Wilson's sliding Cooper. The Lotus ended up dropping down into the pedestrian tunnel opposite the pits.

No one in the tunnel was harmed, but a spectator did assist Bond from the car.

Bond is believed to have suffered a broken collarbone, but otherwise escaped serious injury.

Later in the day, Dutch racer Michiel Smits was airlifted to hospital after his Lola T70 Spyder

plunged off the track at the high-speed Woodcote Corner during the Bruce McLaren Trophy for Can-Am and Group 7 prototypes raced up to 1966.

It is thought debris either hit Smits or forced him to take avoiding action, resulting in the Lola going off. The front of the car was crushed and Smits was airlifted to hospital after marshals worked to extricate him from the T70.

A family statement said Smits had suffered a broken rib and two broken vertebrae.

A Goodwood statement said: "Michiel Smits was taken to the nearest trauma centre, where his condition was stabilised. He spent the night in hospital with family members."

The accidents have brought the circuit's safety into focus, with the fastest Can-Am cars now capable of lapping at over 110mph, faster than the Formula 1 lap record prior to the circuit's closure in 1966.

The two delays affected the timetable and the final three races were reduced to 10-minute sprints and the final race, the Parnell Cup, ended in rapidly failing light.

Another Goodwood statement, issued on Monday, said: "Goodwood reviews all procedures after every event including health and safety. In conjunction with the relevant motor sport bodies, we will be reviewing the issues raised at the 74th Member's Meeting to ensure Goodwood continues to hold safe events."



Smits was airlifted after this accident



MOTORSPORT NEWS EDITOR

KEVIN TURNER

"Maybe there needs to be a licence system"



Historic racing events at Goodwood are among the highlights of the UK racing season. I have been a fan since attending the first Revival meeting in 1998, but last weekend's Members' Meeting was worrying – and could have been disastrous.

The number of safety car interruptions disrupted the event more than usual. That happens at all levels of the sport sometimes, but the speed and confines of Goodwood means the potential for it is higher. And the two serious accidents highlighted a growing concern among some about the increasing speeds there.

Winning at Goodwood has now become a big target for many. More young or semi-professional drivers are coming in to this branch of the sport, as are some top teams and engineers. They are more willing to push the limits – not just on-track, but technically as well.

In 1999, Martin Brundle – a recently retired ex-F1 racer and Le Mans winner – qualified on pole for the RAC TT Celebration with a 1m27s. Last weekend, James Cottingham – a good historic racer but not a veteran of 158 GPs – dipped under the 1m24s barrier in the equivalent race.

Similarly, in 1999 there was a race for early three-litre F1 cars. Geoff Farmer's Lotus 49 set a new lap record in the 1m19s, but the race was full of incident and was not repeated. Now, however, the best Can-Am cars are lapping two seconds faster. Nick Padmore's Lola T70 qualified on pole for the Bruce McLaren Trophy last weekend at 1m17.079s, or 111 mph. At a track with little run-off and unforgiving banks.

It's not just the pace of the cars, either. Goodwood's appeal means some drivers find themselves in machinery much faster than they are used to. As one top historic racer said to me after the Sunday accidents: "The cars are so well-developed they are so much faster than they were in the day. Goodwood wants it to be the way it was, but the cars and drivers are not."

So what to do? Clearly none of us want to see racing at Goodwood end, surely a risk should a repeat of Sunday happen with worse consequences – a car in the pedestrian tunnel at the Revival in the middle of the day would surely result in serious injuries.

The aforementioned historic racer suggested more run-off at Woodcote and modifications to the angle of the bank at the kink, but many agree more could be done.

A performance cap could be implemented, preventing cars from getting faster and faster – this is supposed to be historic racing after all. And how about different levels of racing licence? Perhaps a superlicence for the very quickest of historics would help raise the average standard.

Such a move would need the support of all ASNs, and would upset some of the wealthy owner-drivers, but surely some restrictions are preferable to no more Goodwood racing at all.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

BRDC F4 PREVIEW

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

BRDC F4 is set for a big 2016, but can it become our new F3 class? By Rob Ladbroke

After a much-lamented year's absence British Formula 3 returns this weekend. Well, sort of.

The BRDC Formula 4 Championship is categorically not British F3, but it is as close as this country will get within the foreseeable future. The credentials of the class with its more powerful car have even been noticed by the FIA, despite only eight races being run so far during last year's Autumn Trophy.

The championship looks to have all of the ingredients needed to fill the void left behind by the loss of one of Britain's longest-running single-seater categories.

The new Tatuus-Cosworth F4-016 has proven quick, way clear of the lap times of MSA Formula and only just shy of those of modern F3s, and the calendar stacks up too, with two active grand prix circuits incorporated. It's even slotted nicely into the gap left by British F3 on SRO's British GT package (barring this weekend's standalone opening round at Snetterton). Here are five essential things you should know about the revamped championship.

FORMULA 3

REIMAGINED

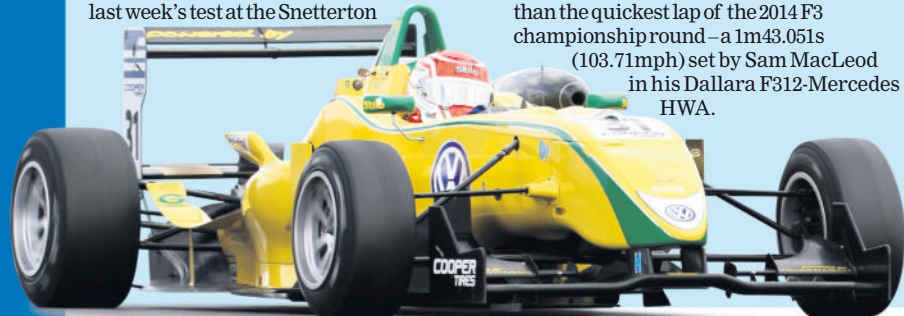


BRDC F4 cars are quick, Nasr (below) has F3 lap record

How close are the cars to F3 performance?

Very. If anything, they have the potential to be faster at some circuits.

The best direct comparison comes from last week's test at the Snetterton



300 circuit. The conditions matched those of the last British F3 event held there from 2014. Ricky Collard topped the times with a 1m41.614s lap at an average speed of 105.18mph. That's 1.4 seconds faster than the quickest lap of the 2014 F3 championship round – a 1m43.051s (103.71mph) set by Sam MacLeod in his Dallara F312-Mercedes HWA.

When compared to the heyday of British F3, Collard's time isn't too far adrift of Felipe Nasr's 2011 outright record from qualifying of 1m39.147s (107.80mph) in his Carlin-run F308-Volkswagen.

Most of that deficit comes from the trade-off between power and aerodynamics between an F3 car and the Tatuus-Cosworth. The Tatuus outrages an F3 car on Snetterton's long straights due to it running less aerodynamics so it therefore has less drag, but it can't match the cornering speed of a true F3 car.

There will be more performance to come from the Tatuus-Cosworth too as teams figure out set-up tricks and get the most from the Pirelli tyres.

Who's worth watching?

MSA Formula graduates Lando Norris, Ricky Collard and Toby Sowery will all definitely be worth keeping an eye on, even if their campaigns may be compromised one way or another.

Reigning MSA Formula champion Norris will be dovetailing his F4 attack with the Formula Renault Eurocup and Northern European Cup, so he will almost undoubtedly skip one round – there are two clashes with the Eurocup.

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist Sowery's deal is just for the first round, but there's potential for that to be extended.

Collard is the only one of the three with a full-season deal [with Carlin], so is in the hot seat. He says: "I think I've got the best opportunity I've ever had. This is an important year for me. Finishing second in MSA Formula last year was great, but I need to aim that one place higher. The car is great, with lots of instant power and an impressive change of direction."

Other drivers capable of fighting at the front include MSA Formula race winner Matheus Leist (Double R), karting star Enaam Ahmed (Douglas), Formula Jedi champion Ben Hingeley and rising star Omar Ismail (both HHC).



Collard Jr should be a title contender

Won't big teams push the budgets up?

This will be a defining year for BRDC F4, both on and off the track as a product.

The arrival of the new car has brought fresh interest from British F3's heavy hitters, with Fortec, Carlin and Double R all fielding multi-car entries.

All three already compete in MSA Formula, and reports have suggested budgets there have already crept up to, and beyond, £200,000 in some cases.

The arrival of the bigger teams has driven some of BRDC F4's smaller outfits away – Graham Brunton Racing has gone as has all privateer entries – and there is a danger of budgets going through the roof.

The spec nature of the Tatuus-Cosworth will limit the costs naturally. It doesn't run many of the fiddly aero parts an F3 car does, such as fragile floors and winglets that can easily get damaged.

Palmer (*below*) insists he will keep a keen eye on what teams are charging. He says: "I'm sure the bigger teams will charge more, that's probably inevitable, but we're being careful to ensure that money can't buy performance.

"Teams cannot lease seven engines and do endless testing. The gearboxes are completely sealed. If teams try to charge more they need to do that based on having the cleverest set-up and not by throwing cash at the car."

Can BRDC F4 really emulate British F3?

In a word yes, but that largely depends on the FIA's stance on things.

At the time of writing, the FIA was in final discussions with series organisers about handing BRDC Formula 4 'National F3' status, which would lead to a rebranding of the championship. Whether that rebranding would carry the actual F3 title with it, despite the car not being an F3 product, is one of the discussion points.

The FIA likes Jonathan Palmer's concept of taking one of its FIA F4 homologated cars and moving it on to a new performance plane. That fits with the FIA's ladder concept, and the FIA has expressed concern over the lack of regional F3 series now, which is seen to also have a detrimental effect on entries to the European F3 Championship. It's ironic, seeing as the FIA effectively killed national F3 by

writing rules stating that any cars that weren't current generation with current spec engines couldn't be called F3 anymore. Yet now it is seriously considering renaming a non-F3 formula as it does represent a true stepping stone.

Teams and drivers are quick to admit that the step between FIA F4 and F3 is currently too big, both in performance and budget.

Trevor Carlin, whose eponymous team will field three BRDC F4 cars this year, says: "Drivers have to have something in between to learn with. The performance gap in terms of both aero and mechanical grip between the MSA Formula car and an F3 car is massive. The BRDC F4 car is a great middle ground.

"We do see it as a British F3 replacement, which is needed as drivers should learn racing here as we have great circuits – many with limited run-off that punishes mistakes – which teaches them to be precise."

Is it already working as a stepping stone from FIA F4?

This year's entry list has attracted 21 cars so far for the first round, seven of which are graduates from an FIA F4 platform of some kind.

Five drivers have graduated from MSA Formula, including champion Lando Norris (*pictured*) and there are drivers from the German ADAC

version (Jan Jonck) and the Australian equivalent (Thomas Randle).

The budget comparison between BRDC F4, MSA Formula and European F3 compares well in BRDC F4's favour. A competitive BRDC F4 season is being touted at roughly £150,000, less than a third of what a year in the cheap seats of Euro F3 would cost.

BRDC F4's entry boasts drivers from 10 nations, so seems to have the international draw F3 had.



BRDC FORMULA 4 ESSENTIALS

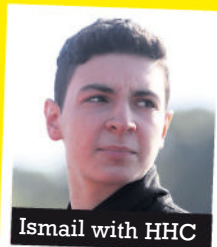
ENTRY LIST

NAME	NAT	TEAM
Lando Norris	GBR	Carlin
Ameya Vaidyanathan	IND	Carlin
Ricky Collard	GBR	Carlin
Quinlan Lall	USA	Chris Dittmann Racing
Jeremy Wahome	KEN	Chris Dittmann Racing
Krishnaraaj Mahadik*	IND	Chris Dittmann Racing
Matheus Leist	BRA	Double R
Enzo Bortoletto	BRA	Double R
Aleksanteri Huovinen	FIN	Double R
Thomas Randle	AUS	Douglas Motorsport
Enaam Ahmed	GBR	Douglas Motorsport
Al Faisal Al Zubair	OMN	Fortec Motorsports
Tarun Reddy	IND	Fortec Motorsports
Sisa Ngebulana	RSA	HHC Motorsport
Omar Ismail	GBR	HHC Motorsport
Ben Hingeley	GBR	HHC Motorsport
Akhil Rabindra	IND	Lanan Racing
Toby Sowery	GBR	Lanan Racing
Eugene Denysen	RSA	Sean Walkinshaw Racing
Jan Jonck	DEN	Sean Walkinshaw Racing
Thomas Maxwell	AUS	Sean Walkinshaw Racing
Sasakorn Chaimongkol	THA	Hillspeed

*will miss first round and be replaced by Paul Sieljes

CALENDAR

DATE	TRACK
March 27/28	Snetterton 300
April 16/17	Brands Hatch GP
April 30/May 1	Rockingham
May 28-30	Oulton Park
June 11/12	Silverstone GP
July 8/9	Spa-Francorchamps
August 6/7	Snetterton 300
Sept 10/11	Donington Park



Ismail with HHC



Palmer says teams cannot buy pace



HISTORICS

'Mercedes contested trial and Goodwood'
Busy 1903 machine, below



Photos: Shelsley Walsh, Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

ROB HUFF

Age: 36 **Lives:** Newmarket
 WTCC racer at Goodwood
 Rallying legend

The Members' Meeting didn't go to plan

"We had a bit of disappointment this time at Goodwood with the cars of my team-mate Richard Meins. We had four cars to drive and three of them broke, unfortunately. It was a weekend of positives and negatives."

He led in the Ford GT40

"The Alan Mann Trophy race was great and I was leading the race. But we knew straight away, even when we were in the holding area, that we were going to have a problem with the brakes because the pedal was pretty much on the floor."

He retired from the lead

"I said to the guys that there was no way we were going to last an hour, but we did the best we could to start with and retired from the lead. If you're going to retire, that's the best place to do it from. The car was quick and we went quicker than the car has ever been before at Goodwood and I think we were on for a new lap record in a GT40."

He also had Mini trouble

"In the Whitmore Cup, the Mini Cooper of Des Smail was great. I knew I had to get a good start if I was going to get Nick Swift. I pretty much did but then he squeezed me quite hard down at the bottom end of the circuit and we had a little bit of contact. Then, unfortunately, coming across the start/finish line I was struggling for gears. It wouldn't go from second to third so I had to go into fourth and then back to third. So there wasn't much I could do, but we'll be back fighting again next year."

Other cars hit problems

"Unfortunately, the Ford Capri we were going to race in the Gerry Marshall Trophy race had a problem with cylinder three even though we qualified sixth. That put us out for the weekend with that car."

He's a big fan of Goodwood

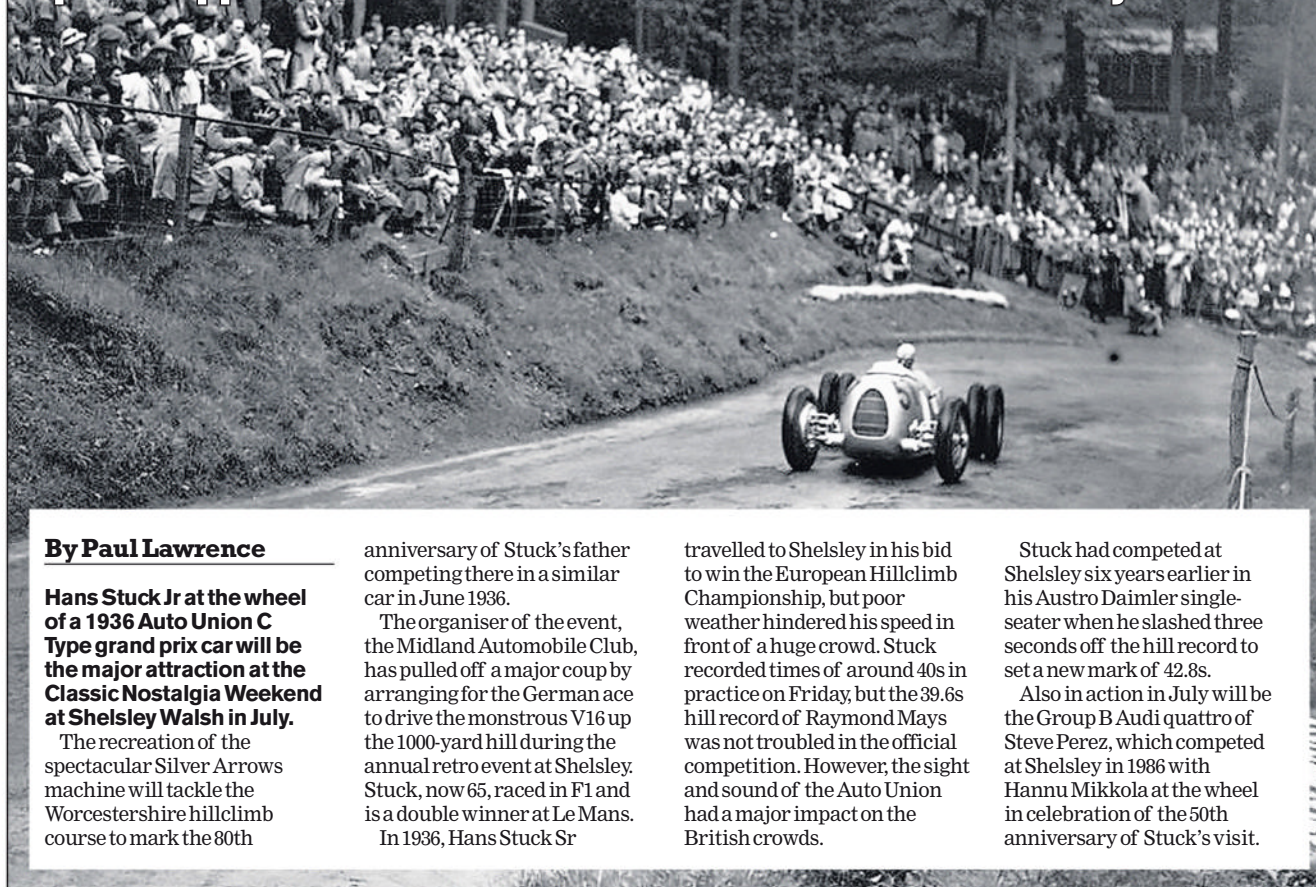
"It was a tough weekend but I was happy to be at Goodwood again. It is the most fun event of the year for me. It's just a fantastic weekend and I think a lot of motorsport organisers around the world could learn a lot from Lord March."



Huff: unlucky weekend

STUCK AND AUTO UNION BACK TO SHELSLEY

Special appearance to commemorate famous 1936 Shelsley run



By Paul Lawrence

Hans Stuck Jr at the wheel of a 1936 Auto Union C Type grand prix car will be the major attraction at the Classic Nostalgia Weekend at Shelsley Walsh in July.

The recreation of the spectacular Silver Arrows machine will tackle the Worcestershire hillclimb course to mark the 80th

anniversary of Stuck's father competing there in a similar car in June 1936.

The organiser of the event, the Midland Automobile Club, has pulled off a major coup by arranging for the German ace to drive the monstrous V16 up the 1000-yard hill during the annual retro event at Shelsley. Stuck, now 65, raced in F1 and is a double winner at Le Mans.

In 1936, Hans Stuck Sr

travelled to Shelsley in his bid to win the European Hillclimb Championship, but poor weather hindered his speed in front of a huge crowd. Stuck recorded times of around 40s in practice on Friday, but the 39.6s hill record of Raymond Mays was not troubled in the official competition. However, the sight and sound of the Auto Union had a major impact on the British crowds.

Stuck had competed at Shelsley six years earlier in his Austro Daimler single-seater when he slashed three seconds off the hill record to set a new mark of 42.8s.

Also in action in July will be the Group B Audi quattro of Steve Perez, which competed at Shelsley in 1986 with Hannu Mikkola at the wheel in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Stuck's visit.



Thomas wants more runs

Thomas makes Shadow debut and now wants race outings in 2016

Preparation team boss Sam Thomas had his first taste of DFV power at Goodwood and now hopes to race the ex-Jan Lammers Shadow DN9 later this season.

Thomas only started racing a couple of years ago and prepares

a range of historic race cars, including the Shadow, which is owned by Michael Tuke.

"This was my first time in an F1 car," he said after Saturday's demonstration session. "I plan to do some races and I'm using

Nick Padmore as a driver coach to try and get up to speed."

Padmore drove the 1979 car in Sunday's demonstration and Thomas is targeting the Silverstone Classic for his race debut.

Race of Champions to Brands Superprix

The 'Race of Champions' name will return to use during the retitled 'Legends of Brands Hatch Superprix'.

The annual HSCC event will run over three days (July 1-3) on the Grand Prix circuit and the famous race title will be handed to the Derek Bell Trophy race that includes Formula 5000s. In 1973, Peter Gethin's Formula 5000 Chevron B24 beat all the F1 cars in the combined F1/F5000 Race of Champions.

Grand Prix cars from up to 1966 will also race, under the wing of the HGPCA, along with Super Touring and Historic F2 cars.

During the weekend historically interesting cars will take part in demonstrations.



Rydell Super Touring Volvo set to compete again

Jason Minshaw will become the first driver to race a Volvo S40 in the Super Touring Trophy when he debuts the ex-Rickard Rydell car in the opening races of the season at the Donington Historic Festival.

Minshaw ran the car in public for the first time in the demonstration sessions at Goodwood last weekend and believes it will be a competitive proposition. A major effort had the car ready in time for its first

on-track run at the weekend.

"It was Rydell's car in the 1998 BTCC and then went to Sweden," said Minshaw. "I picked it up in Norway about 18 months ago and it hadn't done anything for about seven years."

Delays in the supply of engine parts prevented Minshaw from racing the car last season, but it is now ready to race in the UK again for the first time since 1998.

Ex-BTCC Chevrolet wins on comeback

The ex-Rob Potter British Touring Car Championship Chevrolet Camaro made a winning return to racing in the Gerry Marshall Trophy at the Goodwood Members' Meeting.

The car, raced when new in 1971 in the colours of Think Automotive, has been acquired and completely restored by Grahame Bryant. He picked up a 10-second penalty for contact in the sprint race, dropping him to fifth, but then shared victory with his son Oliver in the main Sunday encounter.

"We got it as a worn-out racing car and it had just been stored for 40 years with bits being robbed off it," said Bryant Sr, who decided to source a Camaro after last year's Members' Meeting. "We've done it exactly as it was in period."

More outings are planned this season.

IN BRIEF

Amazing Merc

Seven days after contesting the Vintage Sports-Car Club Herefordshire Trial, the 1903 Mercedes of Ben Collings raced in the SF Edge Trophy at Goodwood. Ben's father Roger used the 60hp model in the trial while Gareth Graham raced it at Goodwood. "It took all week to get the mud off," said Graham of the versatile Edwardian vehicle.

Lyons in Merlyn F3

Frank Lyons raced his one-litre F3 Merlyn Mk10 for the first time for 12 months in the Derek Bell Trophy race at Goodwood last weekend. At the corresponding meeting in 2015, the HSCC chairman managed only a few feet as a gear broke when he dropped the clutch at the start. He finished 19th.

O'Neill replaces JP

Former BTCC racer Paul O'Neill was a late substitute for Jason Plato in the Gerry Marshall Trophy race at Goodwood. O'Neill stepped in to partner Adrian Barwick in the Mini 1275 GT previously owned and raced by Nick Swift. They finished 18th in the main event.

More races for GT40

Rob Hall shared Ford GT40 chassis 1014 with its owner Scott Walker in the Alan Mann Trophy race at Goodwood. Raced by Neil Corner in the late 1960s, the car was more recently raced by American Bill Binnie. Now tended by Hall and Hall in Lincolnshire, the car is expected to race more regularly this season. Saturday's race was the versatile Hall's first race in a GT40 and the duo took eighth.

Goodwood misses

Absent from the Historic F3 grid at Goodwood were intending category newcomers Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT15) and Jonathan Hughes (Merlyn Mk14). Late issues with cars not being ready sidelined both of the expected frontrunners from the Derek Bell Trophy race, but they are expected to join the grid in the near future.

Overnight repairs

Adam Brindle and Nigel Greensall finished sixth in the Gerry Marshall Trophy after a mighty effort by the RW Racing squad to repair Brindle's Rover SD1 overnight. The car took a knock in Saturday's race, which damaged the diff and so team boss Richard Walbyoff went back to base at Brackley to build up a spare back axle. He was back at Goodwood at 0100hrs on Sunday and the work was finished later that morning.

Lea Francis success

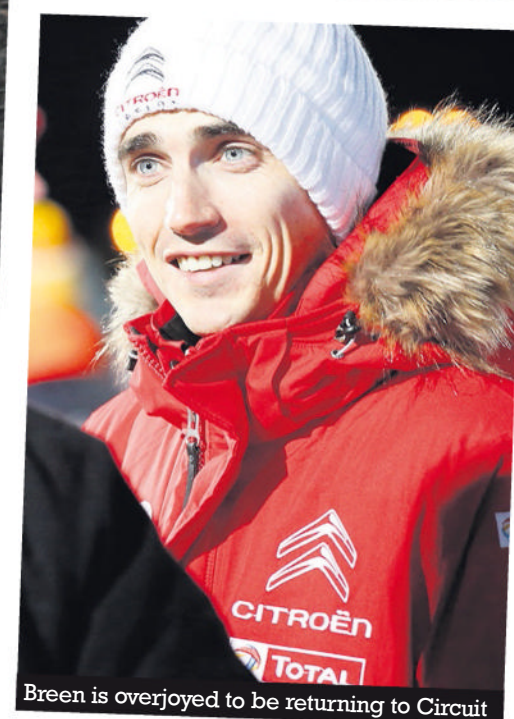
The Lea Francis (below) of Jeremy Brewster took a narrow win on the VSCC Herefordshire Trial, after only failing to clear three of the 15 hills. In overall terms, Brewster finished just one point ahead of the Austin 7 Sports of David Skelton. Matt Johnson's Austin 7 was third, while historic racer Simon Blakeney-Edwards was fifth in his Austin 7.



RALLY NEWS

Photos: ERC.com, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Breen will handle an R5 DS 3 on the Circuit



Breen is overjoyed to be returning to Circuit

BREEN GETS LATE DEAL TO DEFEND CIRCUIT OF IRELAND

World Rally Championship driver ties up agreement to defend Circuit success

By David Evans

Craig Breen will return to defend his 2015 Circuit of Ireland win following a last-minute deal for him to drive a Citroën DS 3 R5.

The Abu Dhabi Total World Rally Team driver was announced at the top of arguably the strongest Circuit entry list ever on Monday. He and co-driver Scott Martin will use a David Greer Motorsport car, testing it early in the week of the Belfast-based rally.

"I'm delighted to be doing the event," Breen told *MN*. "I'll be honest, I didn't think

there was much chance, but Bobby [Willis, event director] really spurred me on to get it sorted – not that I needed too much encouragement!"

Breen's DGM deal came together late last week.

"It was all very last minute," he said, "but the main thing is that we're doing it. There's a whole load of people I have to thank for getting me to the start line. I honestly don't think you'd fit them all in *MN* and I might forget the odd one, so it's best I don't start listing them. Suffice to say, I wouldn't be on an event that means so much to me without them."

Breen won last year's Circuit and will now look to surpass his hero Frank Meagher by taking back-to-back wins on Ireland's most famous rally.

"It's quite ironic that we're using one of David Greer's cars," said Breen, "David finished second to Frank when he won the Circuit in 1992.

"This time around it is definitely going to be an even bigger task. Last year we had the European Rally Championship competitors and guys like Robert Barrable and Alastair Fisher to worry about – this time around we've got three series (ERC, British Rally Championship and Irish Tarmac Championship) converging and those championships are all at the top of their game and bringing some serious competition."

Thirty-eight R5 cars are listed so far on the entry list for the April 7-9 event.

"That's more cars with a theoretical chance to win a rally than I can ever remember before," added Breen. "It's a massive entry and there's loads of quality in it. I think Elfyn's [Evans] has to be the benchmark. He's had a very strong start to the season and he comes in on the back of a round one win in the BRC.

Then there's Keith Cronin: this will be the first time he and I have crossed paths in a while and I think there's going to be a few eyes on that fight."

While Breen will be registering for the European Rally Championship element of the event, he says that he's unlikely to sign up for BRC points also.

"I haven't really thought much about that [BRC points]," Breen said, "but given that I can't really see myself doing any more BRC rounds this year, it would seem a bit unfair to potentially take points away from other [BRC] drivers."

"To be honest, I just want to get there and compete. Don't get me wrong, I'm desperate to win the Circuit again, but this event means so much to me, I'm over the moon just to be on the start line again."

Event director Willis added: "As you can imagine, with a capacity entry for the Circuit

CIRCUIT OF IRELAND LEADING ENTRIES

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Craig Breen/Scott Martin	Citroen DS 3 R5
2	Elfyn Evans/Craig Parry	Ford Fiesta R5
3	Kajetan Kajetanowicz/Jaroslav Baran	Ford Fiesta R5
4	Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Arnautov	Ford Fiesta R5
5	Keith Cronin/Mikie Galvin	Citroen DS 3 R5
6	Alastair Fisher/Gordon Noble	Ford Fiesta R5
7	Tom Cave/James Morgan	Ford Fiesta R5
8	Robert Consani/Maxime Vilnot	Citroen DS 3 R5
9	Fredrik Ahlin/Morten Abrahamson	Ford Fiesta R5
10	David Bogie/Kevin Rae	Skoda Fabia R5
11	Jaromir Tarabus/Daniel Trunkat	Skoda Fabia R5
12	Raul Jeets/Andrus Toom	Skoda Fabia R5
14	David Botka/Peter Szeles	Citroen DS 3 R5
15	Jonathan Greer/Kirsty Riddick	Citroen DS 3 R5
16	Marty McCormack/David Moynihan	Skoda Fabia S2000
17	Joseph McGonigle/Ciaran Geaney	Skoda Fabia S2000
18	Antonin Tlustak/Ladislav Kucera	Skoda Fabia R5
19	Della Federico/Pozzi Domenico	Citroen DS 3 R5
20	Neil Simpson/Elliott Edmondson	Skoda Fabia R5

of Ireland, we're very, very pleased – and Craig is really the icing on the cake for us. He's such a nice guy and obviously a big name and a

big draw for competitors over here. It's great news that he's got everything sorted to be able to come back to defend his win from last season."



Breen landed 2015 win

▶ ALL THE ACTION FROM THE LEE HOLLAND MEMORIAL RALLY

▶▶▶ PAGE 25



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'Armstrong takes first win of the season'

Border Counties report, p24



YOUNGEST McRAE MAKES RALLY DEBUT



Jimmy sat in with Max McRae

The third generation of the McRae rallying dynasty has begun after 11-year-old Max began testing a Mitsubishi Lancer E8 last month.

Max, son of former World Rally Championship star Alister, was given tuition by his five-time British Rally Champion grandfather Jimmy McRae Sr was impressed with the pace and natural flair behind the wheel.

After a day of testing in Western Australia, close to Alister's home, Jimmy told MN:

"I've got to say, I was a wee bit gobsmacked by the whole thing. When I got in the car, I looked down and, even with the seat moved right forward and with a cushion under him, he could hardly reach the pedals!

"Once we were away, I asked him how he'd learned to change gear. He told me he'd done it all on a simulator. Seems times have changed a bit..."

McRae Jr is a reigning state karting champion and will remain racing in the Cadet 12 category this season. Unlike the

UK, there's no provision for him to compete in rallies under the age of 17 – but there is a chance he could compete in some Junior events when he visits Britain.

Jimmy added: "Barrie [Lochhead, family friend who worked on Colin and Alister's early cars] has already told Alister he'll have a car waiting for Max when he comes home."

Max admitted that moment couldn't come soon enough, saying: "I've done a fair bit of karting now, but it was great to get to drive the rally car. Sliding

the car on gravel was great fun. I can't wait until I'm old enough to get into rallying."

Alister added: "It's all about Max enjoying what he's doing. There was a chance for him to get in the car and drive and he made the most of it."

According to Jimmy, Max has driven a rally car earlier than both his father and uncle Colin. "I don't think either of them drove a rally car until they were 17," said Jimmy. "They took my works van around the field before they were 17, mind..."



Gina (l) with Louise (r)

Daughter of Aitken-Walker gets RSAC New Talent scholarship

Gina Walker, daughter of the 1990 FIA World Rally Championship Ladies' Cup winner Louise Aitken-Walker, has been awarded this year's RSAC Motorsport New Talent Scholarship.

Walker, who is hoping to

follow her mother's successful career path in rallying, will contest the 2016 C2MotorsportParts.com Ecosse Challenge in her Citroen C2.

The 21-year-old from Duns said: "It's fantastic to win the scholarship, because this

allows me to cement my plans to get more experience and to move forward in 2016."

Walker began her Ecosse Challenge campaign at last week's Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally, where she finished sixth in class.

Higgins' huge Rally American streak broken

After 25 months and 14 victories, David Higgins' Rally America winning run has come to an end, after the Manxman lost last week's 100 Acre Wood Rally to Travis Pastrana.

After close competition between the two Subaru Rally Team USA entries, Higgins had just eased ahead with two stages left in the Missouri event, when his WRX broke a water pipe on a river crossing. The car had to be towed to the finish, but he still made second.

"Big congratulations to

our team-mates," said Higgins at the finish. "It was a great fight. Not the result we were looking for, but a great one-two for the team and fans."

Pastrana added: "I had more fun on this rally than I ever had at a rally. We had a brand new car and absolutely no technical problems. I couldn't have asked for a better result."

Higgins will look for revenge next time out at Portland's Oregon Trails Rally on gravel (April 22-24).

Marshall gets a renewed world rally deal

British co-driver Seb Marshall will contest at least three World Rally Championship events with the factory Hyundai team this season.

Marshall and driver Kevin Abbring will be present on the next two European WRC rounds in Portugal and Sardinia, where they will use a 2015-specification i20 WRC. A third, as-yet-undecided, event outing will be added later in the season.

In addition to those three events in an i20 WRC, Marshall is expected to compete in Hyundai's all-new i20 R5, which is set for a summer debut this season. Abbring and Marshall are



Marshall (l) joins Abbring (r)

spending much of the season testing both the R5 car and the 2017-specification i20 WRC – they were running the R5 in asphalt trim for the first time earlier this week.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Cottret is a legend at Peugeot"



Biting my tongue for the second time brought genuine acceptance that Jean-Paul Cottret is a hero. Like winning Dakar six times wasn't enough...

I was sitting in his seat alongside another Frenchman and another hero – but this one's won Dakar 12 times: Stephane Peterhansel. The plan was for me to get a feel for what Cottret does by reading his route notes and then getting out of the car and changing a tyre after a pretend puncture.

The notes looked pretty straightforward, nothing I hadn't seen before: tulip diagram and cumulative and interim distances from junction to corner to obstacle. And as changing a tyre... how difficult could that be?

"The car is very comfortable," assured Cottret, opening the door for me to get in.

Hmm. I didn't doubt it would be very comfortable. What I did doubt was my ability to get in it.

You know that thing when the postman's trying to push an oversized parcel through your letterbox?

And comfortable was questionable. I know the HANS device is all very good at stopping me from breaking my neck, but when you've always been taught to make eye contact when talking to somebody, it can almost cause an injury itself.

The test wasn't in Dakar – not least because Dakar's no longer in Dakar. It was in France. So, Dijon. And it was snowing.

That's not so bad; I remember watching a Rothmans-liveried Porsche 959 in the snow on the prologue stage near Paris once.

I digress.

Peter dropped the clutch and we were away.

"Hairpin right!" I shouted.

"Where?" came the reply.

What? Where what?

"I need the distance..."

Oh yeah...

"What now?"

Err...

"DISTANCE!"

The interim gave me the distances, but they were in kilometres, like 0.29. Sitting here, I know immediately that means 290 metres. Confronted by a distance of '0.09' I simply sat and stared at it. Nine hundred? No. Nine? Must be nine.

"Jump, nine metres!"

Then I bit my tongue. Again.

Stephane was awesome. And patient. Especially when it came to changing the tyre. And me getting out of the car...

And the Peugeot was something else. Quite how Bruno Famin and his team turned the absolute pig that was the 2015 car into this Dakar-dominating rocket ship is beyond me. But they did.

And Jean-Paul? He's nothing short of a miracle-working, tyre-changing, mathematical genius in the car.

Turns out it was 90, by the way.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RALLY NEWS

Photos: Lucy Rally Photography, Jakob Ebrey

MELLORS GAMBLES ON NATIONAL ENTRY

Proton crew in Circuit of Ireland shake-up



Mellors enjoyed Epynt asphalt

By Jack Benyon

Ollie Mellors has gambled by entering the national element of the Circuit of Ireland Rally – a round of the British, Irish and European championships and he is the only BRC 1 driver to do so.

The frontrunning R5 cars have paid to become part of the ERC – at a cost of around £2000 – but Mellors and co-driver Ian Windress have taken the shrewd move of entering the national section of the rally.

MN understands that multiple BRC 1 drivers threatened to boycott the event, as even the frontrunners of the Irish Tarmac and British championships had to pay to be seeded at the front because of its FIA international status. Otherwise they would be seeded behind ERC Junior drivers.

Mellors is campaigning in the BRC this year, and even though he is entering a different element of the rally in the national rather than the international, his times will be matched to the BRC runners overall in that championship. Theoretically Mellors could be running 50 cars

back from the BRC crews, but could be ahead of them in the order once the BRC amalgamates the times.

“I think we’ll be behind the ERC drivers [in the seeding] and it could make it very hard work,” explained Mellors. “We might be running in the dark and on muddy stages being quite far back. At the same time it can go the other way, if it rains it could dry up for us, we’ll just have to wait and see.”

The weather could play a major part in Mellors’s fate, if he meets a drying stage he could potentially go quicker than his fellow BRC crews.

There’s another key factor that could help Mellors, involving the reconnaissance: “We get another pass on the recce compared to the international crews too, which gives us another advantage compared to others,” he added.

The international runners will get two passes of the recce opposed to the national events’ three. With Mellors never doing the Circuit before – and with a host of new stages compared to 2015 anyway – the recce could be a contributing factor.

Mellors will go off as the 11th car in

the national category, and this could alleviate a problem for him which has also been discussed with the seeding. The R5 cars who haven’t paid for priority seeding will be behind the priority cars and could therefore catch the slower R2 machinery in front. However, Mellors’s move to the national means he’ll be behind multiple World Rally Cars competing on the event and shouldn’t have to worry as much about cars in front.

The first three cars behind the priority ERC Juniors are Josh Moffett, Max Vatanen and Sam Moffett, all Ford Fiesta R5 drivers.

Mellors and Windress competed on the Tour of Epynt earlier this month in order to set the car up for asphalt and familiarise themselves with the ranges they’ll be using on the Nicky Grist Stages in the BRC later this year.

The crew will be hoping to emulate Niall McShea’s early performance in a similar car on the Irish round of the world rally championship in 2009, when he pushed his Satria Neo S2000 on to third overall in the wet, but he later retired.

Seeding has divided opinions before Circuit

Thirty-eight R5s. I conservatively estimate that at a value of around £7.5million.

And that’s before upgrades, parts, servicing, man power, trailers, travel costs... you get the picture.

It’s a monster of an undertaking, but what an excellent job by the three championships to bring this many R5 cars to the Circuit in what will be the best entry for any rally anywhere this year.

However, the seeding issue has become a concern for crews. For anyone thinking far enough ahead, this has been an issue since the three series announced calendars for the year and we knew the BRC and Irish Tarmac was arriving.

It’s written in the regulations. That’s why I find it strange so many teams/drivers seem to have made a fuss at such a late stage. Surely these people at least have a working knowledge of the regs? Had forward thinking been implemented, the issue could have been foreseen and lobbied out in the open. Maybe a solution could have been found. Who knows? You can understand the stance of the relative championships trying to sort out such a vast problem a week or so before the event. Impossible.

Moving on, the lead battle was going to be the most intriguing part of the rally. Evans? Cronin? Now Breen? But now I’ve seen Mellors move to enter the national there’s more interest. Whether it’s a calculated move or an effort to save cash, you can’t argue that it provides a really interesting slant.

All it takes is one drying stage for the frontrunners of the national class for Mellors to take 20s. Of course it can work the other way, but that’s rallying. Rarely do we see tactical efforts with such creative thinking. You’d have to go back to the mid-1990s or even Group B to see that on a regular basis. But I like what Mellors has done. Underpowered S2000, mix things up. **Jack Benyon**



Carr/Sturdy: nightmare BRC start

Carr enters Somerset Stages and misses Circuit of Ireland

British Rally Championship juniors Nick Carr and Joe Sturdy will compete on next month’s Somerset Stages in the BTRDA in preparation for the BRC’s next gravel round.

The reigning BTRDA Rally First champions will compete with one eye on improving the set-up of their Ford Fiesta R2 before the Pirelli Carlisle Rally starting on April 30.

“We have a free entry for the Somerset from winning the BTRDA last year so that’s the main reason [we’re competing],” explained Carr, who has pulled their entry to the Circuit of Ireland for financial reasons. “Also with all the short stages we can try different set-ups in preparation for the Pirelli.”

The Fiesta pair had a troubled run on the British championship opener in Mid Wales earlier this month. Intercom issues led to a trip into a bank, which ripped a tyre off the rim. A broken shaft on stage five put them out for good.



Preston’s proposed Fabia livery

Preston gets Fabia R5 early with debut in BTRDA

Thomas Preston will give the Skoda Fabia R5 a BTRDA debut after receiving his car early.

MN originally reported that the car would arrive in May earlier this month but a customer cancellation has moved Preston up the list. He’ll debut the car on the Somerset Stages and should get the car this week.

“I am doing a test with Mark Higgins on the April 14, then the Somerset Stages with Jack Morton [co-driver],” said Preston. “I have never done the Somerset Stages before so I’m looking forward to it, the plan then is to do the remaining rounds of the BRC.”

The Somerset Stages on April 16 is one of the only BTRDA events Preston hasn’t done after two part schedules in 2014/15. Preston hasn’t confirmed all of the BRC rounds he will compete on, but will start with Carlisle on April 30/May 1 and has picked out the Manx as another possible counter: “The event after Somerset is the Pirelli [Carlisle] being run by CA1 Sport,” he added.

ARMSTRONG TAKES FIRST SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP WIN IN 2016

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'Field takes Anglesey victory'
Lee Holland report, p25



Photos: Martin Walsh

CUMISKEY SET FOR RALLY NORTH WALES IN FIESTA



Cumiskey will make R5 gravel debut

New R5 owner Brendan Cumiskey has confirmed his return to next month's Rally North Wales – four years after he last appeared on the gravel meeting.

The Dolgellau-based event takes place on Saturday, April 2, and will only be Cumiskey's third outing in his Ford Fiesta R5 and his first in the forests.

On his last visit to what was then known as the Bulldog National Rally the Louth-based driver finished 10th overall using a Group N Mitsubishi Lancer E9.

"I took part in the rally in 2012 and really enjoyed it," Cumiskey said. "I hope to do a few more gravel rallies during the course of the season. I feel that this is the best place for my confidence driving a left-hand-drive car to grow. I find gravel is more forgiving than Tarmac to learn on."

"This will be our first run out on gravel in the Fiesta R5 and the hope is that we can achieve a solid result. I really cannot wait to get going."

Cumiskey's primary focus this year will

be the Irish Tarmac Championship.

He finished sixth in class on the Galway International Rally and seventh in class at West Cork but admits to being overly cautious on the latter.

"It is going to take time to get confident and for me to maximise the car's ability," he said after switching from a JRM Subaru last year.

● The regulations are out for Rally North Wales and the event already has 122 entries.

IN BRIEF

England gets 2.0 R5

Martyn England has become the first owner of M-Sport's two-litre Fiesta R5 Evo in the UK. England briefly campaigned a Mitsubishi Lancer E10 last year, but will step up to the new machine on the Tour of Caerwent. The car was built with the Chinese and American markets in mind.

SMC to Anglesey

The SMC Stages will relocate from Weeton to Anglesey for the Stockport 061 Motor Club single-venue event. The Weeton Army Camp site near Blackpool has been their venue of choice since 2003 but when the chance came to revert to their original venue, Anglesey, the club opted to change. This year's event will take place on April 17.

Memorial Garden

Nigel Feeney steered his new Subaru Impreza B13 built by TEG Sport to a win on the inaugural rally held at RAF Condroit in Arbroath. Feeney – co-driven by Abi Loudon – headed Quintin Milne/Chris Collie to take the Memorial Garden Stages Rally organised by Glenrothes Motor Sport Club by nine seconds. Finlay Retson and Andrew Falconer headed the Junior ranks.



Fitzmaurice is still suffering from injuries from the crash

Fitzmaurice Subaru to return to stages

A rare Subaru will make a return to Irish rallying in the hands of previous owner Daragh O'Riordan on the Circuit of Kerry next month.

The Subaru S12c WRC is believed to be one of kind by Thomas Fitzmaurice, who is in rehabilitation following a crash in the same car on the Gortnagane stage of the 2013 Rally of the Lakes in Killarney. He suffered extensive injuries including two broken ankles while co-driver Fionn Foley was also injured. The car was also badly damaged.

Fitzmaurice says O'Riordan is the perfect driver to give the rebuilt car a maiden run.

"I have great faith in Daragh, he is very mechanically minded and of course he owned the car before," said Fitzmaurice. "I want him to give me the thumbs up on the car."

"We ran a test and everything is fine, it is just that I want to see it out on the stages. The car is the third person here. Myself and Fionn are nearly right, I just want to make sure the car is right as well."

Bell and Edwards: Welsh and BTRDA

Jamie Edwards will rejoin Brian Bell for a combined Welsh and BTRDA championship campaign starting with the Somerset Stages next month.

Edwards sat with Bell for the Cambrian last year in Bell's Dom Buckley-prepared Ford Focus WRC. Coordinating their schedules meant more outings were possible.

Edwards said: "Brian asked me if I was interested in doing the BTRDA and Welsh national from April onwards. It suited him not to do the Cambrian and Malcolm Wilson with work. I've recently become a dad so it wasn't feasible for me to commit to a whole season."

Edwards's new baby means a full campaign in the British Rally Championship wasn't possible this year.

KEEPING AN EYE ON IRELAND

BRIAN PATTERSON

"Not much sign of a deal on the Circuit"



BOGOF' is such an expressive word, great feel to it. It's maybe not in the Odhams Concise English dictionary, but surely everyone knows what it means 'Buy One Get One Free!' For some reason bogof sprang to mind last week when checking out the stages for the forthcoming Circuit of Kerry Rally.

The roads were brilliant, encompassing the route of some of the old Circuits of Ireland. We did see a wee lorry loaded to the gunnels with peat at the roadside. There was a 'For Sale' sign on the rather opaque windscreen of the lorry. The idea seemed to be that if you bought the lorry, the peat was thrown in. Or maybe it was the other way round. Sounded like some 'bogof' deal though.

Following the awful winter, with months of rain, last week the sun-soaked fields had a golden sheen. Mouth watering rally conditions!

It was reminiscent of many happy Easter weekends on the Circuit of Ireland, with mile after mile of the most fabulous Tarmac roads.

We were also on this year's Circuit stages later in the week – Orra Lodge, Glendun, Cairncastle, Hamilton's Folly to name a few. All stages steeped in rally history. Over 'Fisher's Jump' on Hamilton's Folly, for an instant thoughts turned to the late Bertie and the new Fergus McAnallen book, *King Fisher*.

This year's event is again a counter in the European Championship, as it was last year. Of course the Circuit was a European event years ago when it also attracted some great drivers from far afield. It was a different rally then, with 60 special stages over five days, around 600 competitive miles in a 1200-mile route. Those days are gone of course, never to return. On one of those rallies years ago Markku Alen was competing for the factory Fiat/Lancia team. Every Irish man or woman is proud of the rally.

This year there is not much sign of a deal either, for the home drivers anyway. Someone like Keith Cronin, leading the Clonakilty Blackpudding Tarmac Championship points table following two maximum scores, is in a constant battle to source the funds to compete at all. He will have to pay 3000 euros to register for the European Championship to get both a decent seeding and a bit of Eurosport TV coverage. Of course there is a substantial prize fund, which may lessen the pain. Sam and Josh Moffett are second and third in the points, so they will have to fork out as well. I wonder if they could get a bogoff deal? Probably not.

Still, it looks as if it will be a brilliant rally, with the most varied and talented entry seen here for many a long day. Indeed the rally is in a way the victim of its own success. The entry is so oversubscribed that many drivers will not get a run. The rally is not at Easter, a fact that some non-rally people don't seem to be cottoning on to just yet. It is two weeks after Easter.

Bang goes another family tradition – if it's Easter it's Circuit time. But then it's a bit like the 60 stages and the 600 competitive miles over one long weekend – time rolls on.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

SOPER TOPS BATTLE OF THE GT40s

In a weekend peppered with big accidents and a lot of safety car laps, the Goodwood Members' Meeting still delivered some outstanding action from amazing grids.

Headlining Saturday's action was the **Alan Mann Trophy**, a two-driver hour-long contest for Ford GT40s that ran into the dusk of the early evening. A star-studded pack of 25 GT40s made for a breathtaking spectacle and any one of four or five cars could have won the race.

After some early shuffling, World Touring Car star Rob Huff took control of the race and was nicely on target to hand Richard Meins a useful lead until the ailing front brakes finally disappeared and the car was retired.

Rob Hall worked into second in the car of Scott Walker but was soon under pressure from Mike Jordan who had charged up the field from a misfire-hindered 14th on the grid. They raced hard and Jordan looked for a gap, but Hall defended resolutely and Jordan stopped early to hand over to ex-BTCC champion son Andrew.

Hall stayed out to the very end of the pitstop window but Jordan swept ahead before Walker rejoined and the former lead car was bundled down

the order over the final 20 minutes.

It all looked good for Jordan until a rear wheel bearing failed with 10 laps to go and the Steve Soper/David Cuff car took the lead. However, on a mission was Phil Keen after taking over from Oliver Bryant and Keen was within half a second of Soper when the oil light, which had been flickering for some time, stayed on through the chicane and Keen quickly turned the engine off to avoid major harm.

"We just tried to keep the lead cars in sight," said Cuff as Martin Stretton/Tony Wood and Simon Hadfield/Joaquin Folch wrapped up the podium at the end of an absorbing contest.

The **Gerry Marshall Trophy** for Group 1 touring cars was another major crowd-pleaser, with some sensational racing all down the order from a high-quality field. Saturday's 15-minute appetiser, which really only served to set the grid for Sunday's two-driver thrash, was won at a canter by Chris Ward in the JD Classics Rover SD1.

With Ward backed up by Gordon Shedden on Sunday, another win was on the cards and Ward duly shot clear in the early laps. However, a major oil slick at St Mary's from the expired Rover of Tiff Needell turned the race around as the safety car was scrambled

and Ward's vital time advantage was swept away.

The 2015 race-winning Chevrolet Camaro of David Clark/Matt Neal lost time with a rear puncture, but making strong progress was the Bryant family Camaro and, after the stops, Oliver Bryant was able to hunt Shedden down and sweep ahead with three laps to go. Ultimately, the Camaro won by nine seconds even though Grahame B had spun on the oil at St Mary's.

It was a first Goodwood win for the Bryants. "It's great to do it as a father and son team," said Bryant Sr.

"I tried my best but the safety car compromised us," said Ward.

John Young/Steve Soper completed the podium as the best of the Ford Capri pack. The best non-Camaro lap was, however, 2s down on Neal's fastest tour.

Although interrupted by Stephen Bond's accident (see *Racing News*, page 13), the **Brooks Trophy** for pre-1960 Grand Prix cars was an excellent race as Barry Cannell (Cooper T51) had to work very hard to fend off a determined challenge from the four-wheel-drive Ferguson in the capable hands of Nick Adams. A rocket start set the Ferguson away and the wily Cannell only just wriggled back ahead. He then had to contend with a safety car stint as Gregor

Fisken added his Ferrari Dino to the lead contest until a late spin at Woodcote.

Another race truncated by the safety car was the **Derek Bell Trophy** for one-litre F3 cars, but this was always going to belong to Andrew Hibberd, having his first race in his father's ex-Chris Irwin Brabham BT18. In the few racing laps the cars had, Hibberd went clear as Peter Thompson fought off Jim Blockley for second. James King, race winner a year earlier, was an early casualty after his engine grenaded on the Lavant Straight.

On the Goodwood debut for the cars, the Edwardian pack covered itself in glory in the **SF Edge Trophy** as a wonderful contest raged at the head of the pack of outrageous century-old machines. It all came down to a cat-and-mouse contest between Duncan Pittaway's GN Curtiss, the vast V12 Delage of circuit newcomer Mathias Sielecki and the increasingly brakeless 1916 Sunbeam Indianapolis of Julian Majzub.

Pittaway won the deciding dash to the line by less than a quarter of a second from Sielecki as Majzub chased. "You don't often get races like that," said a jubilant Pittaway. "That car is huge when it comes barreling past you," he said of the Delage.



Tin-top encounter gets underway

The Daytona Cobra Coupes of friends James Cottingham and Andrew Smith easily had the legs of the rest of a class field of pre-1966 GT cars in the **Graham Hill Trophy**. Unfortunately, this was another race interrupted by a safety car after Karsten Le Blanc went off heavily at Fordwater in his AC Cobra.

Will Nuthall toyed with fellow Cooper-Bristol pilot Eddie McGuire before rushing clear in the **Parnell Cup**, while Richard Meaden was the class of a typically lively **Whitmore Cup** for under two-litre touring cars. Mark Sumpter, racing solo in his Lotus Cortina for the first time, kept Meaden honest for the 10-minute dash, while Nick Swift came out on top of a wonderful but all too brief Mini contest with Nick Padmore, Jason Stanley and Rob Huff.

The **Bruce McLaren Trophy** race was halted after two laps and not restarted after Michiel Smits flew off the track at Woodcote. At the time of the red flag, Nick Padmore, Phil Keen and Olly Bryant were limbering up for a Lola T70 Spyder slug-fest.

As the light faded, Sam Hancock wrapped up the weekend with a resounding **Peter Collins Trophy** win in the mighty Cunningham C4R. ■

Paul Lawrence

GOODWOOD HIGHLIGHTS

BY PAUL LAWRENCE AND KEVIN TURNER

917 HEAVEN



In any list of the greatest racing sportscars of all time, the Porsche 917 will appear more often than most. Incredibly, the design of this ground-breaking Le Mans winner will soon be half a century old, but examples still draw huge crowds whenever they rarely break cover.

With typical Goodwood panache, the demonstration sessions over the weekend included Group 5 sports cars of the era and no less than eight of the stunning 917s took to the

track. It is now very rare to have so many 917s in action together.

Among the drivers was 1970 Le Mans winner Richard Attwood, one of the men to truly tame the fearsome 917 in period.

However, pride of place went to local hero Derek Bell in a 917 from the Porsche museum. It was the chassis he tested at Goodwood back in 1970 before being offered a factory drive.

"A unique and emotional

experience," said Bell of being reunited with the 917 he drove in Sussex 46 years ago. "We didn't have any imagination back then," he admitted when asked about the challenge of driving a car that was notoriously tricky, yet capable of 240mph at Le Mans in long-tailed form.

Six 512s also made a fine sight (and sound), particularly the Coda Lunga of Franco Meiners, though Oliver Bryant looked quickest in the Lola T70 he races regularly.

JORDAN'S STAR DRIVE GOES UNREWARDED

In nearly four decades of racing, Mike Jordan has been through the highs and lows of the sport. But Saturday's retirement from the Alan Mann Trophy delivered a bitter disappointment.

An oiled plug in qualifying left Philip Walker's Ford GT40 only 14th on the grid. However, the early laps were Jordan Sr at his very

best, rising into the top three inside five laps.

After a battle with leader Rob Hall, Jordan elected to wind back and shadow Hall, knowing that he would stop early and hand the car to his son Andrew.

With 10 laps to run, it had all fallen into place and then a rear wheel bearing failed and a clear run to famous victory was gone.



EDWARDIAN ENCOUNTER



Goodwood's decision to run a race for Edwardian cars during the Members' Meeting might have surprised some, but the impressive leviathans were bound to entertain and even before the start of qualifying big crowds had gathered to take a closer look.

From the 1903 Mercedes of Gareth Graham to several 1923 cars, this was a grid of remarkable engineering from a century ago.

In a world where the curse of one-make racing can make the modern sport uninspiring, the Edwardian racers are wonderfully diverse, ranging from diminutive hillclimb specials like Winston Teague's GN Wasp to vast aero-engine monsters.

Goodwood's oldest ever race was a real hit with the crowd and will surely be repeated.

EETING

Photos: Gary Hawkins and LAT



per/Cuff (41) GT40
n as others wilted

RESULTS

Alan Mann Trophy for Ford GT40s (39 laps)
1 David Cuff/Steve Soper 55m43.593s (99.94mph); 2 Tony Wood/Martin Stretton +22.505s; 3 Joaquin Folch-Rusinol/Simon Hadfield; 4 Roger Wills/Tim Harvey; 5 Michael Gans/Andy Wolfe; 6 Craig Davies/Henry Mann. Fastest lap Frank Stüpler 1m21.607s (104.99mph). Pole position Kenny Brack. Starters 25.

Gerry Marshall Trophy part one (10 laps) 1 Chris Ward (Rover SD1) 15m06.407s (94.52mph); 2 John Young (Ford Capri) +9.683s; 3 Nigel Garrett (Chevrolet Camaro); 4 David Clark (Camaro); 5 Grahame Bryant (Camaro); 6 Kerry Michael (Ford Escort RS2000). FL Ward 1m28.698s (96.59mph). P Oliver Bryant (Camaro). S 25.

Part two (28 laps) 1 G Bryant/O Bryant 46m04.966s (86.76mph); 2 Ward/Gordon Shedden +8.928s; 3 Young/Steve Soper; 4 Michael/Chris Sanders; 5 Ric Wood/Adam Morgan (Capri); 6 Adam Brindle/Nigel Greensall (SD1). FL Matt Neal (Camaro) 1m26.464s (99.09mph). S 27.

Brooks Trophy (10 laps) 1 Barry Cannell (Cooper T51) 18m06.124s (78.88mph); 2 Nick Adams (Ferguson P99) +0.466s; 3 John Chisholm (Lotus 18); 4 Paul Smeeth (Lotus 18); 5 Tony Smith (Ferrari 246 Dino); 6 Barrie Baxter (BRM P25). FL Gregor Fisken (246 Dino) 1m27.953s (97.41mph). P Cannell. S 28.

Derek Bell Cup (11 laps) 1 Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18) 26m26.953s (59.39mph); 2 Peter Thompson (Brabham BT21) +5.456s; 3 Jim Blockley (Chevron B17); 4 Simon Armer (March 703); 5 Marcus Mussa (Tecno); 6 Christoph Widmer (Brabham BT18A). FL Hibberd 1m25.572s (100.12mph). P Hibberd. S 26.

SF Edge Trophy (8 laps) 1 Duncan Pittaway (GN Curtiss) 15m10.150s (75.31mph); 2 Mathias Sielecki (Delage V12) +0.230s; 3 Julian Majzub (Sunbeam Indianapolis); 4 Mark Walker (Darracq); 5 Hughie Walker (GN Thunderbug); 6 John Polson (Hudson Super Six). FL Pittaway 1m50.392s (77.61mph). P Majzub. S 26.

Graham Hill Trophy (14 laps) 1 James Cottingham (Shelby Daytona Cobra) 24m41.341s (80.97mph); 2 Andrew Smith (Shelby Daytona Cobra) +0.504s; 3 Rob Hall (AC Cobra); 4 David Hart (AC Cobra); 5 Gary Pearson (Jaguar E-type); 6 Bradley Ellis (E-type). FL Cottingham 1m23.981s (102.02mph). P Cottingham. S 28.

Parnell Cup (7 laps) 1 Will Nuthall (Cooper-Bristol) 11m01.223s (90.70mph); 2 Eddie McGuire (Cooper-Bristol) +6.016s; 3 Mark Valvekens (Gordini Type 16); 4 David Wenman (Cooper-Bristol); 5 Chris Phillips (Cooper-Bristol); 6 Barry Wood (Cooper-Bristol). FL Nuthall 1m32.059s (93.07mph). P Nuthall. S 20.

Whitmore Cup (7 laps) 1 Richard Meaden (Lotus Cortina) 10m53.594s (91.76mph); 2 Mark Sumpter (Cortina) +4.182s; 3 John Young (Cortina); 4 Andrew Banks (Alfa Romeo GTA); 5 Nick Swift (Mini Cooper S); 6 Tony Wood (BMW 1800). FL Meaden 1m32.452s (92.67mph). P Meaden. S 29.

Bruce McLaren Trophy (2 laps) 1 Nick Padmore (Lola T70 Spyder) 2m57.616s (96.48mph); 2 Phil Keen (T70 Spyder) +1.216s; 3 Oliver Bryant (T70 Spyder); 4 Pedro Macedo Silva (T70 Spyder); 5 Chris Drake (McLaren M1B); 6 Chris Jolly (Cooper T61). FL Padmore 1m23.130s (103.06mph). P Padmore. S 25.

Peter Collins Trophy (7 laps) 1 Sam Hancock (Cunningham CAR) 10m59.216s (90.98mph); 2 Steve Boulton Brooks (Aston Martin DB3S) +26.089s; 3 Richard Woolmer (HWM); 4 Conrad Ulrich (Maserati 300S); 5 Fred Wakeman (Jaguar C-type); 6 Nigel Webb (C-type). FL Hancock 1m32.839s (92.29mph). P Hancock. S 24.



WILL NUTHALL: RISING HISTORIC AGE

There were plenty of talented young racers in action at Goodwood and in the historic grand prix car arena, the one to watch was Will Nuthall.

Being the son of one of the most respected preparers of historic single-seaters is a massive leg up, of course, and Will is showing true class in cars that are 40 years older than he is.

In the Parnell Cup for pre-1953 single-seaters, he took Steve Russell's ex-Bob Gerard Cooper-Bristol to a resounding win and qualified second fastest in the Cooper T51 of John Saunders for the earlier Brooks Trophy.

F1 GROUND EFFECTS



Ground effect F1 cars of the late 1970s and early 1980s were celebrated with two groups of cars demonstrated. Three-time Indy 500 winner Dario Franchitti drove the famous twin-chassis Lotus 88 (top), while the Ligier-Matra JS17 of Rob Hall (above), Ferrari 312T5 (Andrew Willis) and Bobby Verdon-Roe's McLaren MP4/1 also starred. Unofficially, the quickest drivers also lapped significantly faster than the Goodwood lap record...

SUPER TIN-TOPS



The Super Touring era of the 1991-2000 period stands out as the high watermark for the British Touring Car Championship and the category provided the most recent machinery on track last weekend. Former stars Emanuele Pirro (Audi A4), John Cleland (Vauxhall Vectra) and Patrick Watts (Peugeot 406) were among those giving the exotic tin-tops a run. "You've got to feel uncomfortable in one of these Super Tourers to be quick," said double BTCC champion Cleland, who plans to race the Vectra in the Super Touring Trophy again this season.



TVR COMEBACK

Mike Whitaker brought the ex-works TVR Griffith 'BFR 400B' back to racing at Goodwood after a mighty effort to rebuild the car for the Members' Meeting.

Marque expert Nigel Reuben finished the car just in time for a quick shakedown run on Wednesday, but Whitaker was able to take an encouraging eighth place, despite his pace being hampered by the early loss of third gear.

Back in 1965, former World War Two pilot Tommy Entwistle raced the car at Goodwood and Sunday's Graham Hill Trophy race was its first race since the end of the 1965 season.



RACING REPORTS

DONINGTON PARK: 750MC BY RORY MITCHELL
MARCH 19/20

Photos: Steve Jones

PORSCHE PAIRING TAKES ENDURO WIN



Demetriou and Evans's Porsche

The 750 Motor Club kick-started its season with a rammed schedule at Donington Park.

The meeting brought old favourites and new starts. And it was a strong start for the new **Club Enduro** series in what was a race of attrition for most of its competitors. Ben Demetriou/Jonathan Evans took the win in the Porsche 968 ahead of Andy Marston/Brett Evans and Leighton Norris. Class C was won by Liam Crilly/Jonny MacGregor in a Mazda RX-8 while Class I was taken by Paul Aram/Rui Ferreira in a Caterham 7.

Ian Allee won the first of the two **Locost** races on Saturday. Allee was able to take the lead from Jack Coveney in the closing stages in the first race. In the second race there was a red flag on the opening lap due to a five-car pile-up at Redgate. At the restart, there was a closely fought battle to the end between Danny Andrew, Tim Neat, Allee and Coveney, but it was Andrew who took the spoils.

The **Classic Stock Hatch** race got suspended almost as quickly as it started when a red flag was brought out due to contact at Redgate between Stuart Place

and Ryan Clarke. At the restart, Matt Rozier made a crucial move on the inside of Lee Scott into Redgate, which allowed him to stretch the gap until the finish.

The second race featured a reverse of that order when Scott managed to take the lead on the opening lap. Matthew Stubington also had a good run after starting from the sixth row of the grid, making it up to fourth before successfully challenging Andrew Thorpe for third on the final lap. Stubington was later penalised 10 seconds for a jumped start and dropped to sixth.

Adam Shepherd took double victories in the **M3 Cup** after managing to win the first by overtaking Brian Chandler into Redgate and controlling the pace in the morning race. In the afternoon, Shepherd pulled off a similar win, overtaking both Mark Anderson and Kevin Dengate at the start. Luke Sedzikowski was also making moves in the second race, getting into third after Dengate ran wide into the first corner. The next lap he went for second, making use of Anderson's poor run out of Redgate to make the move stick into Hollywood.

James Bark won the first **Clio 182** race on Sunday, after a late challenge from George Williams going through Old Hairpin and McLeans. Bark was able to hold on though, with Williams dropping back after an opportunistic move from Philip Wright at the final chicane. In the second race Bark was on a comeback drive after losing positions in a scrap for second, managing to salvage second place behind Patrick Fletcher, who took the win, and ahead of Don de Graaff.

Paul Smith took two wins in **Formula Vee**. Smith won ahead of Graham Gant and Craig Pollard in the first race after controlling the pace from pole, while Pollard battled for second with Gant. In the second race Smith finished ahead of John Hughes and James Harridge.

In the **Stock Hatch** races, it was Paul Jarvis and Ryan Polley who took victory in the first and second races respectively. There was a nice scrap in the second race between the pair, as they ran nose-to-tail and pulled off aggressive defensive moves through Redgate and McLeans.

It was Matthew Howarth who took the win from Neil

Stringfellow by 8.9 seconds in the **Hot Hatch** race. In the second race however, Tom Bell was able to win from Alistair Camp and Howarth, after a nice comeback drive through the field.

Will Sharpe won the **Super Cooper Cup** ahead of Stephen Rose and Caroline Gilbert.

In the second race on Saturday it was again Rose from Gilbert, with Martin Hathaway taking the final top three position.

Jason Williams won the **Armed Forces Challenge** race ahead of Darren Howe after making use of track position during the pitstop phase as eventual third-placed finisher Ed McKean lost the lead.

The **Toyota MR2** grid was so large the entry had to split into three groups.

In the Group A v C race Kristian White won ahead of Jim Davies. Michael Wells took third position.

In Group B v C Davies won ahead of Alex Knight and Cam Walton, while the Group A v B race was won by White ahead of Ben Rowe and Mick Nicholls.

RESULTS



Locost series featured packed grids yet again

750 Formula Championship (10 laps)
1 Ed Pither (PRS 1b) 13m13.67s (88.45mph); 2 Robin Gearing (Dart P88) +13.94s; 3 Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV); 4 Peter Bove (Darki Mk4/5); 5 Chris Gough (CGR2 Evo); 6 Bob Simpson (SS/F 750F). Fastest lap Pither 1m16.75s (91.47mph). Pole Pither. Starters 14.
Race two (11 laps) 1 Pither 14m40.32s (87.72mph); 2 Cowley +16.12s; 3 Bove; 4 Gough; 5 Mark Glover (Racekits Falcon); 6 Simpson. FL Pither 1m17.72s (90.32mph). P Cowley. S 11.

750 Trophy Series (9 laps) 1 Martin Depper (Centaur Mk4) 15m22.36s (88.50mph); 2 Trefor Slatter (Centaur Mk11) +14.04s; 3 Tim Grigsby (Merlin); 4 Chris Hopkins (HCS Trophy); 5 John Skeavington (Austin Ulster); 6 Ian Grant (Austin 7 Pigsty Special). Class winner Skeavington. FL Slatter 1m38.14s (71.53mph). P Hopkins. S 10.

Club Enduro Series (85 laps)
1 Ben Demetriou/Jonathan Evans (Porsche 968) 2hrs00m39.54s (82.42mph); 2 Andy Marston/Brett Evans (BMW E46 M3) +57.70s; 3 Leighton Norris (Toyota Super GT); 4 Neville Anderson/Allan Gibson (Toyota Super GT); 5 Steve Hewson/Neal Martin (Peugeot 106 GTI/VW Caddy); 6 Liam Crilly/Jonny MacGregor (Mazda RX-8). CW Anderson/Gibson; Crilly/MacGregor; Paul Aram/Rui Ferreira (Caterham 7). FL Anderson/Gibson 1m19.66s (88.12mph). P Marston/B Evans. S 22.

Locost Championship (10 laps)
1 Ian Allee (Locost) 14m51.88s (78.71mph); 2 Danny Andrew +1.91s; 3 Richard Bradley; 4 Garry Brandon; 5 Steve Paddock; 6 Jack Coveney. FL Andrew 1m27.30s (80.41mph). P Coveney. S 35.
Race two (7 laps) 1 Andrew 10m34.77s (77.41mph); 2 Tim Neat +0.45s; 3 Allee; 4 Coveney; 5 Lee Emm; 6 Ben Powney. FL Andrew 1m28.21s (79.58mph). P Emm. S 30.

Classic Stock Hatch Championship (8 laps)
1 Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205GT) 11m44.16s (79.75mph); 2 Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i) +1.98s; 3 Edward Cooper (Vauxhall Nova GS); 4 Matthew Stubington (Peugeot 205GT); 5 Benjamin Leach (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 6 Paul Thorpe (Ford Fiesta XR2). FL Rozier 1m26.47s (81.18mph). P Scott. S 23.

Race two (10 laps) 1 Scott 14m29.79s (79.79mph); 2 Rozier +0.16s; 3 Andrew Thorpe (Citroen AX GT); 4 P Thorpe; 5 Cooper; 6 Stubington. FL Rozier 1m26.75s (80.92mph). P Scott. S 23.

M3 Cup/Super Cooper Cup (15 laps)
1 Adam Shepherd 19m42.54s (89.05mph); 2 Brian Chandler +3.08s; 3 Mark Anderson; 4 Garry Hufford; 5 Mathew Wallis; 6 Kevin Dengate. CW Will Sharpe (Mini Cooper S). FL Shepherd 1m17.68s (90.37mph). P Shepherd. S 16.

Race two (10 laps) 1 Shepherd 13m09.62s (88.90mph); 2 Luke Sedzikowski +11.34s; 3 Anderson; 4 Dengate; 5 Hufford;

6 Peter Isherwood. CW Sharpe (Mini Cooper S). FL Shepherd 1m17.95s (90.06mph). P Shepherd. S 15.

Clio 182 Championship (11 laps)
1 James Bark (Renault Clio 182) 15m28.52s (83.16mph); 2 Philip Wright +3.12s; 3 Patrick Fletcher; 4 George Williams; 5 Don de Graaff; 6 Trevor Gregory. FL Fletcher 1m23.42s (84.15mph). P Bark. S 21.

Race two (11 laps) 1 Fletcher 15m34.55s (82.63mph); 2 Bark +0.74s; 3 De Graaff; 4 Wright; 5 Williams; 6 Martin Ward. FL Bark 1m23.69s (83.88mph). P Bark. S 21.

Formula Vee Championship (11 laps)
1 Paul Smith (AHS Dominator) 14m54.28s (86.35mph); 2 Graham Gant (WEV FV01) +8.28s; 3 Craig Pollard (Bears GAC); 4 Paul Taylor (Bears GAC); 5 James Harridge (Maverick Vee); 6 Ian Buxton (GAC Daghorn). CW Harridge. FL Buxton 1m19.97s (87.78mph). P Smith. S 23.

Race two (11 laps)
1 Smith 15m04.53s (83.54mph); 2 John Hughes (Scarab Mk5) +9.38s; 3 Harridge; 4 Harry Webb (AHS Dominator); 5 Jack Wilkinson (Sheane Mk3); 6 Gant. CW Harridge. FL Buxton 1m19.57s (88.22mph). P Smith. S 22.

Hot Hatch/Stock Hatch Series (7 laps)
1 Matthew Howarth (Vauxhall Astra GS) 10m04.90s (81.24mph); 2 Neil Stringfellow (Peugeot 206 GTI) +8.97s; 3 Paul Jarvis (Citroen Saxo VTR); 4 Ryan Polley (Citroen Saxo VTR); 5 Phil Law (Citroen Saxo VTR); 6 William Hunt (Citroen Saxo VTR). CW Stringfellow; Jarvis; Adam Reed (BMW Compact). FL Howarth 1m23.84s (83.93mph). P Tom Bell (Ford Fiesta ST). S 17.
Race two (11 laps) 1 Bell 15m09.08s (84.94mph); 2 Alistair Camp (Ford Fiesta ST) +2.20s; 3 Howarth; 4 David Allen (Ford Fiesta ST); 5 Polley; 6 Jarvis. FL Bell 1m19.33s (88.49mph). CW Allen; Polley; Mac McCarthy (Ford Fiesta ST). P Howarth. S 17.

Armed Forces Challenge (26 laps)
1 Jason Williams (BMW M3) 40m42.71s (74.72mph); 2 Darren Howe (VW Golf) +48.78s; 3 Ed McKean (BMW 325i); 4 Chris Wood (BMW 325i); 5 Grant Hatfield (Mini Cooper S); 6 Dan Tedstone (Honda Civic Type-R). CW Howe; Chris Slator (Peugeot 306 GTI). FL Williams 1m21.93s (85.68mph). P McKean. S 25.

Toyota MR2 Championship (10 laps)
1 Kristian White 14m15.87s (82.02mph); 2 Jim Davies +0.73s; 3 Michael Wells; 4 Cam Walton; 5 Timothy Heron; 6 Paul Cook. CW Wells; Paul Callaway. FL Davies 1m24.18s (83.39mph). P Davies. S 32.

Race two (10 laps) 1 Davies (Toyota MR2) 14m22.72s (81.37mph); 2 Alex Knight +0.34s; 3 Walton; 4 Ben Rowe; 5 Mick Nicholls; 6 Nigel Ralphson. CW Nicholls. FL Walton 1m24.73s (82.85mph). P Knight. S 27.
Race three (10 laps) 1 White 14m23.12s (81.33mph); 2 Rowe +4.10s; 3 Nicholls; 4 Ralphson; 5 Heron; 6 Wayne Lewis. CW Nicholls; Callaway. FL Knight 1m24.84s (82.74mph). P Knight. S 30.



Ed Pither (1), ahead of his rivals Gearing (85) and Cowley

Pither takes a double in 750 Formula series, but three-car fights enliven the contest

Ed Pither took a dominant double victory in the opening 750 Formula races of the season at Donington, ahead of Robin Gearing in what was a thrilling duel throughout the first race.

While Gearing was able to take the lead in the opening stages, Pither challenged for the top spot later and took it into the final chicane.

He then stretched the gap to the tune of 13.9 seconds at the chequered flag.

Bill Cowley was also onto

the back of Gearing at this stage, sizing him up into Redgate and through Hollywood.

His power disadvantage on the straights was hurting his ability to catch up, which sealed his fate.

In the second race, Gearing and Pither managed to get ahead of Cowley in the opening stages, but their battling cost them time and brought Cowley back into play. After a rather NASCAR-style moment from Cowley,

who bump-drafted Gearing down the Wheatcroft Straight, he made his move for second on the next lap, where he was able to slingshot into the chicane and overtake a more cautious Gearing.

Cowley then defended with all his might, making his rather narrow Cowley MkIV as wide as he could. Gearing was close coming through the Old Hairpin on the final lap, and tried a move on the inside of McLeans but

it wasn't enough, which allowed Cowley to hold on to second.

Post-race scrutineering found that Gearing's rear wing was too high, which meant he was disqualified and promoted Peter Bove to third place.

Martin Depper won the 750 Trophy race ahead of Trefor Slatter and Tim Grigsby. Grigsby and Chris Hopkins traded third throughout the final five laps with the former getting the nod.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

'Manchester won despite spin'
MSVR Allcomers, below



'Dorlin annihilated the opposition'
Michelin Clio Cup, below



OULTON PARK: BARC BY PETER SCHERER

MARCH 19

Photos: Mick Walker, Richard Styles

SUTTON AND ZANETTI TAKE JUNIOR SALOON WINS

George Sutton and Matteo Zanetti shared the victory spoils in two action-packed Junior Saloons races.

Polesitter Edward Moore led race one away but Sutton had gained the upperhand by the end of the first lap. Although Moore went back ahead into Knickerbrook, the pressure told as they arrived at Island for the third time. "Once I was ahead I just put my head down and got away," said Sutton as he eased to a 2.8s victory.

Moore was soon under pressure for second too, as Zanetti closed in and their duel brought Oliver Willmott into contention. But it was Zanetti that lost out as Willmott maximised his opportunity to secure second as Moore was wide again at Island on lap seven. Zanetti came back to snatch third as they started the penultimate lap, leaving Moore to take fourth from Adam Batty and Ethan Hammerton.

Moore managed to retain the opening lap lead in race two after Sutton had muscled his way past Zanetti at Old Hall on the opening lap. But by the end of lap three it had become a four-car lead train. Sutton soon hit the front from Moore, Zanetti and Batty.

Having seen off Moore a couple of laps later, Zanetti had the lead into Old Hall as they started lap six and that left the rest to fight for second. Moore regained second and just held on despite Sutton's continuous presence, while Batty, Charlie Kennedy and Willmott completed the top six.

James Dorlin annihilated the opposition to take two lights-to-flag

victories in the Michelin Clio Cup. In the first race, Brett Lidsey soon dropped back but retained second throughout, despite intermittent challenges from Samuel Randon.

Daniel Kirby and Luke Pinder had a good duel for fourth until Kirby got sideways at Cascades and Pinder picked up a track limits penalty, which handed the place to Tom Barley. Lidsey was a solitary second again in race two once Dorlin was over the horizon, while Pinder completed the podium after Kirby ran wide at Old Hall on lap four.

Nick Dunn managed to consolidate his lead in the first Max5 race after sneaking ahead of Richard Breland. The lead quartet had paired off early on, which left Chris Webster defending third from Russell Tamplin after they had exchanged on lap two.

Dunn managed to hold his lead, while Breland, Webster and Tamplin all held station, leaving Steve Dolman to gain the upperhand over Geoff Gouriet for fifth with a lap to go.

Breland led again at the start of the second race but kept the door firmly closed as Dunn looked for the gap again. They were able to ease clear as Webster, again in third, had Dolman and Tamplin inches behind. But Breland's reward for his race one defeat was complete. "His pace was relentless once he had beat me into the first corner," said Dunn.

Tamplin was into fourth at Cascades on lap six and threatened Webster again, before Dolman briefly split them on lap nine. Webster just held on for his second



Sutton took a victory and a third at Oulton

podium, from Tamplin, Dolman and Gouriet.

From a four-car battle into the final stages, 2CV legend Pete Sparrow claimed another victory with a lap to go. Matthew Hollis had his share of the lead but had to settle for second, surviving late pressure from Thomas Perry, after Steven Walford had gone off at Knickerbrook on the last lap.

Kris Tovey led for most of race two and was declared the winner when a shunt at Druids brought an early end. Lien Davies and Mick Storey completed the podium.

Although Adrian Wray was a double winner in the MG Owners Club, his

victories differed greatly. In race one he led from pole and spent most of the race with Andrew Rogerson inches from his ZR's tailgate. They remained unchanged but Adam Jackson was allowed to close periodically too in third, leaving David Mellor to fend off Simon Kendrick and Mark Baker's Fs for fourth.

It was Rogerson heading Wray from the start of race two, but a track limit penalty left Rogerson down in seventh, despite his ZR leading when the race was red flagged after a multiple shunt at Cascades.

Jackson and Martin Wills' F were in the mix too, with Wills just gaining second place, only to lose it on

countback at the red flag.

It was plain sailing for defending champion Joe Spencer as his Stuart Taylor Locosaki took a lights-to-flag win in the CNC Heads North West Sports/Saloons race. Roddie Paterson's Caterham had overhating problems and surrendered second to Dave Harvey's Locosaki on lap four, but he soon recovered as both he and Nick Cresswell's Caterham demoted Harvey to fourth.

Paterson was forced to retire on lap nine, leaving Cresswell to gradually consolidate his advantage over Harvey for second.

RESULTS



Wray (r) took two wins in the MG Owners Club

Junior Saloons (9 laps) 1 George Sutton 16m38.520s (72.22mph); 2 Oliver Willmott +2.809s; 3 Matteo Zanetti; 4 Edward Moore; 5 Adam Batty; 6 Ethan Hammerton. Fastest lap Zanetti 1m49.014s (73.50mph).

Pole Moore. Starters 23. Race two (9 laps) 1 Zanetti 16m33.113s (72.82mph); 2 Moore +2.376s; 3 Sutton; 4 Batty; 5 Charlie Kennedy; 6 Willmott. FL Zanetti 1m48.861s (73.61mph). P Moore. S 22.

Michelin Clio Cup (12 laps) 1 James Dorlin 19m29.675s (82.21mph); 2 Brett Lidsey +10.765s; 3 Samuel Randon; 4 Tom Barley; 5 Luke Pinder; 6 Daniel Kirby. Class winner Sarah Franklin. FL Dorlin 1m35.891s (83.56mph). P Dorlin. S 12.

Race two (12 laps) 1 Dorlin 19m28.188s (82.31mph); 2 Lidsey +9.232s; 3 Pinder; 4 Kirby; 5 Barley; 6 Ben Palmer. CW Franklin. FL Dorlin 1m35.778s (83.66mph). P Dorlin. S 11.

Max5 (12 laps) 1 Nick Dunn 20m58.290s (76.42mph); 2 Richard Breland +5.948s; 3 Chris Webster; 4 Russell Tamplin; 5 Steve Dolman; 6 Geoff Gouriet. CW Ben Hancy. FL Breland 1m42.856s (77.91mph). P Dunn. S 27. **Race two (12 laps)** 1 Breland 20m48.987s (76.99mph); 2 Dunn +0.993s; 3 Webster; 4 Tamplin; 5 Dolman; 6 Gouriet. CW Guy Carter. FL Dunn 1m42.734s (78.00mph). P Dunn. S 26.

2CV Parts.com Classic (10 laps)

1 Peter Sparrow 21m38.951s (61.59mph); 2 Matthew Hollis +0.173s; 3 Thomas Perry; 4 Nick Crispin; 5 Peter Rundle; 6 Sandro Proietti. FL Proietti 2m06.823s (83.18mph). P Sparrow. S 17. **Race two (8 laps)** 1 Kris Tovey 17m56.481s (59.55mph); 2 Lien Davies +0.709s; 3 Mick Storey; 4 Paul Taylor; 5 Simon Crook; 6 Jim Henshaw. FL Davies 2m07.396s (62.90mph). P Davies. S 17.

MG Owners Club (12 laps) 1 Adrian Wray (ZR) 20m46.748s (77.13mph); 2 Andrew Rogerson (ZR) +7.350s; 3 Adam Jackson (ZR); 4 David Mellor (ZR); 5 Simon Kendrick (F); 6 Mark Baker (F). CW Kendrick; Jim Baynam (B). FL Wray 1m42.688s (78.03mph). P Wray. S 23. **Race two (7 laps)**

1 Wray 12m32.105s (74.58mph); 2 Jackson +0.158s; 3 Martin Wills (F); 4 Kendrick; 5 Baker; 6 Mellor. CW Wills; Baynam. FL Wills 1m44.574s (76.63mph). P Wray. S 21.

CNC Heads North West Sports/Saloons (15 laps) 1 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) 22m23.356s (89.48mph); 2 Nick Cresswell (Caterham Seven) +23.500s; 3 David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX-7); 5 Peter Davies (Spire GTR); 6 Ilsa Cox (SEAT Leon Cupra). CW Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); Cresswell; Dobson; Piers Grange (Ford Escort MK2); David Bird (Honda Civic). FL Roddie Paterson (Caterham R400) 1m27.671s (91.40mph).



Spencer won Sports/Saloons thrash

SNETTERTON: MSVR BY LEWIS BEALES

MARCH 19

The combined Lotus Cup and Elise categories provided their usual high quality entertainment with newcomer to the series Adam Mackay taking a pair of dominate debut victories.

"I knew I had to beat Jason Baker to the first corner as he was faster through the Bomb Hole and Coram," said Mackay who just managed to get his nose in front at the opening turn.

The Scottish newcomer then controlled the race to run out a delighted victor. He was helped when Baker was given a drivethrough penalty for a non-working transponder. This dropped him down the field and into a tight battle for sixth place with Andrew Wright, who managed to hold his place with some spirited defensive driving.

On the final corner, Freddie Hetherington was unseated from the lead in the Elise Trophy when Stuart Ratcliff's chase paid dividends. "I'm annoyed with myself for leaving a gap," admitted Hetherington.

A reverse grid plus 45kg of success ballast didn't hinder Mackay in the least as the race one winner easily made it a double. His only real problem came at the opening corner. "It was mayhem," said the winner on the podium. "I went onto the grass to avoid the melee and somehow ended up in fourth."

This left David McNulty at the head of the field but he was soon squeezed down the order, with Adam Knight holding off Ryan Savage with Mackay looking rampant on their tails. On the fifth lap Savage was demoted to second, with Mackay taking the lead four laps later and Savage also sneaking by Knight.

As Mackay serenely motored to victory Knight reasserted himself over Savage but, in the closing stages, handed the position back. "Stupidly I outbraked myself into Montreal," explained Knight. Meanwhile, Adam Balon was working hard to haul in the second place battle and with a demon last lap managed to affect a late challenge,

which was repulsed by Knight. In the Elise, Trophy Ratcliff was able to make an early break to secure an easy second victory.

Despite a flat sounding engine, Alan Hogg romped to a comfortable opening Allcomers victory, while 17-year-old Jack Manchester gave valiant chase. Mike Roberts carved through the field to lock out the podium for the sportscars while the leading saloon runner, Luke Armiger, was knocked out of fourth by an errant backmarker allowing Kevin Williams to take the position after an earlier mishap.

Hogg ran off into the distance once more in race two but, mid-race, was pulled into the pits for his car making excessive noise. This allowed the recovering Manchester, after rotating at Montreal, to weave by the late-starting Lotus of David McNulty and the two Caterhams of Anthony Bennett and Williams, to take the win.

The opening Monoposto 200



Mackay took double win

Challenge race fell to Ben Cater, who led from lights to flag, while David Gillett closed in towards the end when the leader backed off to save his tyres. James Williams looked comfortable in third until he rolled to a halt, allowing Chris Levy to take the position after recovering from a mid-race spin.

Race two produced the same result with winner Cater again slowing mid-race to bring his tyres back in before another late push, while Henry Chart's excursion at the opening corner stopped him from challenging Kevin Couling for fourth place.

RESULTS

Lotus Cup/Elise Trophy (23 laps) 1 Adam Mackay (Exige V6 Cup) 30m39.806s (89.29mph); 2 Ryan Savage (2-Eleven) +9.966s; 3 Adam Gore (Exige V6 Cup); 4 Adam Knight (Exige V6 Cup); 5 Adam Balon (Exige V6 Cup); 6 Andrew Wright (Exige S1 Honda). Class winners Savage; Stuart Ratcliff (Elise Cup R). FL Mackay 1m16.541s (93.31mph). P Jason Baker (Elise S2 Honda). S 28. **Race two (24 laps)** 1 Alan Hogg (Spire GT3) 20m08.137s (94.59mph); 2 Jack Manchester (Radical SR3) +22.261s; 3 Mike Roberts (ADR); 4 Kevin Williams (Caterham CRS); 5 David McNulty (Lotus Exige V6 Cup); 6 Ian Conibear

(Caterham CRS). FL Hogg 1m12.877s (98.00mph). P Hogg. S 17. **Race two (15 laps)** 1 Ben Cater (Dallara) 20m54.422s (96.79mph); 2 David Gillett (Dallara F302) +2.205s; 3 Chris Levy (Van Diemen RF83); 4 Henry Chart (Van Diemen RF02); no other finishers. FL Cater 1m10.109s (101.87mph). P Cater. S 7. **Race two (17 laps)** 1 Cater 20m48.654s (97.24mph); 2 Gillett +12.063s; 3 Levy; 4 Kevin Couling (Renault Atlas); 5 Chart; no other finishers. FL Cater 1m10.473s (101.35mph). P Cater. S 6.

MSVR Allcomers (16 laps) 1 Alan Hogg (Spire GT3) 20m08.137s (94.59mph); 2 Jack Manchester (Radical SR3) +22.261s; 3 Mike Roberts (ADR); 4 Kevin Williams (Caterham CRS); 5 David McNulty (Lotus Exige V6 Cup); 6 Ian Conibear

Monoposto 200 (17 laps) 1 Ben Cater (Dallara) 20m54.422s (96.79mph); 2 David Gillett (Dallara F302) +2.205s; 3 Chris Levy (Van Diemen RF83); 4 Henry Chart (Van Diemen RF02); no other finishers. FL Cater 1m10.109s (101.87mph). P Cater. S 7. **Race two (17 laps)** 1 Cater 20m48.654s (97.24mph); 2 Gillett +12.063s; 3 Levy; 4 Kevin Couling (Renault Atlas); 5 Chart; no other finishers. FL Cater 1m10.473s (101.35mph). P Cater. S 6.

RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Writtle Photographic, Lorcan Barron

TIMES TIED BUT ARMSTRONG BEATS PEARSON TO VICTORY

Scottish championship thriller as crews have to rely on first-stage times to decide result. By **John Fife**



Garry Pearson: Fiesta R5



Armstrong/Swinscoe tied with Pearson but took win

RESULTS

Scottish Rally Championship, round two of seven, Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally, March 19

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Jock Armstrong/Paula Swinscoe	Subaru Impreza	41m17s
2	Garry Pearson/Robbie Mitchell	Ford Fiesta R5	+0s
3	Shaun Sinclair/Kirsty Riddick	Ford Focus WRC08	+7s
4	Mike Faulkner/Peter Foy	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+45s
5	Mark McCulloch/Michael Hendry	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+1m47s
6	Bruce McCombie/Michael Coutts	Mitsubishi Lancer	+2m03s
7	Dale Robertson/Stuart Loudon	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m09s
8	Donnie MacDonald/Paul Beaton	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m35s
9	Barry Groundwater/Neil Shanks	Mitsubishi Lancer E10	+2m37s
10	Andrew Gallacher/Jane Nicol	Mitsubishi Lancer E8	+2m46s

11 John S Wink/John Forrest (Lancer E9); 12 Alistair S Graham/Laura Stuart (Lancer E9); 13 Scott McCombie/Mark Fisher (Lancer E9); 14 Ross MacDonald/Matthew Johnstone (Lancer E9); 15 Scott MacBeth/Daniel Forsyth (Lancer); 16 Steve Bannister/Kim Baker (Ford Escort Mk2); 17 Stephen Freddy Lockhart/Richard Wardle (Lancer E9); 18 Iain Wilson/Keith Riddick (Impreza); 19 Ian Baumgart/Mike Dickson (Impreza); 20 Keith Morris/Martin Forrest (Lancer E9). **Class winners** Angus Lawrie/Jeanette Kvick (Vauxhall Corsa); Scott Beattie/Russell Fair (Talbot Sunbeam); Steven Smith/Daniel Johnstone (Escort Mk2); John McIlwraith/Scott Young (Escort RS); Bannister/Baker; Alan Cowan/Katie Stimpson (Vauxhall Astra); Grant Inglis/Robert Gray (Escort); Donald Brooker/Rachel Brooker (BMW 130i); Faulkner/Foy; Armstrong/Swinscoe; Pearson/Mitchell.

Saturday's Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally ended in a dead heat. At the finish, Jock Armstrong and Garry Pearson shared identical totals. A faster time by 12 seconds on the first of the day's six stages provided the reigning Scottish champion with his first ever win on this event but it could so easily have been a three-way tie. Going into the final stage,

10 seconds covered the top three, with Shaun Sinclair only a second behind Pearson.

Armstrong was fastest over the first three stages, the Subaru Impreza opening up an 11-second lead over Sinclair first time out in a hired Ford Focus WRC, but Armstrong nearly dropped the ball on the start line at the fourth test. "I forgot to put it in gear when the marshal started counting down," said Armstrong. "That cost me two or three seconds and could so easily have cost me the rally!"

A third fastest time on the first stage followed by two second-fastest times demonstrated Pearson's confidence in the Ford Fiesta as he chased the top two, but it was Sinclair who went fastest on the fourth test, before dropping time in the fifth. "The car filled with dust. I couldn't see a thing, it was worse than fog," he said.

This time Pearson was quickest in the Fiesta R5, closing the gap to Armstrong to nine seconds, with Sinclair just one

second behind that. The final test would decide the winner; nine miles in the superfast Craik.

Pearson had been growing in confidence all day with his new car and, considering he had taken a second a mile out of the rally leader on the previous eight-mile test at Elibank despite a front-wheel puncture for the last half-mile, a similar effort was needed here.

He was quickest by six seconds from Sinclair, while Armstrong could only manage third quickest, a crucial nine seconds behind Pearson. The result was a dead heat with a relieved Armstrong being declared the winner.

Top Mitsubishi driver on the day was Mike Faulkner in fourth place, finishing over a minute clear of Mark McCulloch, but both had their troubles. Faulkner dropped time on the final test with a top end misfire, while McCulloch was plagued all day by a Lancer that lacked traction at the rear.

Bruce McCombie had to settle for sixth after a puncture on the fourth test, while

Dale Robertson made it back into the top 10 after breaking a driveshaft on the first test and doing the next two with a front-wheel-drive Lancer. Andrew Gallacher lost over a minute on the penultimate test when his Lancer rumbled out of the stage on two flat tyres on the same side.

In worse luck was John MacCrone, who retired his Fiesta R5 from the top 10 when a turbo pipe clamp snapped. At least he lasted a little longer than Peter Stephenson, whose Focus had plunged down a bank. There was little damage but it would need more than spectator power to get it out.

Snowman Rally winner Donnie MacDonald finished eighth losing time on the fifth test with a front puncture and Barry Groundwater held on to ninth place in front of Gallacher.

Top two-wheel-drive runner on the day was Steve Bannister, while Greg McKnight, who was 10s fastest on the opening stage, lost out when the rear end of his Escort made violent contact

with a banking on a fourth-gear corner in stage 2, although he recovered to finish fifth in class. Matthew Robinson retired his Fiat 131 in the final stage when the car hit a rock "and broke something underneath!"

Angus Lawrie took the 1450cc class in his Vauxhall Corsa while Ross Carby's Corsa ended its day on the first stage with a broken driveshaft. Scott Beattie won Class 3 in his Talbot Sunbeam ahead of the top-placed Peugeot 205 of Ben Cree, while Steven Smith took Class 4 in his Escort ahead of the Corsa of Alex Curran.

Added to his fourth place finish on the Snowman Rally, Pearson's second place puts him provisionally at the top of the ARR Craib Scottish Championship points tables on 53 points, with Donnie MacDonald on 52 and Dale Robertson sharing 51 with Mark McCulloch.

Next month there is a change for the Scottish rally crews: it's Elgin instead of Aberdeen as the Speyside Stages assumes the round three role.



Bannister impressed in Escort

Bogie pumps in spectacular final stage to overturn McVeigh for Midland Moto Stages win

Midland Moto Stages

By Brian Patterson

Organiser: Midland Motor Club **When:** March 19/20
Where: Longford Championships; Loughran Signs.ie Rally
Championship Stages: 9 **Starters:** 77

David Bogie made a lengthy trip from Dumfries to Ireland worthwhile by winning the Midland Stages in his Skoda Fabia R5. He and co-driver Kevin Rae were preparing for next month's Circuit of Ireland Rally with team CA1 Sport, and headed Paddy McVeigh after a stunning final stage.

Less than 3s separated the top three – McVeigh, David Bogie and Chris Armstrong – over the opening test Killashee. That was a sign of things to come over the day's mostly fast flowing stages,

helped by the ideal benign conditions. McVeigh was able to give his Subaru Impreza WRC its head, while, for Bogie, the rally was ideal for him to chalk up some asphalt mileage ahead of the European, British and Irish Tarmac counter on the Circuit of Ireland.

By first service, the cars had covered 24 miles and McVeigh took just 20m11s to complete them. Bogie was 17s in arrears and Armstrong 29s back.

Just a handful of seconds covered the following drivers too, Stephen McCann, Vivian Hamill, Pauric Duffy and Gary Kiernan.

The middle loop of stages was curtailed to just the two shorter stages, as stage six was blocked by an earlier accident.

By second service the positions at the top were little changed. McVeigh had extended his lead to 22s over Bogie, with Armstrong 37s behind the leader and still best of the two-wheel-drive brigade.

Kiernan had put on a push and was fourth in his Escort, although just 1.4s ahead of Hamill.

Bogie was fastest in stage eight (stage seven didn't run) to reduce the gap to leader McVeigh to just 15.7s. On the final stage Bogie really went for it. His time was 25s faster than his first run over the same stage. He was also 20s faster than McVeigh to win by 4.6s.

Armstrong again showed great speed in his Escort on his way to third overall. Sean Gallagher/Barry McNulty won Group N in

their Mitsubishi Lancer and Kyle White/Sean Topping had a very impressive victory in the Juniors with their Citroen C2R2.

Results

1 David Bogie/Kevin Rae (Skoda Fabia R5) 45m25.7s; 2 Paddy McVeigh/Gary McElhinney (Subaru Impreza WRC) +4.6s; 3 Chris Armstrong/Chris Melly (Ford Escort Mk2); 4 Gary Kiernan/Ryan Moore (Escort); 5 Vivian Hamill/Andrew Grennan (Escort Mk2); 6 Pauric Duffy/Kevin Glynn (Ford Fiesta R5); 7 Stephen McCann/Damien Fleming (Impreza WRC); 8 Tommy Doyle/Liam Moynihan (Renault Clio R3); 9 Jim McKenna/Thomas Treanor (Escort); 10 Paul Rowley/Patrick Brides (Skoda Fabia). **Class winners** Darragh Kenny/David Gibbons (Honda Civic); Shane Forde/Aaron Johnston (Citroen C2); Pauric Duffy/Evan Hughes (Civic); Sean Gallagher/Barry McNulty (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); Bogie/Rae; McVeigh/McElhinney; Anthony Masterson/Tommy Clinton (Escort); Shane Healy/Emmet Donlon (Peugeot 205); Gary McNamee/Kieran O'Donoghue (Honda Civic); Barry Treanor/Cole Donnelly (Escort); Kevin Cole/Matthew Kirwan (Escort Mk2); Kiernan/Moore; Armstrong/Melly; McCann/Fleming; David Leonard/Niall Burns (Lancer); Kyle White/Sean Topping (Citroen C2R2).



Bogie showed class on last stage in CA1 Skoda R5

RALLY REPORTS



Photos: Steve McKenna



Field flew in the mid-engined car

FIELD GIVES NEW DARRIAN FIRST MN CHAMPIONSHIP VICTORY

Lee Holland Memorial Rally

By Dave V Thomas

Organiser: Pendle DMC with Garstang & Preston MC
When: March 20 **Where:** Anglesey Circuit
Championships: Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship, ANWCC, ANCC, SD34, Junior F1000 **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 82

Despite having never competed at the Anglesey Circuit, Ashley Field took an emphatic victory with rookie co-driver Jack Benyon in the rapid Darrian GTR.

No less than 12 seconds quicker than



Stone was Field's closest rival

everyone on the first stage, they won every stage to take overall victory by almost a minute ahead of John Stone, still acclimatising to his new Ford Fiesta S2000 car fitted with a Millington powerplant.

Eight stages were scheduled, with a number of splits and merges that made it a very testing day for both crew members. The organisers gained the most out of the roads of the race circuit and service road.

The circuit owners had also built a yump, which proved to be the undoing of some crews, notably the Darrian of Brandon Smith and Craig Sharpe-Simkiss, who destroyed the car's gearbox bellhousing on the first launch.

Last year's winner Wil Owen, this time with regular co-driver Rob Hopewell alongside in the 2.5-litre Ford Escort, held second after the first stage but then spun on the third and were actually caught by Field. They were clawing their way back up the leaderboard until the sixth stage when a diff pin fell out

and caused their retirement mid-stage.

That left Stone as Field's closest contender, but a problem with the trip screen in the car meant the Fiesta driver stalled at a hairpin, which was also incorrectly laid out. That put the final nail in the coffin of the lead battle, although he got quicker throughout the day and will no doubt be a challenger for victories on future events.

The event was the latest round of the MN Circuit Rally Championship and all the leading crews finished well up to gain many useful points. Field extended his lead with the win – which was 59s in total on the rally – while James Sharrock/Stuart Faulds consolidated their second place in the standings, finishing fourth overall in the Ford Escort Mk2. Sharrock commented that this event was the “best so far in the series – hard work, testing stages that flowed well.”

Nigel Mummery – also a regular campaigner in the MN series – rounded out the top spots with Fiona Scarrett.

Making a very welcome appearance was Irishman Dessie McCartney – best known for his phenomenal exploits in a Porsche 911 in the late '70s/'80s – drove his Darrian rapidly to fifth overall with son Richard. McCartney Senior would be celebrating his 72nd birthday the following day and didn't ease off on the tricky yump.

Leading the two-litre class were Steve Quigley/Tom Hutchings, who finished sixth despite removing some of the front bodywork on one of the chicanes, while seventh fell to the Metro 6R4 of Pete Smith/Alan Walker.

Talbot Sunbeams took the next two places, the two-litre version of Stuart Gilks/Michael Boyns finishing ahead of the Lotus version of Mike Taylor/Martin Haggett, who fared better once the early gear selection issue was solved.

Rounding off the top 10 was ANWCC Championship leader Rob Hughes with Sion Cunniff in a Millington-engined Ford Focus, Hughes increasing his lead while Cunniff moved up to take the

co-drivers championship lead due to pre-event leader Sharpe-Simkiss's failure to add to his score.

All-girl crew Jade Paveley/Sarah Hughes finished just outside the top 20 – this time using Paveley's dad's Mitsubishi Lancer following their big accident in Jade's Impreza at Brands Hatch on the previous round. They finished the event with no first gear but gained useful championship points in both the MSVR and ANWCC series.

In the 1400cc class, a close battle raged between the Vauxhalls of Joe Cunningham/Andrew Fawcett (Corsa) and Justin Lawson/Paul Hargreaves (Nova), with the Nova just keeping ahead until the seventh stage. Cunningham went into the final stage with a three-second advantage but a broken driveshaft put him out.

The 1600cc class leaderboard remained the same all day, Howard Potter/Dylan Thomas, a first-time pairing, taking the class and just missing the top 10 in their Sunbeam.

RESULTS

MN Circuit Rally Championship, rd 6/8, Lee Holland Memorial, March 20

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Ashley Field/Jack Benyon	Darrian GTR	46m29s
2	John Stone/Paula Swinscoe	Ford Fiesta S2500	+59s
3	Nigel Mummery/Fiona Scarrett	Ford Focus WRC	+1m22s
4	James Sharrock/Stuart Faulds	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m29s
5	Dessie McCartney/Richard McCartney	Darrian T90	+1m50s
6	Steve Quigley/Tom Hutchings	Renault Clio 172	+2m10s
7	Peter Smith/Alan Walker	MG Metro 6R4	+2m11s
8	Stuart Gilks/Michael Boyns	Talbot Sunbeam	+2m47s
9	Mike Taylor/Martin Haggett	Talbot Sunbeam Lotus	+3m00s
10	Robert Hughes/Sion Cunniff	Ford Focus	+3m10s

Class winners. Justin Lawson/Paul Hargreaves (Vauxhall Nova); Howard Potter/Dylan Thomas (Talbot Sunbeam); Quigley/Hutchings; Field/Benyon; Josh McElean/Thomas McElean (Peugeot 107).

Evans and Turner tee up late charge to steal AGBO win from Moran on the final stage

AGBO Stages Rally

By Peter Scherer

Organiser: Owen MC **When:** March 20
Where: Weston Park, Shropshire
Championships: AWMMC Heart of England; HRCR Old Stager **Stages:** 10 **Starters:** 75

Paul Evans and Stephen Turner took a dramatic victory in their Ford Escort Mk2 after starting the final stage tied with Roger Moran and Samantha Lester's similar car.

Timing problems caused the first stage to be cancelled, but Moran had tied on the second stage with five-time winners Oliver Davies/Ben Innes, before Moran went a second clear on the fourth.

Evans had already started to consolidate third over David

Wright/Steve Pugh's Ford Escort, after the latter had a couple of grassy excursions, while Paul Alexander/Abi Haycock's Escort headed Gareth Richards/Heather Gilmore's Darrian for fifth.

But Davies' hopes of another victory were dashed on stage five. “It was a huge tank-slapper over the grass,” he said. It dropped him to third, seven seconds off the lead and chasing to recover second from Evans.

Although Moran retained his lead, a stall at the Hairpin on stage six halved it and spurred Evans on to chase the win. After seven stages it was a one-second gap, before they matched each

other on stage eight.

It was dead level into the final stage from which Evans emerged two seconds quicker to snatch the win from Moran, but Davies was left parked after his engine let him down. Wright therefore claimed third, despite being slowly caught by Richards.

They were followed home by the Class C battle, led all day by Alexander, despite battling without power steering from mid-rally. Julian Jones/Mikey Herritts' Escort overcame brake bias problems to oust Lee Edwards/Mike Roberts' Escort from second in class after seven stages to complete the top six overall.

Ian and Sarah Hambleton's

Peugeot 106 led Clive King/Anton Bird's Mini Cooper S all day to take Class A, with Mark Gamble/Steve Link's Suzuki Swift heading Dai Roberts/Max Freeman's Peugeot 205 GTi in Class B. Stuart and Jack Anderson's Vauxhall Chevette topped the Historics.

Results

1 Paul Evans/Stephen Turner (Ford Escort Mk2) 24m12s;
2 Roger Moran/Samantha Lester (Escort Mk2) +2s;
3 David Wright/Steve Pugh (Escort Mk2);
4 Gareth Richards/Heather Gilmore (Darrian T90);
5 Paul Alexander/Abi Haycock (Escort Mk2);
6 Julian Jones/Mikey Herritts (Escort Mk2);
7 Lee Edwards/Mike Roberts (Escort Mk3);
8 Mark Gamble/Steve Link (Suzuki Swift); 9 Dai Davies/Gerwyn James (Darrian T9); 10 Tom Barber/Jamie Barber (BMW Compact). **Class winners** Ian Hambleton/Sarah Hambleton (Peugeot 106); Gamble/Link; Alexander/Haycock; **Historics:** 1 Stuart Anderson/Jack Anderson (Vauxhall Chevette); 2 Stephen Hall/Aggie Foster (Triumph TR4); 3 Clive King/Anton Bird (Mini Cooper S).

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Carwyn Evans/Dylan John Williams took a clear win on the **Rali Llyn** as they finished 30 seconds ahead of a highly competitive field. This was the driver's first win on the event in 12 years.

Arwel Jones/Iwan Jones had built up a lead of 27 seconds but they were then forced out with engine maladies. Gareth Rhys Jones/Aron Jones just held off a second-half charge from last year's winners Kevin Kerr/Huw Rhys Manion to secure the runner-up spot.

At Petrol, Shon Roberts/Dion Morley held a huge lead in the Semi-Expert class but their Ford Escort broke a driveshaft in the second half and they were out. Martin Lloyd/Rob Lloyd won

the **John Robson Navigational** and Andy Lane/Richard Crozier the **Hexham Historic** event.

Ian Mills

Merfyn Hughes Memorial Rali Llyn

Organiser: Harlech & District Motor Club
When: March 19/20 **Where:** North West Wales
Championships: WAMC & ANWCC
Route: 110 Miles **Starters:** 89.
1 Carwyn Evans/Dylan John Williams (Ford Escort) 6m05s; 2 Gareth Rhys Jones/Aron Jones (Vauxhall Corsa) +30s; 3 Kevin Kerr/Huw Rhys Manion (Escort); 4 Dale Furniss/Nick Bloxham (VW Golf GTI); 5 Steven John Williams/Paul Roberts (Escort); 6 Ian 'Dude' Roberts/Gwawr Hughes (Golf GTI); 7 Reian Jones/Cadog Davies (SEAT Ibiza); 8 Rob Pugh/Dafydd Evans (SEAT Ibiza); 9 John Davies/Aled Richards (Astra); 10 George Williams/Jon Hawkins (Escort).
Class winners Semi-Experts: Osian Vaughan Williams/Peredur Davies (Peugeot 106 GTI); Novices: Deion Atkinson/Aron Jones (Honda Civic).

Congratulations to Ashley Field & Jack Benyon on winning the Pendle District Motor Club - Lee Holland Memorial Rally 2016



With special thanks to Medi Cell, Techron, www.goodridge.co.uk & Cam Auto Developments



Would like to congratulate Steve Quigley and Tom Hutchings on another superb class win at the Lee Holland Trophy Rally in their AES prepared Renault Clio. 1st in Class and 6th Overall, which holds them in a great position for the MSVR/M'News Championship.



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Motorsport Engineering / Preparation Specialists
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Congratulations to Stefan Oberdoester & Olaf Heupel on their victory at the XII ORIS RALLY CLÁSICO. Stefan & Olaf have won themselves a free trip to compete in the Barbados Historic Rally Carnival taking place over the last two weekends of August. Entry info available at www.barbadosrallycarnival.com

On event support provided by Dansport

SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Hal Ridge and Jack Flash Photography

DORAN LANDS MINI DRIVE FOR WRX

European round winner set for full world campaign in 2016

By Hal Ridge

Leading British rallycross driver Liam Doran will contest the FIA World Rallycross Championship this season in a JRM Racing Mini RX Supercar.

Doran has raced a Citroen DS3 in recent seasons, run by his own LD Motorsports team, but told *MN* at Christmas that he was seeking to drive for a different team in the 2016 season.

JRM Racing embarked on running the Mini RX Supercar last year, and made a number of appearances through the campaign with various drivers. Double British Rally champion Guy Wilks scored the squad's best result by finishing sixth at Lydden Hill. The team will enter Doran as a single entrant in World RX.

"This is something I've been working towards for the last couple of years – being able to go at the championship professionally as a driver with a capable and successful team," said Doran. "It's exciting for me to have the chance to do that. I know I can just do the driving in 2016. That's the most important part for me."

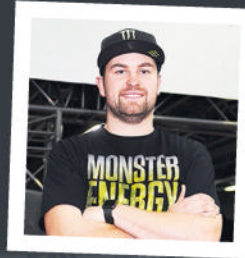
Doran won a number of European Championship events before the sport grew to a World Championship, but has struggled in the last two seasons, often due to poor reliability. He does have previous form with a Mini rallycross car, and won his second X Games gold medal in Munich, Germany in 2013 driving a similar car.

"One of the main reasons for this whole deal happening is because the car is what it is

and the team is what it is," said Doran. "It's going to be a strong, fast and reliable package which is something I need and is something, with the way the sport's gone, that is required. This is the ideal package for that. I have no doubts at all that the car

can do what it needs to do."

The JRM squad ran a 1.6-litre engine in the car last year, but will upgrade to a two-litre unit for 2016. The team ran two cars on three occasions last season and has the capability to do so again, but is expected to focus on success with just Doran.



Doran struggled throughout 2015

MN'S RALLYCROSS EXPERT

HAL RIDGE

"Electric dream should be addressed"



Andros Trophy has an electric support formula

Last week, *MN's* sister publication *Autocar* revealed that Volkswagen is keen on creating an electric rallycross Supercar if rules were changed in the World Rallycross Championship to be all-electric.

As with any proposed new idea for any motorsport series, this news is without doubt an opinion splitter.

Purists, myself included, believe that while the Earth's progressively diminishing supplies of fossil fuels are still available, part of the biggest draw of a rallycross event (aside from the dual-surface, sideways, close-combat action) is the raw anti-lag fuelled noise Supercars emit. The ear-popping and banging from a grid of Supercars about to launch into the all-important final race of the weekend is an experience that should be savoured by any motorsport fan.

But, facts have to be faced. Rallycross races are the ultimate sprint, run over four or six laps where acceleration and startline performance is king.

Races are won or lost in the first few metres. With the EV concept, a car's maximum power can be deployed in a split-second when the lights turn green, and if enough power could be produced by an electric motor, those machines could even match or out-accelerate a current internal combustion-powered car.

Turbocharged rallycross engines rely on clever anti-lag systems to maintain engine response out of corners; an electric motor would deliver all of its power whenever the driver wanted. In many ways, rallycross and EV machinery go hand-in-hand.

The purists shouldn't fear: the prospect of World RX Supercars being solely powered by an electric motor is a considerable leap into the future.

But, it would be fantastically interesting if a manufacturer or team developed such a machine to run back-to-back with a current Supercar to make direct performance comparisons.

This isn't to say that electric vehicles can't become part of rallycross competition in the short term either. Rallycross need look no further than the Andros Trophy ice racing series. While the headline category cars are mid-engined V6 fuel-guzzling screamers, the support class is battery-powered.

The spaceframe Trophée Andros Electrique machines use 90kw motors (around 122hp), have 200Nm torque and can reach 100mph using a single-speed gearbox. Although these kind of cars would in no way rival a rallycross Supercar on performance, a similar support category concept could fit into rallycross just nicely.

BRITISH SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP

Holmes kicks off 2016 campaign with a victory at Castle Combe

Terry Holmes put himself in the hunt for title glory after setting the fastest time during the opening round of the British Sprint Championship at Castle Combe last Saturday.

The Lola driver, who was sharing with Graham Porrett (who went on to finish fifth), put in a masterful performance in the top-12 run off to lead the rest home by almost 2.8 seconds.

Behind him, winter work had

paid dividends for Steve Broughton, who brought his Dallara F3 car home in second. To underline the progress, car sharer Matt Hillam was third during the run-offs.

Steve Miles set the fourth fastest time in his Van Diemen RF96, although the driver was perplexed by the time awarded to him after the second run as he had felt the effort had been significantly faster than his first attempt.

Behind Porrett was Matt Carter, who improved his first run time by 1.1s to record a 122.96s, which was enough for the Radical driver to snare sixth spot.

Dallara-Cougar pairing of Tony Jarvis and Martin Webb, took sixth and seventh places respectively.

Local man Dave Cutcliffe made the run-offs in his Van Diemen D93M, but he was unable to record a time on either run.



Broughton was second

Results

British Sprint Championship

Organiser: CCRG When: March 19

Where: Castle Combe

1 Terry Holmes (3.5 Lola Tegra-Judd) 114.84s; 2 Steve Broughton (2.0 SBD Dallara F3) 117.63s; 3 Matt Hillam (2.0 SBD Dallara F3); 4 Steve Miles (2.0 Van Diemen RF96); 5 Graham Porrett (3.5 Lola Tegra Judd); 6 Matt Carter (1.3 Radical PR6); 7 Tony Jarvis (2.0 Dallara-Cougar Power F399/00); 8 Martin Webb (2.0 Dallara-Cougar Power F399/00); 9 Grahame Harden (1.0 Jedi Mk6); 10 Carole Torkington (1.6 SBD OMS CF08).

Euro truck series gets promoter boost

The FIA European Truck Racing Championship has appointed a new body as promoter.

ETRA, the European Truck Racing Association, which launched the 2016 season last week, is formed from an idea of existing truck event organisers and the FIA, with the German governing body ADAC as the major stakeholder.

Georg Fuchs will head up the organisation. ETRA has attracted partnerships from Goodyear for three years and has begun to increase the championship's TV profile with shows on Motors and Sky Sports. The format of four races, two per day, continues, with some events being headlined by the trucks and two partnering the Blancpain Sprint Series.

The ETRA has launched the National Challengers' Cup to attract domestic entrants.

Racer Ellen Lohr said: "This is a great time to show truck racing to people in a new era for the sport."

SPORTING TRIAL

Uglov has a perfect trialling afternoon

Roland Uglov retained the **Stuart Butterfield Sporting Trial** trophy last weekend, winning by cleaning all 32 sections to take the lead in the British championship.

Six crews were still clean by lunchtime so the sections were toughened up, but that still failed to stop Uglov's charge.

Dave Rance challenged and only failed one steep section to finish second. He was ahead of Richard Sharp, who also won the intermediate class. Sharp has now taken the lead in the BTRDA championship.

Mark Milne had just rebuilt the propshaft of his Crossle but drove out of a section to slip to fourth ahead of Boyd Webster.

Jeff Armistead was top live-axle in eighth, while Ian Fullwood won the novice class just outside the top 10 overall from autotester Stuart Perren.

Local driver Ray Lane won the **Basil Elkington Car Trial** last Sunday in Kent, the second round of the British championship, having led the front-wheel-drive class all day. Rupert North closed in during the afternoon to secure second in class in his similar Mini.

Duncan Stephens

Results

Stuart Butterfield Sporting Trial

Organiser: Yorkshire Sports Car Club

When: March 20 Where: Keighley, Yorkshire (Crossle) 4 marks; 2 Dave Rance (Crossle) 4 marks; 3 Richard Sharp (Cartwright); 4 Mark Milne (Crossle); 5 Boyd Webster (Crossle); 6 Bryan Walker (Jedi); 7 George Watson (Hamilton); 8 Jeff Armistead (Hutton); 9 Andrew Woodhead (Jedi); 10 Brian Thornton (Kincraft).

Car Trial

Basil Elkington Car Trial

Organiser: Sevenoaks and District Motor Club

When: March 20 Where: nr Bearsted, Kent
1 Ray Lane (Mini); 2 Rupert North (Mini);
3 Nigel Weeks (Hillman Imp); 4 Dave Oliver (Hillman Imp); 5 Mark Hoppe (Citroen Saxo);
6 Nick Pollitt (Vauxhall Corsa).

Coney to run new Corsa in rallycross

Rallycross driver Paul Coney will debut a brand new Super1600 Vauxhall Corsa D in the British Rallycross Championship at Lydden Hill this weekend.

Coney previously raced a Vauxhall Nova in the popular Nova Challenge in the 1990s, and more recently in the SuperNational category. He has been planning the new car for over three years. It has been built to comply with FIA European Rallycross regulations.

"Harry Hockly Motorsport has built the car and it used the engine from the Nova," explained Coney. "We're running Proflex shocks and a Sadev sequential gearbox. We've not finished all the engine work we want to do yet but this has been going on for three years."

The Englishman plans to contest the rest of the British series and could also venture across the Channel: "It will be fine on the Tarmac, but like all cars it will be a bit of a balancing act to work on the loose."



AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

SANTA POD AT 50

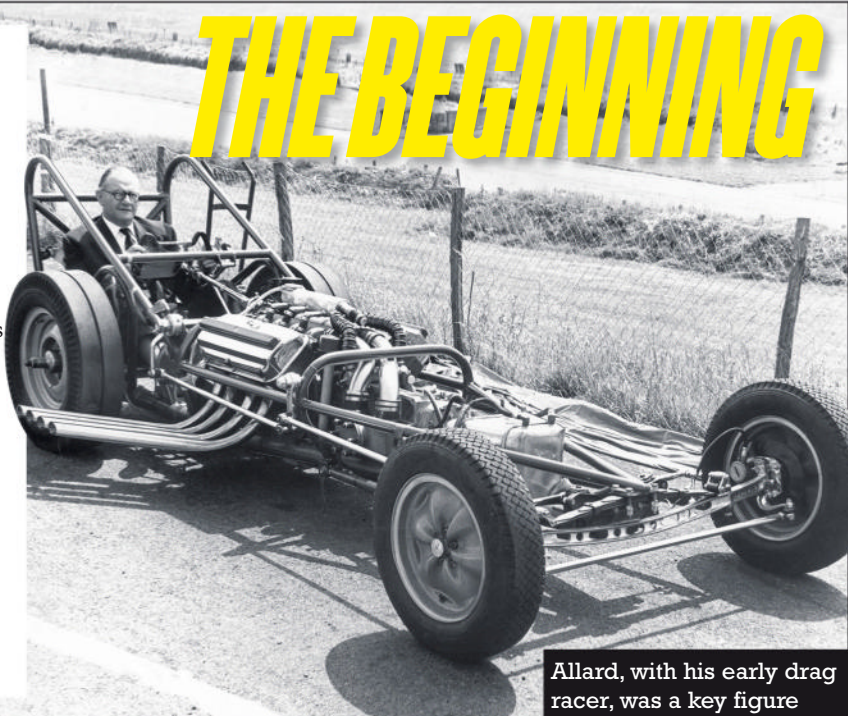
This year Santa Pod Raceway celebrates its 50th Anniversary. **Robin Jackson** picks out 10

THE UK DRAG STRIP'S

Arguably America's quintessential homegrown motorsport, drag racing had its British adherents too by the early 1960s, mostly inspired by reading the imported hot-rodding magazines of the era. Chief among the early converts was Sydney Allard, sportscar manufacturer and racing/rally driver, who built the UK's first dragster in 1961, partly to advance his new-found sprinting interests.

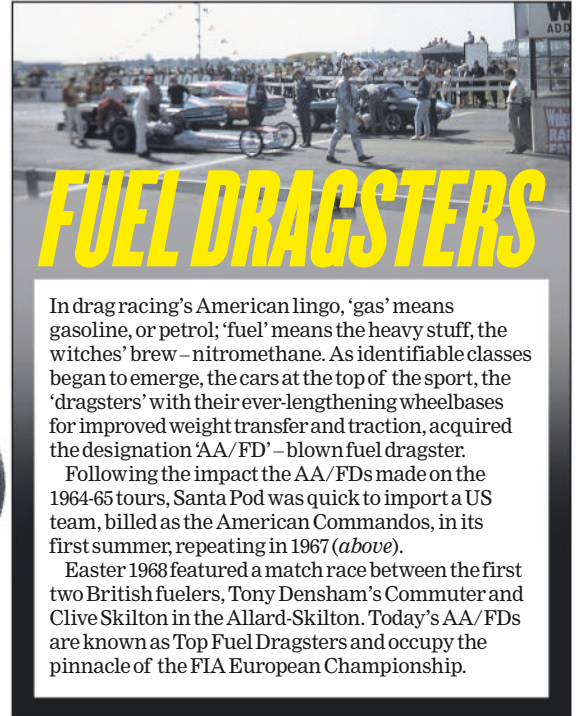
In 1964 and 1965, Allard and Wally Parks, founder of America's National Hot Rod Association, brought all-star drag racing teams from the USA to perform on airfields around the country. Impressed by what they saw (and heard), a group of businessman-enthusiasts determined that Britain should have a permanent venue for the sport, and selected a disused wartime airfield on the Bedfordshire-Northamptonshire border. They named it Santa Pod – 'Santa' to evoke visions of Santa Ana, scene of California's first commercial drag race in 1950, and 'Pod' after the nearby village, Podington.

Santa Pod opened for business on Easter Monday, April 10, 1966. With sad, supreme irony, Sydney Allard died two days later.



Allard, with his early drag racer, was a key figure

THE BEGINNING



FUEL DRAGSTERS

In drag racing's American lingo, 'gas' means gasoline, or petrol; 'fuel' means the heavy stuff, the witches' brew – nitromethane. As identifiable classes began to emerge, the cars at the top of the sport, the 'dragsters' with their ever-lengthening wheelbases for improved weight transfer and traction, acquired the designation 'AA/FD' – blown fuel dragster.

Following the impact the AA/FDs made on the 1964-65 tours, Santa Pod was quick to import a US team, billed as the American Commandos, in its first summer; repeating in 1967 (above).

Easter 1968 featured a match race between the first two British fuelers, Tony Densham's Commuter and Clive Skilton in the Allard-Skilton. Today's AA/FDs are known as Top Fuel Dragsters and occupy the pinnacle of the FIA European Championship.

EASTER 1976: GARLITS AND THE FIRST '5'

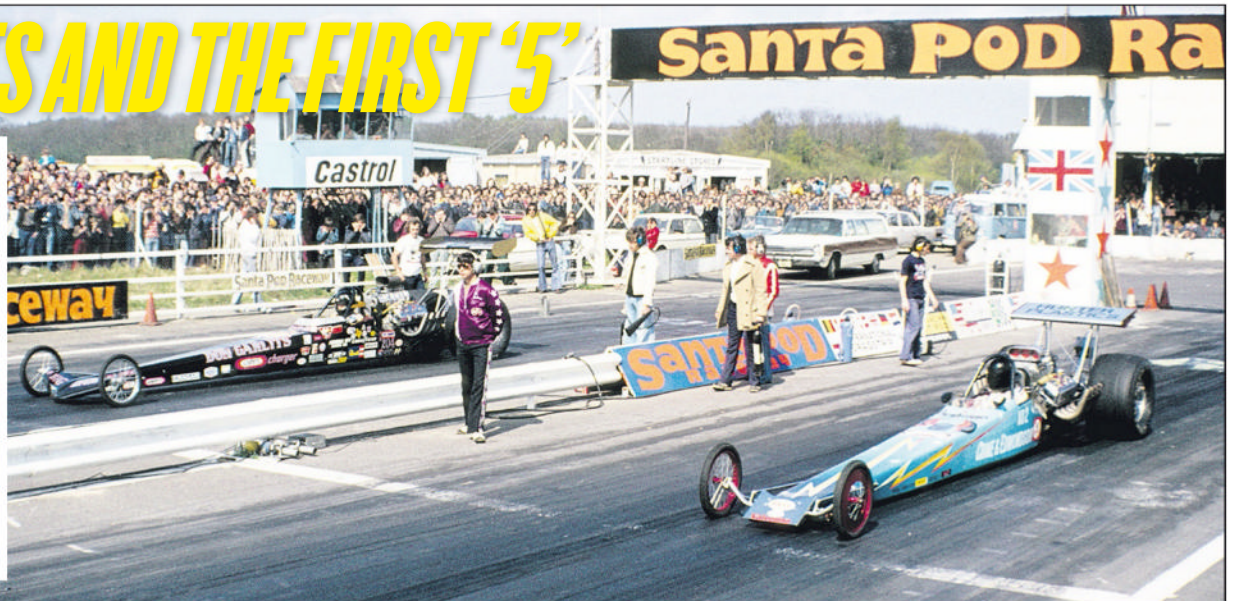
There have been so many great weekends in Santa Pod's history, but none to top Easter 1976. The reason? Don Garlits, the greatest drag racer ever, returned to Britain for Santa Pod's 10th anniversary celebration after heading the 1964 all-star tour.

The *Daily Mail* gave him back-page prominence and the venue was packed to overspill, with spectators' cars parked nose-to-tail more than two miles back through Podington village. Yet Garlits' Swamp Rat 21 dragster, far

from home, was blighted by mechanical problems throughout qualifying and wound up facing Britain's quickest entrant, Peter Crane, in the first round.

Garlits went too early and was disqualified, while Crane's Stormbringer stormed to the first five-second elapsed time clocked outside America. Clive Skilton was the eventual race winner.

Garlits returned in July 1977 with less fanfare and a fitter car and routed the opposition.



SUMMER OF '73

To UK drag racing enthusiasts of a certain age, the names Don Schumacher and Paula Murphy conjure a special moment in time: the summer of 1973. Attending that year's July Internationals at Santa Pod, the pair unleashed the first full-tilt American Fuel Funny Cars seen on these shores.

The spectacular, ear-splitting Funnies – essentially nitro-burning dragsters cloaked by lightweight, saloon-car-replica

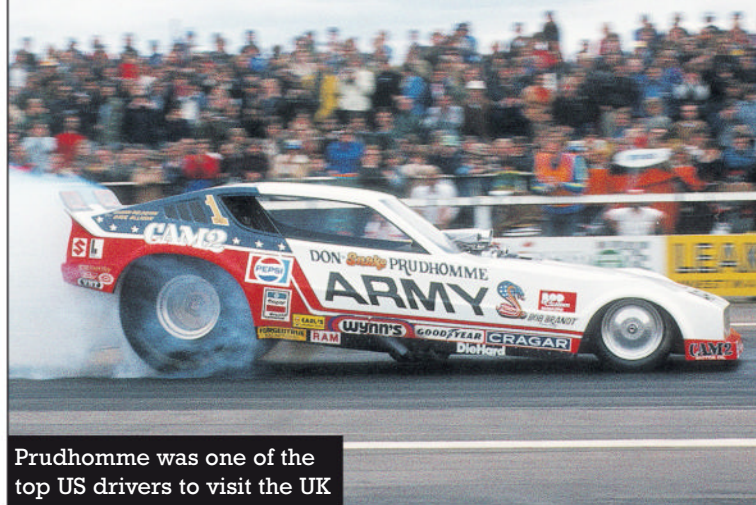
bodyshells – were all the rage across the Atlantic, drawing huge crowds to America's dragstrips. Schumacher and Murphy together created a seminal moment in the sport's British history.

Murphy – now 87 – and Schumacher, today the most powerful team owner in NHRA Drag Racing, will be reunited on UK soil when they attend the

British Drag Racing Hall of Fame's Gala Awards Dinner in November.



SEPTEMBER 1980: 16 FUNNY CARS



Prudhomme was one of the top US drivers to visit the UK

Following the Schumacher-Murphy showstopper in 1973, Funny Cars really did become all the rage at Santa Pod. The management's policy of importing the previous season's top American Funnies and booking their drivers to pilot them initially, before passing them on to home-based teams, brought both star names from the States and a growing number of European entries to the track.

The high point occurred at September 1980's international meeting when a 16-car nitro field was assembled for the first and only time in Europe's drag racing history. Racers from Britain and Scandinavia faced top Americans Gene Snow, Tom Hoover, Harlan Thompson and – the real coup – the four-time NHRA champion Don Prudhomme. Thompson, who would become a Santa Pod regular, was the event winner.

Photos: LAT, Robin Jackson, Roger Gorringe and Santa Pod

milestones from the history of Europe's first permanent dragstrip

10 BIG MOMENTS

JETS AND ROCKETS

In theory, thrust-powered vehicles are for exhibition purposes, not serious racing. Just don't tell their drivers. Sweden's Arnold Sundqvist brought the first jet dragster to Santa Pod in 1971, an unwieldy-looking machine that fairly trundled down the track, and a far cry from the afterburner-equipped, flame-and-thunder showmobiles that followed.

Rocket machines are different, emitting a few, desultory puffs of steam from their hydrogen peroxide motors while the

temperatures are stabilised, then howling into the distance almost faster than the eye can see. Barry Bowles' Blonde Bombshell was Santa Pod's first rocket, but American Sammy Miller (*below*) was the real star. While banned from running at home, Miller's 3.58-second elapsed time over the Santa Pod quarter-mile in 1984 has never been matched, nor even approached, anywhere else.

French biker Eric Teboul flies the rocket flag today with his 280mph 'motorcycle', the world's quickest-accelerating two-wheeler.



Everyone loved The Barn. In 1969, a covered terrace was built behind the start line to afford fans a unique view directly up the track. It's a myth that drag racing machinery always goes straight, and every twitch, wiggle and squirm was visible from this vantage point.

"Everyone vacate The Barn," the commentators would instruct as jet cars were towed to the line – and everyone would pile in, eager to be smoked and blasted. It is with good reason that drag racing is described as the most sensory spectator experience in motorsport.

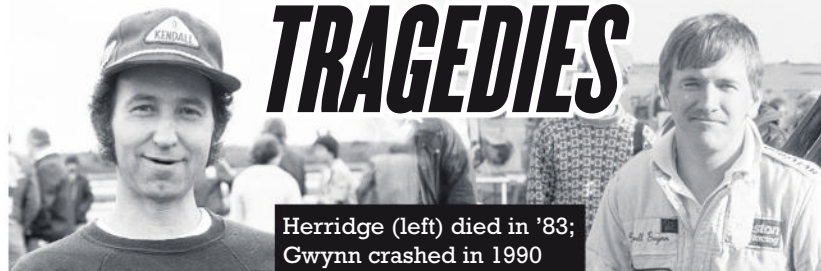
For health and safety reasons, The Barn was demolished in 2007. Today's VIP Hospitality units hug the startline area on both sides, with a third unit at mid-track. In particular, the Bankside suites offer a closeness to the action unrivalled anywhere in the world.

THE VIEW



Bankside VIP area still provides a great view

TRAGEDIES



Herridge (left) died in '83; Gwynn crashed in 1990

As home to a motorsport of such speed and mechanical violence, Santa Pod has experienced mercifully few deaths and serious injuries in its 50 years. But two tragic incidents are particularly poignantly remembered.

Allan 'Bootsie' Herridge was

a pioneer of the sport, first as an independent racer and constructor and later as Santa Pod's resident driver/builder. Herridge was killed in 1983 when the jet-engined Funny Car he was testing crashed.

Darrell Gwynn was the rising young giant of NHRA's Top Fuel

scene in the late 1980s, another star brought from the States to Santa Pod. Gwynn was left paralysed from spinal injuries when his dragster's chassis broke at Easter 1990. He later launched the Darrell Gwynn Foundation to raise funds for fellow spinal injury sufferers.

JUNE 2002: THE FIRST '300'

June 2, 2002 was a signal date in motorsport – a racing car exceeded 300mph for the first time on a European racetrack. In fact, not just one car achieved the feat but two, running side-by-side in an epic confrontation.

Top Fuel racers Barry Sheavills and Andy Carter crossed Santa Pod's finish line alongside one another, each topping the triple-ton. Sheavills reached the line first and so is credited as the first European driver

to break the 300mph barrier. Indeed, he punched it aside with speed to spare, clocking 304.71mph allied to an elapsed time of 4.970 seconds. Carter's ET of 4.897s was the quickest yet achieved in Europe, stopping the speed clock at 303.07mph.

Santa Pod is still Europe's fastest track. In 2010, Carter hit a European quarter-mile best of 320.19mph. In 2014, Thomas Nataas clocked 316.40mph over Top Fuel's now-reduced 1000-foot racing distance.



Carter and Sheavills both cracked 300mph



DRAGSTALGIA: THE HISTORIC SCENE

Santa Pod was a late arrival on the historic drag racing scene, already emerging 25 years ago, but its Dragstalgia meeting – launched only in 2011 – has quickly become the annual highlight for the retro drag racing and hot rodding community.

Nostalgia-themed groups abound and Nostalgia racecars come in all shapes and sizes, from vintage American stockers through altered (Competition Altered: a Sportsman eliminator comprising multiple classes of vehicles with production-line origins and altered for competition purposes) and roadsters

to full-tilt dragsters and nitro Funny Cars, and there's a similar array of motorcycles too.

In 2014, the programme stepped up a gear with a pair of American Fuel Altered – historically the hairiest-handling machines ever to grace a dragstrip. Rat Trap and Pure Hell had already made an impression at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, and now ran here for the first time on a European dragstrip, their proper environment. Ron Hope brings Rat Trap (*above*) back to Dragstalgia this year, accompanied this time by Randy Bradford's 'Fiat Topolino'.

SANTA POD TODAY

Santa Pod Raceway is a busy place, staging events every weekend from February to November (except August Bank Holiday) and sometimes midweek too, in a range of forms – enthusiast events, lifestyle events, celebrations of individual car marques, family entertainment shows, and frequent public track days (known as Run What Ya Brungs). The leading drag racing events incorporate rounds of the MSA British Drag Racing Championship, which is run for Pro Mod machines and which runs all its rounds at Santa Pod.

Full information and online booking are available at santapod.com, or by telephone at 01234 782828.

CALENDAR

2016 MSA British Drag Racing Championship

DATE	TRACK
March 25-27	Festival of Power
May 27-30	The Main Event (FIA European Championship Round 1)
June 25-26	Summer Nationals
July 29-31	Mopar Euro Nationals
Sept 8-11	European Finals (FIA European Championship Round 6)
Sept 24-25	National Finals

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

The start F1 2016 needed?

Saturday was rubbish, but Mercedes v Ferrari looks promising

So, after the farce of qualifying, we had a decent grand prix to open the Formula 1 season. As hoped, Ferrari did give Mercedes a run and it would have been interesting to see if Sebastian Vettel could have won in Australia without the red flag, as Ferrari thinks.

Of course, making predictions after one race is dangerous, particularly on a street/park circuit like Melbourne. But Ferrari looks stronger than last year and that's exactly what we wanted. Nico Rosberg getting off to a good start is also promising. As Lewis Hamilton showed last year, if the number 44 Mercedes gets out front early on, it's all over. A chasing Lewis is hungry and could mean we have a title fight even if the SF16-H doesn't prove a match for the F1 W07 Hybrid. Other good signs include Red Bull's chassis, the ever-more interesting team dynamic at Toro Rosso and the fact we have a competitive new F1 team.

One slight concern I have is that there is a small undercurrent of feeling that the qualifying format won't necessarily revert to the previous system, that another new method could be tried. For some things, change can be good, but F1's big issues are not to be found in qualifying. Just go back to what we had before and focus on more important things.

Kevin Turner, Editor (Twitter: @KRT917)



LETTERS



Motorsport News, March 16

We need women

I agree with Ian Mills' column (*Motorsport News*, March 19). We need more women in motorsport and juniors as well.

Why are more women more interested in rugby union? England is the women's rugby union world champions and, in women's football, England's women finished in third place in the 2015 World Cup. Importantly, the women's football World Cup was shown on the BBC.

Bernie Ecclestone's comments about women in motorsport have also been very unhelpful in the past.

Motorsport is mostly on pay TV these days and that can't help the issue, but motor racing needs to embrace female competitors and catch up with other sports that already do this.

Garry Simpson
New Milton

Palmer warrants place

I find it disappointing that there seems to be a general feeling that Jolyon Palmer shouldn't be occupying a seat at the newly reborn Renault team, illustrated by your rather misleading statement "few could argue that Jolyon Palmer is under-qualified" (*Motorsport News*, March 16).

Having taken the 2014 GP2 title and been unable to buy a seat at, for example, Sauber, he knuckled down to prove his worth as the Enstone team's third driver.

Was Valtteri Bottas under-qualified when, having won the 2011 GP3 title and spent the following season as Williams' third driver, he was promoted to a race seat in 2013?

If Renault weren't keen to take Palmer I'm sure they would have found a way to cancel his contract as they did with Pastor Maldonado.

John Russell
Via email

Ed note: We agree. We were saying most would agree he is qualified!

Motors TV spot on

Motors TV's recent coverage of the European Rally Championship event from the Rally Gran Canaria was, to me, the perfect highlights package to put on TV.

There was a superb mixture of static cameras, truly great onboard pictures and some of the best helicopter shots I have ever seen on rallying.

I hope the WRC can learn from this as only occasionally do we get to see a glimpse from its helicopters.

Now drones are easily available and, surely, the WRC organisers can use this brilliant new technology.

Mike Mace,
Isle of Skye

YOUR PICS



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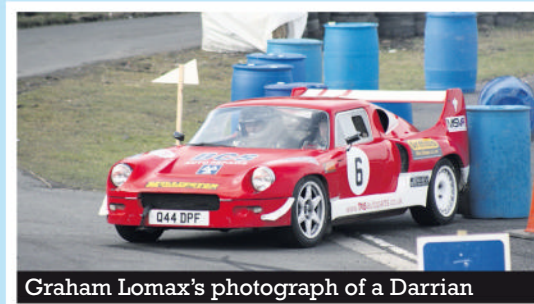


ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Ben Lawrence, six-year-old son of our historic correspondent Paul, took this trials picture



Steve Stowe's photo of Matthew Robinson



Graham Lomax's photograph of a Darrian



Steve Jones braved the snow for this



Variety is the spice of testing, by James Smee



Mark Ashby's Irish rallycross photograph



Will Jones's snap of a very sideways Elfyn Evans



Steve Stowe's pic from Race Retro



A sideways Ford Escort Mk1, by Peter Atkins

GET MN ON THE GO

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TV GUIDE

We're starting the TV guide retro style this week, with a particular race in mind; the 1996 Monaco Grand Prix.

The whole weekend was exciting, with Michael Schumacher famously holding up Gerhard Berger in qualifying, and rain fell not long before the start. Olivier Panis forced his way past Eddie Irvine in an infamous move at the Loews Hairpin for his first and only F1 victory. Watch it on Sky Sports F1 Classic Races (Thursday, 2100-2145hrs).

Sticking with F1 but coming into the modern era, the **F1 Midweek Report** is also on the box, allowing you to catch up with all the talking points from the

opening round of this season in Australia (Thursday, 2030-2100hrs, Sky Sports F1 HD).

It's a circuit racing-heavy guide this week, with highlights of the **Sebring 12 Hours** – the latest round of the IMSA American sports car championship – another must watch. Fangio, Moss, Andretti and Kristensen have all won the race in the past, with Sebastien Bourdais, Christian Fittipaldi and Joao Barbosa the reigning winners.

Finally, a chance to catch some highlights from an exciting **Formula E** race in Mexico is on offer. Post-race drama shook up the result, so make sure you tune in (Saturday, 0930-1030hrs, Eurosport).



Panis won a dramatic Monaco GP back in 1996

LISTINGS

RACING SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
BARC meeting Classic FF1600, Caterham Graduates, Britcar Endurance, Clubmans, Kumho BMW, Karts
Starts Saturday, racing from 1205hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0940hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs)
Admission £10 **Web** silverstone.co.uk
Contact 08704 588260

SATURDAY-MONDAY

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
Truck meeting Mini Trophy, Pickups, Legends, Quaife Saloons, Intermarque, Tin Tops **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1215hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1130hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) Monday, racing from 0945hrs (qualifying from 0915hrs)
Admission adult £24, under 13 free
Web msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

SUNDAY/MONDAY

■ **Snetterton, Norfolk**
MSVR meeting Formula 4, FF1600, Radical Challenge, Track Day Trophy, Team Trophy, Production BMW, Racing Saloons, 206 GTi Production Cup, Coupe Trophy, Deutsche Marques Cup, Toyota MR2, Nippon Challenge, Tricolore Trophy, V Racing Series **Starts** Sunday, racing from 1150hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Monday, racing from 1120hrs

(qualifying from 0900hrs)
Admission adult £15, under 13 free
Web msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

MONDAY

■ **Castle Combe, Wilts**
CCRC meeting FF1600, GT, Sports-Racing, Mini Miglia, Mini Seven, Saloons, BCV8, **Starts** racing from 1240hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £15, child free **Web** castlecombe-circuit.co.uk **Contact** 01249 782417

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**
MSVR meeting Monoposto, Ford XR, VAG Trophy, Northern Saloons/Sports **Starts** racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £20, under 13 free **Web** msv.com
Contact 0843 453 9000

RALLYING SUNDAY

■ **Caerwent MOD Training Area, Gwent**
Marshall and Hicks Tour of Caerwent **Starts** 0915hrs **Admission** tba
Web forresterscarclub.co.uk

SPORTING SCENE FRIDAY

■ **Northampton Raceway, Northamptonshire**
National Hot Rods **Starts** 1300hrs **Admission** tba
Web spedeworth.co.uk



More close Hot Rod action

FRIDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Santa Pod**
Festival of Power
Gates open: 0800hrs each day
Admission adults £25 a day, children under 16 **Web** santapod.co.uk

SUNDAY/MONDAY

■ **Lydden Hill**
MSA British Rallycross Championship
Starts: Sunday 0900hrs practice, Monday 0900hrs racing
Admission: tba **Web** lyddenhill.co.uk

MONDAY

■ **Foxhall Heath, Ipswich**
National Hot Rods **Starts** 1330hrs **Admission** tba
Web spedeworth.co.uk

■ **Croft, North Yorkshire**
British Sprint Championship **Starts** tba **Admission** £8
Web croftcircuit.co.uk

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NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY MARCH 30

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Who will rule the tin-top roost in 2016? Read our full preview

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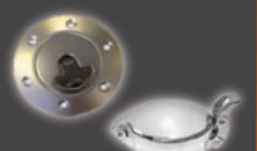
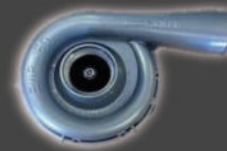


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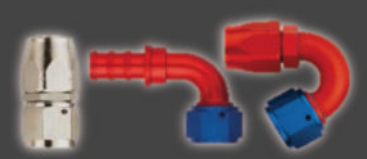
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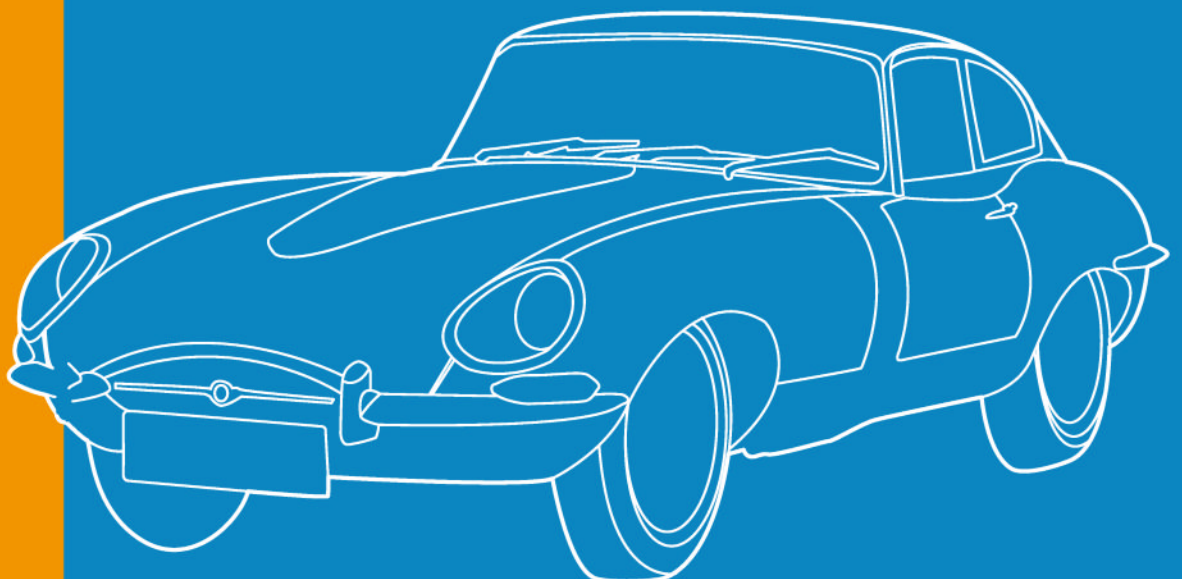
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