

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

# MOTORSPORT NEWS

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# GAMBLE



## LANDS THE BIG ONE!

YOUNG DRIVER TOPS THE TROPHIES AT THE AUTOSPORT AWARDS P23

Citroen-bound champion pays tribute to M-Sport boss Wilson

# OGIER



## BEGINS A NEW WRC CHAPTER



By David Evans

Sebastien Ogier said goodbye to his "best boss ever" in M-Sport's Malcolm Wilson last week and now turns his attention to making more World Rally Championship history with Citroen.

The Frenchman will aim to become just the second driver ever to win world titles with three different manufacturers next season – and he starts that challenge having learned plenty from M-Sport.

"You are always learning in this sport," Ogier told MN, "and certainly my time at M-Sport has made me stronger. I have to say thank you to them for that – and a big thank you to my friend and my best boss Malcolm."

Full story p2-3

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## FLUXIE REUNITED!

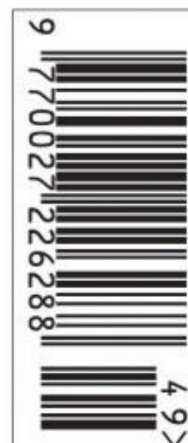
VETERAN RACER BACK TO HIS ROOTS P25



## WHAT NEXT FOR WORLD RX?



HOW THE SERIES PLANS TO REBOUND P26



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**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Bottas vows to come back stronger**  
**P4**



**LOEB LEFT WITH NO DRIVE...FOR NOW**  
**P12**



**AUTOSPORT AWARDS 2018 ROUND-UP**  
**P20**



**GAMBLE WINS MABA PRIZE**  
**P23**



**WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE WRX?**  
**P26**



Racing news	4	Flux rolls back the years	25
Historic race and rally news	11	What's happened to WRX?	26
Rally news	12	The Jackson three	28
Rally reports	17	Sporting Scene	29
Skoda Motorsport	18	Letters/Comment/What's On	30
Christmas gifts	19	Wanted: Loeb back full-time in WRC	
Autosport Awards round-up	20		
Gamble wins MABA	23		

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

**World champion buoyed by opening**

**OGIER AS CITROEN**



Ogier drove his new mount for two days last week and will drive again before Monte

**By David Evans**

**Sebastien Ogier flew out of Britain following an emotional farewell to his World Rally Championship-winning M-Sport team earlier this week, admitting his time with the Cumbrian squad would stay in his heart forever.**

Ogier, co-driver Julien Ingrassia and more than 250 of the team's staff attended the send-off at Dovenby Hall on Monday.

Ogier said: "This team and these people will always be special for Julien and I. We feel now like we are part of the M-Sport family and will stay like this, we will always have this team close to our heart. I have to say an incredibly big thank you to all of the guys in

this team, they have been so fantastic for two years. And, of course, I want to say a special thank you to the boss. The best boss I had, to Malcolm [Wilson]. He made all of this possible."

Team principal Wilson added: "I don't know what I can say. For two years these guys have just kept on delivering. I wanted to bring them here so badly and they delivered on every level for us. We've learned a lot from them and the job for us now is to use that and to take it forward."

Ogier's focus must now shift to developing the Citroën C3 WRC he will drive for the next two years – the final two years – in his WRC career. Back with the French manufacturer he last competed with in 2011, he tested the car for the first time in Portugal last week.

"I drove only for two days," the Frenchman told MN, "so it's really too early to say what is the feeling with the car. The one thing I can say straight away is that I didn't discover something which is worrying me, there was no bad surprise for me. We started to

work [with the team] like I expected we would, which is good.

"There are of course lots of areas for us on the car to look at and this will take a bit of time: differential, for example, but again but my initial feeling is not too bad and I'm sure we'll find the right solutions quite quickly."

Part of Ogier's motivation for the switch from M-Sport to Citroën was the chance to become only the second driver in the sport's history to win the world championship with three different manufacturers. Juha Kankkunen was the first, winning with Peugeot, Lancia and Toyota. In addition to his two titles with M-Sport, Ogier has four with Volkswagen.

"It's an interesting challenge," said Ogier. "And I really think there's potential, with the equipment here to write a nice story, but from here on it's going to be important to quickly see what works and what works less well to try to feel as well prepared as possible from Monte Carlo."

Ogier, who will be back aboard a C3 WRC for a Monte Carlo test



Crew: Fond Ford memories

steps with C3 WRC machine

# HAILS FORD JOURNEY BEGINS



Ogier was pleased after maiden run in the Citroën



Ogier finished third in the points in 2011 for the Citroën team

later this month, says he will need the full support of the Citroën team in his bid for a sixth consecutive successful title defence.

"That's not something that you can do on your own," he said.

Citroën team principal Pierre Budar told *MN* he had budgeted for all of Ogier's development needs with the C3.

"We are committed to have several tests of course with Sebastien and Esapekka [Lappi, Ogier's new team-mate] and we are also committed to do all the necessary development – everything has been included in our budget for next year. We

will develop what is necessary according to what we will decide with them. Our first test [in Portugal] was a working session to have some first guidelines shared between us."

Budar admitted he was delighted to see Ogier back in the team, adding: "It's a very nice feeling and also a friendly feeling because Seb was quite in the family already. Very quickly we could see this feeling was very nice with all of the team. He knows a few people in the team already from his first period in Citroën. The feeling was as if he was at home and it's very nice to see him back at home, it's like that."

## Citroën upbeat despite funding blow

Citroën Racing team principal Pierre Budar has explained the reason for the loss of Abu Dhabi Racing and the implication for his Versailles-based team next season.

When initial images emerged from Sebastien Ogier's first test in a C3 WRC last week, there was anticipation that the Abu Dhabi deal was still on – the stickers were still on the side of the car. By the afternoon, the deal was off. And so were the stickers.

Budar said: "The relationship stopped after six years because Abu Dhabi Racing and its government have to do some studying on what is going on in their investment. After the result in Spain, we had some hope that it would continue, but also Sheikh Khalid [Al Qassimi] let us know that it was possible it would stop."

"The main impact for us will be on the

**Budar: two cars only in 2019**

number of cars we run in 2019. Without the partnership of Abu Dhabi, it will be more difficult to have a third car. So far we can only confirm two cars for Citroën Racing. It was a condition to have a partnership with Abu Dhabi to get a third car, so yes it will be much more complicated to get that [third] car unless we get another partner."

Budar added that there was every possibility Abu Dhabi would be back with Citroën, following its evaluation, in 2020.

Mads Ostberg, who stepped in to replace Kris Meeke who was sacked by the French firm after the Rally of Portugal in May, said the loss of the Citroën's third car had ended his hopes of staying in the WRC next year.

He said: "With no third car, my last option for a WRC contract disappeared. I'm really sorry and disappointed right now. I felt



Abu Dhabi backing will not be on the C3 cars this term

at home with the team and happy with the way we were moving forward as a team."

Ostberg is well acquainted with the tribulations of the WRC driver market, having been forced to sit out large parts of last season having been dropped by the M-Sport World Rally Team at the end of 2016.

"It's time to buckle up and fight back," said Ostberg. "I've done it before and I can do it again! I'm open for different possibilities, but WRC is,

of course, where my heart lies.

"Now it's time to get back to the drawing board, finding a way to fight my way back. I'm not done being a rally driver."

Citroën's other drivers Sebastien Loeb and Craig Breen are both working to find other options to remain in the WRC next season.

For further details of their efforts – together with a full analysis of implications for the loss of Citroën's third car – see analysis, page 14.



# RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

## F1 ROUND-UP

### Midfield podiums

Formula 1 sporting boss Ross Brawn says it is "unacceptable" that midfield teams have only scored two podiums between them since the start of 2017. Sergio Perez bagged third place for Force India in this season's Azerbaijan Grand Prix, one year after Lance Stroll scored the same result for Williams at the same race. "Two podiums from a total of 123 [across the two seasons] is unacceptable, especially when it comes with an ever increasing technical and financial divide," said Brawn. "It's a problem we are tackling together with the FIA and the teams, because the future of Formula 1 depends on it. There are various solutions on the table and we must all accept that we can't go on like this for too much longer."

### Hamilton's crash

Lewis Hamilton took part in a Superbike trackday at Jerez last Saturday, suffering a small crash in the process. Hamilton was riding a Yamaha YZF-R1, the same bike used in the World Superbike championship by the works-backed Crescent team this year. Italian outlet *Gazzetta dello Sport* reported the Mercedes F1 driver worked with Crescent during the test, which was organised by British trackday firm No Limits. His day was hampered by a small crash, but he escaped the incident without any injuries, and was able to continue riding afterwards.

### Vettel can improve

Sebastian Vettel admits he was not "at the top of my game" in F1 this season at times, but knows where he and Ferrari need to improve for 2019. He said: "Naturally, the year I've had, I don't think I ever have any problems raising my hand if I made a mistake. I think I know what I need to do. Certainly, here and there, looking back I haven't been at the top of my game. So, I look at myself first, I think I can be better than I was at times this year."

### Kimi back at Sauber

Kimi Raikkonen returned to the wheel of a Sauber F1 car for the first time in 17 years last week. Ahead of his move to the team for the 2019 season, the Finn tested with Sauber on the first day of the tyre test in Abu Dhabi. It was his first experience of Sauber's current set-up after he last raced for the team back in 2001. His day ended early with an unspecified technical problem and he was 11th fastest of the 12 drivers to set a time on the opening day. Carlos Sainz Jr was another driver to have a first run with their new team, and he said he has "a lot of information to analyse" after his McLaren debut.

# BOTTAS VOWS TO ADOPT 'DRIVE LIKE I STOLE IT' ATTITUDE

## Mercedes man aims to bounce back



It was a difficult 2018 for Bottas



Finn was only fifth in final standings

By Jonathan Noble

**Valtteri Bottas has vowed to adopt a "drive like I stole it" attitude next year as he fights for his Mercedes future after a difficult 2018 Formula 1 season.**

Having ended this year without a win, Bottas has openly admitted that the season just gone has been his most disappointing in grand prix racing.

With Esteban Ocon waiting in the wings at Mercedes as its reserve, Bottas – whose current contract only covers 2019 – says his plan for next year is to go on an all-out attack to prove how good he is.

"This sport is funny, you never know what happens in the future,"

he said. "But I think the right mentality for me to approach next year is like I have nothing to lose.

"I just want to go for it and drive like I stole it, like it's my last race, last day ever. That's a good plan."

Bottas won three races in his first season with Mercedes in 2017, but although this year was worse in terms of results, and he only finished fifth in the final standings, he is certain his form improved and he was closer to title-winning team-mate Lewis Hamilton.

"What we've analysed as a team and what we spoke about with the guys is qualifying pace and race pace, compared to my team-mate, has been better this year on average, which is positive, but the results haven't," Bottas said.

"We need to analyse why the results weren't there. Obviously sometimes it was unlucky, sometimes were different reasons.

"But I think performance-wise this year was better, but results-wise last year was better."

Bottas remains adamant he has the speed and potential to beat Hamilton.

"In this sport, when you're kind of sometimes thinking of yourself, you're thinking all kinds of different things," said Bottas.

"The main thing is always the thought that I've got to be the strongest, and I've never told myself that I'm not good enough to do this.

"Even though I feel disappointed for the season, I know that I can do

much more than what this season proves, and that is the main thing."

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff says Bottas wants to "disappear" back home for the winter to help recover from his disappointing campaign.

"He said to me that he just wants to disappear back home, recharge the battery," said Wolff. "Forget, recover and recuperate, and then come back next year. It has just been very long. I can understand his frustrations."

Wolff believes that Bottas's season fell apart once it became clear that he was no longer in championship contention.

"Speaking with the drivers, once the championship opportunity has been taken away, there is a drop," he said. "And I think we've seen that this year."



Stroll will drive for his father's team

## Stroll finally confirmed but Racing Point name due to change before season

The Racing Point name is not a permanent new title for the former Force India team and will change before the start of the 2019 Formula 1 season.

The provisional entry list for the 2019 F1 World Championship lists the team and chassis name as Racing Point, but that is just a temporary measure as the Silverstone outfit makes the transition from its former identity as Force India.

The team was originally rebranded as Racing Point Force India following a takeover by a consortium led by Lance Stroll's father, Lawrence.

Williams driver Stroll has been linked with a move to the team and this was finally confirmed last week, meaning the whole 2019 grid has now been decided.

"I'm pleased that we can finally confirm Lance's arrival to race alongside

Sergio next year," said team principal Otmar Szafnauer. "It gives us an exciting line-up with the perfect blend of youth, talent, and experience.

"Lance is only 20 and already has two years of Formula 1 experience under his belt, as well as a podium finish and a front-row start."

Stroll had his first experience with the team in the Abu Dhabi tyre test last week.

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Photos: LAT



European F3 champ Schumacher tested

# SCHUMACHER MOVES TO FORMULA 2 WITH PREMA

Formula 3 European champion Mick Schumacher will graduate to Formula 2 next year with Prema Racing.

The 19-year-old took eight wins and a further six podiums on his way to his first major title this season in European F3 with Prema Racing's sister outfit Prema Powerteam.

Schumacher attended the F2 season finale in Abu Dhabi, and tested with Prema at the Yas Marina circuit from Thursday to Saturday last week.

"I'm really looking forward to contesting my next season with Prema in FIA Formula 2—a logical step on my sporting path in my view,

because I want to further improve my technical experience and driving skills," said Schumacher.

"For me, it was very clear to go into Formula 2 with Prema.

"I can't thank the Prema family enough for what we achieved together as a team, especially this year, how we continued to develop together."

GP3 runner-up Nikita Mazepin will also step up to F2 next year with the ART Grand Prix team.

The 19-year-old Russian, who has served as development driver for the Racing Point Force India Formula 1 team, won four races in his debut GP3 campaign and finished 16

points behind his champion ART team-mate Anthoine Hubert.

He will be joined at ART by Nyck de Vries, back for his third season in the category, and Schumacher will be partnered by the returning Sean Gelael.

All four drivers were in action at the post-season F2 test in Abu Dhabi last week, with Carlin driver Louis Deletraz topping the first and third day of testing on the Yas Marina circuit.

On the second day, GP3 graduate and Charouz Racing System driver Juan Manuel Correa denied Schumacher the top spot with a last-gasp lap.

## Ticktum: No F2 but will do winter series for Superlicence points

Red Bull Formula 1 junior Dan Ticktum will not compete in Formula 2 full-time next year, but says he will race in a winter series to boost his FIA Superlicence points.

Ticktum, who won the Macau Grand Prix for a second time last month, is five points short of the 40 required to compete in F1.

Seven Superlicence points are offered to the winner and five to the runner-up of the New

Zealand-based Toyota Racing Series that takes place from January 10-February 10.

Ticktum believes the same amount will be offered for the Asian F3 winter series (January 11-February 24), although the final number will be confirmed after the FIA's World Motor Sport Council meeting in St Petersburg today (Wednesday).

With Ticktum now all-but confirmed to compete in

Super Formula, he said he will race in whichever winter series does not conflict with Super Formula testing. "It's a choice between TRS and Asian F3," Ticktum told MN. "I will look to do whichever doesn't clash with any Super Formula commitments.

"My Super Formula deal isn't confirmed and signed yet, it's just looking very likely I'll be doing that."

## QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

**Seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson and two-time Formula 1 champion Fernando Alonso drove each other's cars last week in Bahrain during the 'JxALO' car swap. Alonso also got a brief run in the 2013 Mercedes-powered MP4-28 before handing it over to Johnson, as Alonso switched to the 2018 road course**

**NASCAR Chevrolet...** Toyota is preparing to race on in the World Endurance Championship in the 2019/20 season that starts next September. The Japanese manufacturer has yet to officially confirm that it will compete in the first season of the WEC run to the 'winter-series' format, but the Toyota Motorsport GmbH squad in Cologne is readying itself for

another assault with the TS050 HYBRID in expectation of an imminent decision... **The entry list for next year's Le Mans 24 Hours will be revealed in two stages. The first 50 cars on the 60-strong entry for the 87th running of Le Mans on June 16/17 will be unveiled on February 11, with an additional 10 cars and a**

**further 10 reserves announced on March 1...** Ex-Formula 1 driver Rubens Barrichello's son Eduardo will race in the 2019 USF2000 Championship. The younger Barrichello, 17, will drive for Miller Vinatieri Motorsports in a two-car team alongside Jack William Miller, son of former IndyCar driver Dr Jack Miller... **Richard Philippe, the 2005 Formula BMW USA**

**champion, was killed in a helicopter crash last month in the Dominican Republic. The 28-year-old Frenchman, who was the younger brother of Champ Car race winner Nelson Philippe, died along with their grandfather and three others including the pilot, a lieutenant colonel in the Dominican Air Force.**



Formula 2 runner-up Rowland

## Rowland replaces Albon in Formula E

Oliver Rowland has been signed to replace Formula 1-bound Alexander Albon in the Nissan e.dams ABB FIA Formula E team.

Rowland, who was Charles Leclerc's main rival for the 2017 Formula 2 title, will replace Albon, who had been expected to race alongside Sebastien Buemi at Nissan in FE's 2018/19 season before he became a frontrunner for the 2019 Toro Rosso drive alongside Daniil Kvyat.

Rowland also replaced Albon for the final day of the FE pre-season test at Valencia in October.

"The Formula E championship features some of the best drivers in the world, and it's an honour to be selected by Nissan e.dams to represent them in season five," said Rowland.

## Alonso back to Daytona 24 Hours with Wayne Taylor Racing team

Ex-Formula 1 drivers Fernando Alonso and Kamui Kobayashi will race in the 2019 Daytona 24 Hours with the IMSA SportsCar Championship Wayne Taylor Racing squad.

Alonso and Toyota World Endurance Championship team-mate Kobayashi will join full-time drivers Renger van der Zande and Jordan Taylor in the WTR #10 Cadillac DPi-V.R for the 2019 IMSA curtainraiser.

Alonso's first visit to Daytona

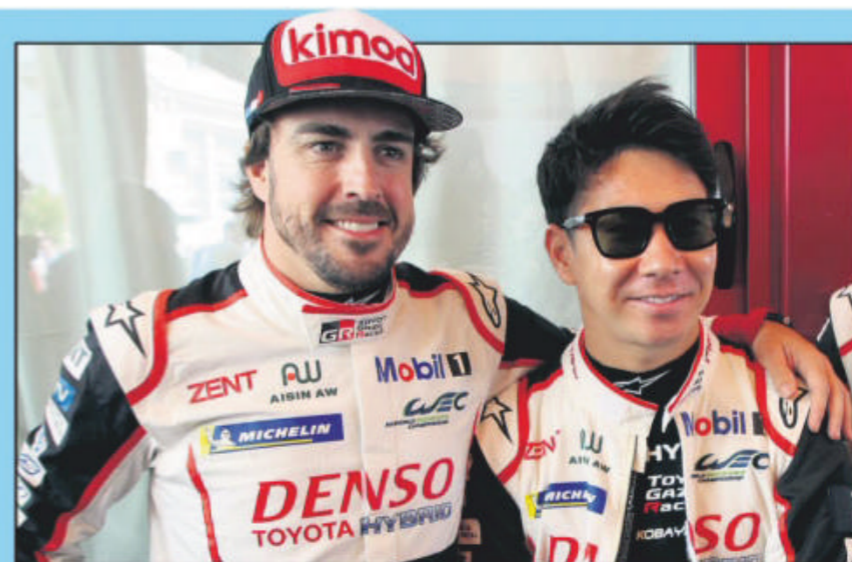
this year resulted in a 38th place finish after mechanical issues, driving for the United Autosports squad in a prelude to his ongoing WEC season that has already yielded a Le Mans 24 Hours win and the championship lead.

"I am very happy about joining the Konica Minolta Cadillac team and Wayne Taylor Racing to race together at the Rolex 24 At Daytona," said Alonso, who will also race at the 2019 Indianapolis

500 with McLaren. "I made my debut this year both in endurance races and with these sportscar prototypes, as well as on this track.

"I was left wanting much more after a brake issue ended our hopes of stepping on the podium.

"After an intense year in which I've competed in both Formula 1 and the WEC, I'm really looking forward to 2019 and attempting to conquer one of the most important races in the world."



Alonso (l) and Kobayashi will team-up for Daytona 24 Hours

## W Series attracts 55 contenders for maiden season, including Garcia, Jorda, Chadwick and Moore, who will vie for 18 spots on grid next year

The all-female W Series has released a list of 55 contenders for a spot on the 18-driver grid for its inaugural campaign in 2019.

The championship, backed by the likes of grand prix winner David Coulthard and Formula 1

technical chief Adrian Newey, was announced in October with a \$1.5million [£1.1million] prize fund and no budget requirements from prospective participants.

It is set to be held over six rounds in 2019, running in support of the

DTM, and use F3-specification Tatuus T-318 machinery.

The organisers say they have been contacted by "more than 100 applicants from 30 countries around the world", from which the current 'long-list' was selected.

"We are thrilled but perhaps not surprised by the response," series CEO Catherine Bond Muir said.

"Even today there is a massive gender imbalance in motorsport and W Series is making the first step to correct that.

BMW-backed former Red Bull junior Beitske Visser, ex-Renault Sport Academy driver Marta Garcia, former Lotus F1 tester Carmen Jorda and British GT class champion Jamie Chadwick are among the highest-profile

names in the initial roster.

Other British drivers on the list are Britcar champion Sarah Moore, Carrera Cup racer Esmee Hawkey, 2010 Formula Renault BARC champion Alice Powell and Mini Challenge driver Jessica Hawkins.

# RACING NEWS

## IN BRIEF

### Fortec's Brazilian

Brazilian karter Roberto Faria has been announced as Fortec Motorsports's first driver for British Formula 4 next season. He graduates into single-seaters having achieved domestic and European success in karts. "This year will be a massive learning curve for Roberto, but I am confident he will mature into a competitive driver challenging for the podium and, with hard work and determination, a strong contender for the Rookie Cup," said Fortec team manager Ollie Dutton.

### Kell to Ginetta GT4

Mazda MX-5 Super Series racer James Kell will make the switch to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup next season. The 21-year-old became a regular top six finisher in his second year of car racing this term and will now compete with the frontrunning Rob Boston Racing squad in the Ginetta category.

### Mustang entry planned for British GT in 2019

The Multimatic squad that masterminds Ford's World Endurance Championship assault is planning a British GT campaign in 2019.

Multimatic Motorsport, which races under the Ganassi banner in the GTE Pro class of the WEC, expects to run the Ford Mustang it has developed for the GT4 category in the British GT Championship's secondary class next year. A pair of cars would be run from its workshops near Silverstone with long-time Multimatic drivers Billy Johnson and Scott Maxwell as part of the line-up.

Multimatic racing boss Larry Holt explained that he wanted to compete with the Mustang GT4 in Britain to try to boost sales of the car in Europe.

"We've sold around 40 cars, but not many in Europe and only one in the UK, so we want to get the car out there to show it off," he said. "We sold the car in the UK after we came up with the plan, but we're pushing on with it because we like going racing."

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Austin took Alfa to two podiums in '18



Belcher 'beyond disappointed'

# HMS RACING WITHDRAWS FROM 2019 BTCC SEASON

## Alfa Romeo Giulietta will be missing from the grid next year

By Matt James

**The HMS Racing British Touring Car Championship team will sit out the 2019 campaign, but plans to return to the category in 2020.**

The Swindon-based team ran Rob Austin in an Alfa Romeo Giulietta in 2018 but, due to "several factors", the squad will now take a sabbatical. Its TOCA BTCC licence is on loan to Motorbase Performance for next season.

Team principal Simon Belcher said: "We are beyond disappointed HMS

Racing will not be on the BTCC grid next year after five years of continual progression. Very unfortunately, we have had hurdles placed in front of us which we simply can't overcome in the timeframe to meet the registration deadline [December 1]."

Austin added: "This is heart-breaking news, we worked so hard to bring the Alfa Romeo to the BTCC grid and we worked through the tough period of development that's required with a new car. We felt we were making progress and, with a solid winter testing programme, believe we would

have enjoyed a strong 2019.

"As a team we did all we could and working for Simon and the HMS Racing team for the last three years has been an absolute pleasure, I would like to thank them for all their hard work and support. It's quite late in the day, so I am not sure what 2019 holds for me as a driver."

Handy Motorsport, which became HMS Racing in 2018, was formed by Belcher when he was racing himself. Belcher contested Legends and three years of the Renault UK Clio Cup before switching to the British

Touring Car Championship in 2014. He was 28th in the standings in 2015.

Austin joined the team in 2016 taking over the controls of the Toyota Avensis, which was initially overseen by Speedworks Motorsport.

However, the team branched out on its own in 2017 and Austin won the final round of that year's contest for the team.

HMS Racing built the new Alfa Romeo Giulietta for 2018. Austin scored two podiums in the Italian hatchback on his way to 14th in the standings.



Series bosses are trying to control grid numbers

### BTCC announces 30 cars set to be on grid next year

Thirty cars will appear on the British Touring Car Championship grid in 2019 as series bosses maintain their plan of trying to reduce the size of the entry list.

As alterations have happened in team ownership over the course of the closed season, series director Alan Gow has managed to retain two TOCA BTCC Licences (TBL). These will be kept back by him – and he said that he did not want to allocate them "despite receiving serious applications from no fewer than three new teams wishing to participate

in the forthcoming campaign".

The teams need the TBLs to compete, and they stipulate a number of demands such as guaranteed appearances at each round and a limited number of driver swaps during the course of the 30-race season.

Teams will announce driver line-ups and details of their cars and sponsorship agreements for 2019 over the coming weeks, prior to the release of the finalised entry list, set to be distributed in March.

#### LICENCES

TEAM	TBLs
Aiden Moffat Racing	1
AmD/Cobra Exhausts	2
AmD/Trade Price Cars	2
BTC Racing	2
Ciceley Motorsport	2
Excelr8 Motorsport	2
Motorbase Performance	3*
Power Maxed Racing	2
Simpson Racing	1
Speedworks Motorsport	1
Team Parker Racing	1
Team BMR	2
Team Dynamics	2
Team Hard	4
West Surrey Racing	3

\*including one TBL on loan from HMS Racing

### Johnson splits from Robinson, as O'Brien joins Balfe

Former British GT4 champion Graham Johnson has re-signed with Balfe Motorsport to drive a McLaren 570S GT4 next year and will be joined by McLaren Driver Development Programme graduate Michael O'Brien, after splitting with long-time co-driver Mike Robinson.

Johnson and Robinson had raced together in endurance karting events in the early 2000s and competed in British GT since 2015, winning the '16 title outright before adding the Pro-Am crown in '17. But, after a trying season that yielded only one win at Brands Hatch, Johnson told *MN* it was time for a change.

"I would be surprised if we didn't team up again in the future, we're great friends and we have fun racing together, but at some point you have to set yourself new challenges," Johnson explained.

"I've got to learn how to work with someone new, I've worked so long with Mike that to work with someone else is going to be a real challenge, but it's genuinely exciting to partner with McLaren

and work with one of their rising stars."

Historic Formula Ford graduate O'Brien moves across from Tolman Motorsport, where he finished third in his debut season with fellow Silver-graded driver Charlie Fagg.

In addition to the Pro-Am title, O'Brien is targeting another run at the outright championship, having missed out by just two points to Jack Mitchell.

"Coming so close this year was very disappointing, so hopefully we can go those couple of places better next season," O'Brien said.

"It's nice to have the continuity of coming back to the same championship and the same car, so hopefully I can start where I left off."

Johnson will drive McLaren



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Photos: Steve Jones, Jakob Ebrey

## Fiesta drivers in Ginetta GT5 move

Fiesta frontrunners Danny Harrison and Josh Steed will graduate with Mutation Motorsport to the Ginetta GT5 Challenge next season, racing under the Altima Academy banner.

Steed, who was third in this year's Fiesta Junior Championship, tested a Ginetta G40 at Bedford Autodrome last month with coaching from British GT4 race winner David Pittard. Multiple Fiesta Championship race winner Harrison is also set to have a run in the rear-wheel-drive machine imminently.

The Altima Academy has been formed by Mutation boss Greg McIlwraith and Antony Weeks, who will drive a third G40 in the Am class having contested some Castle Combe Saloon and Hot Hatch races in a Peugeot 106 this year.

"Antony likes the idea of promoting talent rather than budget," said McIlwraith. "He's working with me to find the funding. We're trying to go against the grain and do something about all those talented drivers that are out there who don't have the funding."

"The GT5 Challenge is the strongest grid in the UK, competition-wise, so if you want to prove yourself and get on the ladder to something big, that's where you've got to be."

The team plans to compete in another Ginetta series too.



Harvey is stepping down

## Meyrick to head up SuperStars scheme

Sportscar regular Andy Meyrick will take over as director of the British Racing Drivers' Club's SuperStars programme from Tim Harvey.

Meyrick is a former member of the scheme and will take the place of Harvey – who has been part of the programme for 11 years.

Formula 2 champion George Russell and runner-up Lando Norris are the latest of five SuperStars to graduate to F1 under Harvey's watch.

"Tim has done an incredible job turning it into what it is today," said Meyrick. "Drivers want to be a SuperStar and all the members wear the badge with pride. I was a Rising Star and then a SuperStar so I cannot wait to carry on the work Tim has done."

Harvey added: "SuperStars has been a big part of my life for the past 11 years and is something of which I am immensely proud. Due to my commitments to the programme it has meant that I have not had time to pursue a number of other projects and with two SuperStars moving into F1 next season it seems like a good time for me to pass the baton to Andy."

# MINI SEZENS AND MIGLIAS LAND BTCC SUPPORT SPOT

## Four races for Mini 7 Racing Club at Thruxton as part of special calendar



Minis will join BTCC package

The Mini Se7en and Mini Miglia categories will support the British Touring Car Championship at Thruxton next year as part of a special calendar to celebrate 60 years of Mini.

Both Mini 7 Racing Club categories will get two races around the Hampshire circuit at the first of two BTCC visits over the May 18/19 weekend and are set to benefit from live or delayed-as-live TV coverage.

The club's 2019 schedule also includes its popular visit

to Zandvoort for the British Race Festival in July, a return to the MG Live event at Silverstone and being part of a revamped Mini Festival at Brands Hatch.

The BTCC support slot is a major coup as it's not since the Super Touring Car Challenge appeared at Rockingham in 2015 that there's been a 'club' racing category guesting alongside the UK's premier series. It's arisen as both the Renault UK Clio Cup and Porsche Carrera Cup GB are skipping that meeting.

The two Mini categories provided some dramatic racing at the Thruxton 50th anniversary meeting this year and Mini 7 Racing Club commercial manager Colin Peacock is excited to return.

"The club's been going for 52 years and it's the 60th year of Mini next year so we have put together a bit of a special calendar," he said. "It wasn't easy to do it with Rockingham closing down. We are very lucky that Alan Gow [BTCC series director], Dunlop and BARC have given us a helping

hand to be with the touring cars at Thruxton. We do put on some great racing there and we are really excited about that.

"We feel it's an honour and recognition of the grids we've had over the years. It's a real breakthrough for us at the club in terms of attracting members. It's very exciting and we're looking forward to be live on television.

"MG Live is a big event and we haven't been there for about 20 years so we've got some really good events. Last year we had some good grids

and took nearly 60 to Brands Hatch for the Mini Festival. "We're also thrilled to go back to Croft. It's a long way but it's a cracking circuit."

As well as the main seven-event schedule for the championships, a winter series is also planned.

"We are doing a winter challenge starting in March at Silverstone for the first two rounds and the last three rounds at Brands Hatch in November which again is about getting more people on track," Peacock added.

## GINETTA PROLOGUE ENTRY EXPANDED



All G40s will be able to enter

The Ginetta 24-hour prologue has been opened up to all G40 competitors rather than just those with G40 Cup cars.

MN reported last week that want2race was organising the non-competitive event at the Guadix circuit in March next year but it has been decided that Ginetta Junior and GT5 Challenge-spec cars will also be eligible.

"Originally it was going to be one class only but it makes sense for it to be open to everyone and be quite inclusive," said organiser Ben Hyland. "We wouldn't want to exclude anyone – because it's

the first time we have no idea if it will be more popular with Juniors, GT5 or G40 Cup drivers."

As the event is not a race, under 16s are allowed to participate too giving them a unique opportunity to be part of an endurance event.

"It's a competitive test but there will be prizes for doing the most laps," explained Hyland. "It's a prologue test so it's not run under a race licence – we are governed by the circuit and our insurers and ourselves as to how we form the event."

There is space for 20 teams of between three and six drivers to take part.

## Gooding joins Mini Challenge JCW grid with the title-winning Jamsport squad after successful Fiesta spell

Mini Challenge JCW title-winning team Jamsport's 2019 line-up will include Harry Gooding, with whom it has had a very successful relationship in Ford Fiestas.

Jamsport claimed the Mini Challenge crown with Ant Whorton-Eales this year and ran Gooding to a class title in

the British Racing and Sports Car Club's Fiesta Championship, having previously won the Fiesta Junior title with him in 2016.

Gooding tested an ex-Louis Doyle Mini JCW run by the team at Donington Park last month.

"It's a bit different to what I've been used to but it was a really

great experience," said Gooding, 16.

"They are a bit of a handful, especially through the Craner Curves. You want to push it to its limits and have those sorts of sideways moments to know how the car reacts when it's been pushed too far."

Gooding, who missed out on

the overall Fiesta title at the final round, intends to test at each Mini Challenge venue over the winter.

"You've got to be prepared," he said. "It's a bit of a step up from what I've been used to so I've got to step everything up and just work a bit harder for it."

Gooding will be joined on the grid

by Volkswagen Racing Cup driver Matt Wilson. The 23-year-old was third in the standings and will race with new team JWB Motorsport.

Jac Maybin will also compete in the series again next year after finishing eighth in the series this season and will remain with the Excelr8 squad.



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# RACING NEWS

## PICKUPS TO USE MALLORY PARK OVAL

Track granted licence by Motorsport UK



Oval last used in 2005

By Stephen Lickorish

**Pickup Truck Racing is set to return to the Mallory Park Oval next year after Motorsport UK has granted a licence for the circuit to be used again.**

The Mallory Oval was last used by Pickups in 2005 and has since had its licence taken away. But, with Rockingham closing, the series has worked with circuit officials to try and get the oval back in use.

Oval racing has been an important part of the Pickup championship and it was the only category to use the Rockingham Oval in recent years. It now has two meetings scheduled at Mallory next year and series boss Sonny Howard hopes to add more in future seasons.

“With the demise of Rockingham, everybody said it would be the end of Pickup racing but that is not the case,” said Howard. “After Rockingham [closing] we want Pickups to still put on a show. We are going back to racing on the circuits again and we’ve got six rounds with the British Truck Racing Championship. But I believe the icing on the cake is the return to Mallory Park’s Oval.

“Twenty-two years ago that was where Pickups started racing under Eurocar. It will keep that part of the series going and that’s important – it makes Pickups unique.

“We’re going to try and make those events into something special and will work with Mallory Park to

promote the events and we’re hoping to bring in other products so it ends up being a whole day [of entertainment]. It won’t just be a clubbie race meeting with trucks on the oval.”

Motorsport UK has granted Mallory the licence to reopen the oval – but it is only the Pickups that will be allowed to compete on it in 2019 and they won’t run in the anti-clockwise direction as they have previously. The UK motorsport governing body has also placed conditions on the licence.

The Pickups will be one of three series Howard’s SHP concern will run next season. The British Automobile Racing Club has handed SHP a three-year contract to operate the Intermarque championship – which Howard has renamed Super Silhouettes for 2019.

“Super Silhouettes came about because BARC HQ took back the permit for it that was held from the South Eastern Centre,” explained Howard. “At the same time the drivers approached us because they felt SHP not only understood the product, we understood the mentality of the drivers. It’s our intention to make it into a national championship as opposed to one that was in the south east of England.”

The final part of the so-called ‘Power of Three’ is a new series for American-style Sprint racers, which Howard says was originally designed with the Rockingham Oval in mind but has now been adapted for regular tracks.

### Rookies get to grips with BRDC British F3 car

British Formula 4 race winner Paavo Tonteri was just one of several drivers to get their first taste of BRDC British Formula 3 machinery last week at Silverstone.

Tonteri tested with Double R, who he raced for in British F4 this season and which won the 2018 British F3 drivers’ title with Linus Lundqvist.

Reigning ADAC Formula 4 champion Lirim Zendeli was also testing with Fortec Motorsports, but won’t race in the series next year.

“He was just learning the circuit for FIA Formula 3 next year,” said Richard Dutton, team principal at Fortec.

“He was very quick though and it’s a shame [he won’t be racing in the series next year].”

Fortec also tested IMSA Prototype Challenge champion and Pro Mazda Series driver Kris Wright.

Elsewhere, Chris Dittmann Racing ran recent Formula Ford 1600 race winner Tommy Foster, while Carlin tested Kaylen Frederick, who finished sixth in this season’s USF2000 series.



Moore won Endurance overall title

### Champion Moore returns to Britcar with Tockwith

Reigning Britcar Endurance champion Sarah Moore has confirmed she will return to defend her crown next season.

Moore became the first female to win the title after racing a Ginetta G50 run by her family team Tockwith Motorsport alongside rookie Matt Greenwood, who also became the youngest driver to win the Britcar crown.

She will return to the series alongside Moh Ritson, who has contested the Junior Saloon Car Championship this term in his first season of car racing.

“I’m going to be back in Britcar, probably in the same car and hopefully we can win it again. That would be nice,” said Moore, whose last title was the Ginetta Junior Championship in 2009. “I think it will be a little bit more difficult next season, I guess the only way we can go is backwards.”

### Lundqvist impresses on GP3 debut and eyes FIA F3 move in 2019

Reigning BRDC British Formula 3 champion Linus Lundqvist experienced his first taste of GP3 machinery last week at the series’ official post-season test in Abu Dhabi.

The Swede, who claimed seven wins this season, took part in two days of driving with Campos Racing ahead of a possible move to the new-

for-2019 FIA Formula 3 Championship – a merger of GP3 and European F3.

“Every time I went into the car I learnt something new and left [after] the two days very happy,” said Lundqvist, who finished third fastest on the second day of running at the Yas Marina circuit.

“As a bonus we had good

pace compared to the rest of the field.

“I think the aim is to be in FIA F3 [next year], it’s one of the possibilities we’re looking into.”

Also testing GP3 machinery was former British F3 driver Ben Hingeley with Jenzer Motorsport and Max Fewtrell, reigning Renault Eurocup champion, with ART.



Test took place in Abu Dhabi with Campos Racing

### Two one-hour race format for Britcar

The format of the Britcar Endurance Championship will change next year as the series reverts to two one-hour races on a weekend.

Two 50-minute races for the Sprint Championship and one 50-minute plus one two-hour race for the Endurance Championship has been the format for the past two seasons.

But following a consultation with teams and drivers, this will be changed to two one-hour races (held on the same day) per round with just one overall title up for grabs.

“Britcar has been listening to what the customer wants,”

said championship co-ordinator Claire Hedley.

“We plan to have a cheaper price-per-minute of racing, it would be less than this year.

“We want to make sure we’re offering a better package.”

The provisional eight-round calendar consists of Silverstone – on both the International and Grand Prix layout – Donington Park, Snetterton, Oulton Park, as well as two visits to Brands Hatch.

The final round will be at Brands for the Into the Night Races across two days, with the final race on Sunday lasting two hours instead of one.



Britcar has listened to its teams and drivers

### Rushworth moves to VW Racing Cup

Reigning 750 Motor Club Hot Hatch Class A champion Ben Rushworth will move into the VW Racing Cup next season with Power Maxed Racing.

Rushworth, who also won the MG Metro Cup title in 2016, will drive a VW Polo in the series and will have his first test in the car this Sunday at Silverstone.

“To be honest it [VW Racing Cup] wasn’t on my radar at all, I didn’t have any plans to do it,” said Rushworth, who raced a Honda Integra DC2 this year.

“I wanted to defend the [Hot Hatch] title but I didn’t want to defend the title in a series that might have had a



750MC Class A title went to Rushworth in Honda Integra

downturn [in grid numbers].

“I’d been working with the people at the 750 Motor Club to bring in some sort of balance of performance, reverse grids or weight ballast. I was at Motorsport

Days and Power Maxed were there and I started having a nosey around the Polo.

“The car isn’t as competitive as the Scirocco or the Golf so the first step will be to get the car to that level.”

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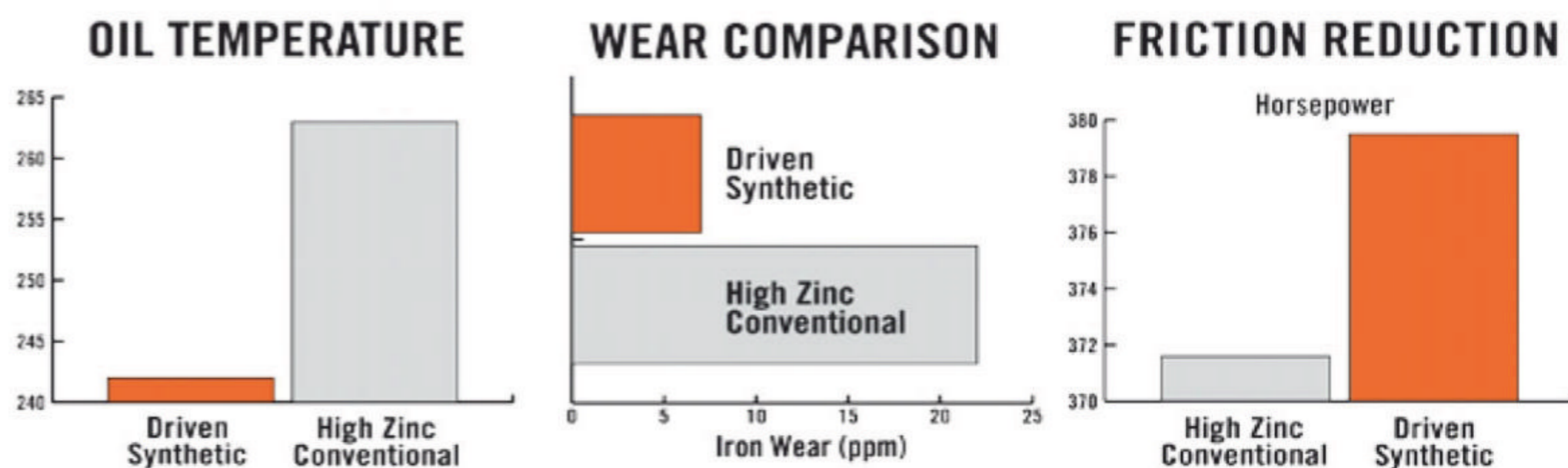
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# HISTORICS

'Goodwood's Procar plan'  
BMW M1s recalled, below

Photos: Silver Fern Rally, Paul Lawrence



## DOWN THE PUB WITH

**JEZ ROGERS**  
British Historic Rally Championship co-driver  
Age: 39 Lives: Bridgnorth

### He followed his dad

"I grew up when my dad Peter was sprinting and hillclimbing in a Morgan +8 and I did a bit of motocross when I was a lad. I did my first road rally at 16 as a co-driver and when I was 17 I borrowed my sister's Austin Metro to do the Starlight Road Rally and came 10th overall. I told her I was going bowling for the night. I got away with it until the proofs of the photographs came through just addressed to J Rogers, which is the same initial as my sister, and then I had some explaining to do."

### He did well in a 205

"After that I built a Peugeot 205 for the 205 Challenge and came second overall in 2005. I went to Sweden as the prize and then ran out of money. I did a bit of rallying with various people and then I co-drove for Alan Walker when he started in historics in 2012. We won the Welsh Historic Championship. Then Alan was having a break and another co-driver, Pete Cotton, suggested my name to Simon Webster."

### There's a plan for 2019

"I already knew Simon and it has gone really well. We've now done three seasons and the pace is really good. It is working well and we want to continue it next year, with a full assault on the BHRC and the Roger Albert Clark Rally. We finished fifth on the 2017 rally and I did it with Alan in 2015 when his engine blew up on the first day."

### He's also driving

"I've also started doing speed events in a Westfield and I'm planning to do the Midland and Westfield Championships next season, although BHRC dates will take priority. It should be a pretty full season. I love driving but stage rallying is just too expensive for me. Even club level rallying has got silly. My 205 probably cost me £10,000 all-in, but it wouldn't be competitive now. I do all the work on the Westfield myself."

### He enjoys the BHRC

"There's been a really good atmosphere in the BHRC this year and everyone was willing to help each other and it's been a great craic. Away from motorsport I'm a project manager in the construction industry and spend a lot of time walking my Labrador."



Co-driving expert Rogers

# ROBINSON ON TOP IN SILVER FERN RALLY

*Brits to the fore on eight-day New Zealand classic event*



Robinson overcame a mid-rally accident

By Paul Lawrence

**Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis led home a British clean sweep of the podium when the eight-day New Zealand Silver Fern Rally finished in Rotorua on Saturday.**

Robinson and Collis set the pace from the start of the 800-stage mile rally and were able to ease their pace over the last two days having established an

eight-minute lead over the similar Ford Escort Mk2 of Roger Chilman and Max Freeman. Into third overall came Simon Tysoe and Paul Morris in their Escort Mk2.

However, it was not always straightforward for Robinson and on the third day he was caught out by a tightening right-hander and plunged off the road. They were helped by a farmer but needed an engine

change at the end of the day. The following car of local driver Shane Murland went off at the same point and narrowly missed Robinson's car just as Collis was about to get out.

Chilman went ahead but a broken halfshaft on day five cost him a chance of victory. He was towed out of the stage and the delay handed a big lead back to Robinson, which he nursed over the closing stages of the epic rally.

"That's some achievement after eight days of rallying and it's above and beyond what we thought we'd do," said an elated Robinson. Chilman added: "I'm delighted to get to the finish: we had a lot of fun."

Making it five British crews in the top seven were Andrew Siddall/Alex Lee in fifth and Phil Squires/Nigel Hutchinson in seventh, despite a mid-rally roll.



More F2 races planned

## Expanded Historic F2 calendar for 2019 features six weekends

The Historic Sports Car Club has announced an extended calendar in 2019 for the Historic Formula 2 FIA International Series, with an increase from five to six double-header race weekends following the addition of the Silverstone

Classic to the calendar: Hockenheim, Brands Hatch GP, Magny-Cours, Zandvoort and Dijon are all on the schedule to place Historic F2 at significant historic racing festivals across Europe. In 2018, 50 drivers took

part in the season and that number is set to grow further in 2019.

Grahame White of the HSCC said: "We asked the competitors about adding a sixth race weekend and the support for an expanded calendar was unanimous."

## BMW M1 Procars to be reunited at Goodwood

The 40th anniversary of the spectacular BMW M1 Procar Championship will be marked by high-speed demonstrations at the 77th Goodwood Members' Meeting on April 5/6.

A collection of the mighty 470bhp one-make race cars will be a highlight of the event and it is hoped that some drivers from the 1979 and 1980 Procar championships will be on hand. The category ran for two

seasons as a one-make support series to the European rounds of the F1 World Championship as many of the F1 drivers competed in identical BMW M1 coupes. Niki Lauda and Nelson Piquet were the two champions.

Will Kinsman from Goodwood said: "These fabulous cars are seldom seen on track together, so we are incredibly excited to have them in action at the 77th Members' Meeting."

## Zeus Formula Ford returns to track action

After an absence of three decades, a rare Zeus Formula Ford 1600 returned to racing during the recent Walter Hayes Trophy.

The Zeus design was the work of race engineer Peter Sneller and he was there to oversee the run for the car now used in sprints and hillclimbs by Russell Haynes.

Formula Junior racer Mark Haynes, father of Russell,

owns three examples of the Zeus design from the early 1980s. Haynes senior rebuilt the car with support from Sneller and it was entrusted to Classic F3 racer Gaius Ghinn for its racing return as Sneller also prepares Ghinn's title-winning Ralt RT3.

Ghinn took the distinctive square-bodied machine to fourth place in the Pre '82 final at Silverstone.

## Historic Sporting Trials to encourage rookies with new initiative

Newcomers to Historic Sporting Trials are being offered an 'arrive and drive' package from £500 per day by trials ace Ian Wright.

The multiple trials champion has put together a package for

HSTA events that covers entry fees, car preparation and delivery and an experienced driver to act as a tutor and passenger for the day. Packages will be tailored to the driver's level of experience.

"Drivers with little or no experience will be able to benefit from their knowledge and have a mentor on hand for the whole day," said Wright, who will supply a Ford-engined Cannon from his base in Kent.



Newcomers can trial

## IN BRIEF

**Woe for the Welsh**  
Welshmen Ken Davies and Alan Jones were on target for a top 10 finish on Silver Fern Rally in New Zealand until they rolled their Ford Escort Mk1 out of the eight-day rally halfway through the final day. More usually seen in a Volvo Amazon, they made their New Zealand debut in a local car hired for the event.

### LeJog starts

The annual Land's End to John O'Groats Reliability Trial will start from Land's End at 0730hrs on Friday morning. The HERO-organised classic rally is widely regarded as one of the toughest on the calendar and the first car is due to reach John O'Groats at 1000hrs on Tuesday. A field of 70 cars will set off from Cornwall.

### Walker's return

Over seven months after it was badly damaged on the Pirelli Rally, the Ford Escort Mk2 of Alan Walker and John Connor will return to competition on Saturday's Grizedale Stages. The car has been extensively rebuilt after rolling and later being hit by another car. The Grizedale run is a shakedown ahead of a BHRC campaign in 2019.

### Chris Martyn

Former sportscar racer and BRDC life member Chris Martyn died in November at the age of 82. Martyn started racing in 1957 and raced for about eight years in national and international sports car races, notably with the Fitzwilliam MGA team and the Dick Jacobs MG Midgets. He contested the Nurburgring 1000kms six times in a row, taking a Midget to 13th overall in 1963.

### Lees tops VSCC

The Vintage Sports Car Club has appointed Jenny Lees as club president with immediate effect and she takes over from Geoff Smith who has retired from the role. Lees will serve at least until the club's AGM in 2020. The VSCC is Britain's prime organiser for a wide range of competition for Pre-War cars, including racing, speed events, trials, autotests and rallies.

### Safari entry open

Entries have now opened for the 2019 East African Safari Classic Rally, which will be the ninth running of the world's most demanding historic rally. The event will run from November 27 to December 6 2019, covering long and challenging competitive sections on roads that remain open to local residents. The £26,000 entry fee includes sea freight for the car and hotel rooms.

### Hodgson's outing

More normally seen sitting alongside Stuart Egglestone in a Ford Escort Mk2, BHRC champion co-driver Brian Hodgson will take on a different challenge this weekend when he contests LeJog with David Martin in a Volvo 142. They are tackling the classic rally to support charities including Papyrus, which raises funds to help prevent young suicide.

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Nine-time WRC champion is out of work



Citroen has ruled out running a third car

# LOEB SCRAPS FOR HIS MOTORSPORT FUTURE

## Out-of-work French legend looking at job options for 2019 season

By David Evans

**Sebastien Loeb is heading into a new season without a Peugeot-Citroen agreement for the first time in almost two decades.**

Confirmation that Citroen will only run two cars (see page 14) in the World Rally Championship allied to Peugeot's departure from World Rallycross means the nine-time champion is without a full-time drive in 2019. Loeb has been employed by the PSA Group every year since 1999.

Loeb told *MN* he is open to offers for the coming year and said he wouldn't rule anything out.

Loeb said: "At the moment, I have nothing and I am open to discussions with any team in any discipline. It's hard because of the late news from World Rallycross about Peugeot stopping – I was 100 per cent concentrated on that, but now I have to find another drive. There are talks with some manufacturers about some things, but nothing is done and everything is possible."

Loeb contested a three-event WRC programme with Citroen as part of a wider PSA Group contract, which encompassed



Peugeot has quit WRX for 2019

his participation with Peugeot in World RX, in 2018.

"At the moment my contract with PSA ends at the end of December," Loeb said. "For next season, nothing is done and I am free for next year."

Loeb's only commitment in 2019 is Dakar, where he will compete in a Peugeot 3008DKR with the PH Sport team.

With two seasons of World Touring Car Championship experience under his belt, there's the potential for a return to racing – possibly with his own Sebastien Loeb Racing squad. But it's rallycross and rallying which remain Loeb's passion.

After winning Rally of Spain, Citroen's only WRC success of the season, Loeb talked of how comfortable he'd felt back in the sport where he started his career.

"Rallying is what brought me to motorsport," he said, "it's the discipline where I feel most at home and able to enjoy [it]. I know this sport. I don't want to come back full-time, I know the reasons why I wanted to stop [in the WRC] and these stay the same, but it would be interesting to think about some more rallies."

Loeb's hopes of remaining in World Rallycross look to be fading as he tries to source backing to land Peugeot's 208 WRXs for his team to run.

"I would say this is very far away now," said Loeb. "The cost to rent them is too high for me. I am trying to find some backers and we need a lot of sponsors, but at the moment it's not looking so good. I'm still fighting, but let's see."

Loeb admitted WRX remained an attractive option for next year and, if an electric solution could be found, for the future.

"This is what I am working for [to continue in WRX]," said Loeb. "What made Peugeot retire [from WRX] was the decision not to go for electric, this was a major problem for them and now for me. Compared with other motorsports, RX is not so expensive for the manufacturers,

but the show is good for the spectators at the events and on TV.

"Look at Formula E, the show is not so good, but it has good promotion and it's exciting for the manufacturers. But when you see it on TV, it's not as nice as RX could be.

"But we don't have the promotion. In France, [WRX] is not really on television, people don't know about it. I meet people in airports, in the street and they say: 'Oh, how are you? How are you enjoying retirement? Don't you miss the driving?' I say: 'But I am competing in World Rallycross...' and they know nothing about this.

"We need to improve the communication. For me, we need to make it more like an American show, it needs more atmosphere – we need to make people talk about the sport more."

More immediately, Loeb said costs needed to be cut for next season, starting with an 11-round calendar which features four long-haul races.

"It [the 2019 World RX season] will be for privateers, so for 2019, the most direct solution is to reduce the costs and one way to do this is with the calendar," Loeb added.

### M-Sport still looking at Loeb

As Colin Clark's analysis of the driver market highlights (see page 14), Sebastien Loeb has been projected into the thick of the fight for the few remaining 2019 World Rally Championship seats – but there's one man who would very much like to replace one Sebastien with another.

While Hyundai must be a possibility for Loeb, Malcolm Wilson has told *MN* he would love to replace the word Ogier with Loeb on the side of his factory Ford Fiesta WRC for next season.

M-Sport team principal Wilson is working on finding a solution to remain in the WRC following Ogier's departure for Citroen – and the Cumbrian said he would very much like to see Loeb as part of that future.

"I've always been a very big fan of both



Wilson is a big Loeb fan

Sebastiens," said Wilson. "We've worked with one and that went very well, so we've got to have a go at getting the other [Sebastien]. You know I tried to get him before and I would love to work with Sebastien [Loeb]."

"In light of the way things have worked out, it's time to give him a call and see if we can finish a deal we first worked on a few years ago. Be great, wouldn't it, to see him in one of our cars... but we've got to make the budget work first. Getting the budget sorted to stay in the WRC is the first priority and that's what we're working on now."

▶ **WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR TROUBLED WORLD RALLYCROSS?** ▶▶▶

**PAGE 26**



The Strength of Experience

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'Rockingham's final competitive event'  
King wins circuit send off, p17



## SKODA'S ROVANPERA FREE TO CHASE TOP-FLIGHT WRC CHANCES

Skoda will not halt Rovanner

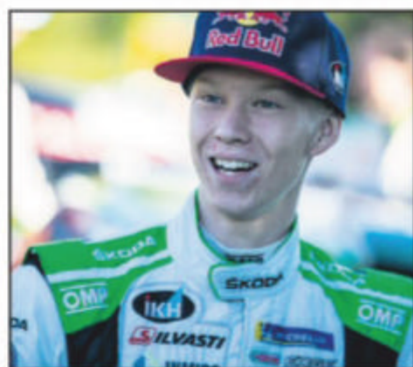


Kalle Rovanner feels he could be ready to step into a full-time World Rally Car seat this time next year – and Skoda is ready to release him from his contract to make that move.

There's strong speculation that Rovanner's manager Timo Jouhki already has the 18-year-old's future tied down in a long-term agreement with another of his former drivers, Toyota Gazoo Racing team principal Tommi Makinen.

Both Jari-Matti Latvala and Kris Meeke were given single-season agreements for 2019, with one of them widely expected to step aside for Rovanner.

The son of one-time world rally winner Harri remains a Skoda factory driver for a second season in succession next year, contesting as many WRC rounds as possible. When he's not driving a works Fabia R5, Rovanner will use a private car run by Toni Gardemeister's team.



Rovanner: back with Skoda

Rovanner told MN: "I won't do any national rallies next year, just the world championship and the events which I don't do with the [factory] team, if I haven't already done them, then I will try to do them with the private car. Next year is about the experience for me.

"It depends how next year goes, but after that I think I can be ready if we get that experience and the speed is good.

"If I drive two years or three years in WRC2, I don't mind.

"I'm not in such a hurry."

But neither is he focused on the WRC2 title.

"WRC2 title is not what it's about for me," he said. "It's not like I'm going there to chase for the title. It's about the experience for the rallies for me and to make myself better and make myself really fast."

Skoda team manager Pavel Horteck confirmed the door could be opened ahead of his contract expiring, if Rovanner is ready to step up to a World Rally Car after next year.

"I can tell you we have a long-term agreement with Kalle," said Horteck. "But like you saw with Juho [Hanninen] and Esapekka [Lappi] we have never broken the opportunity for a young driver when he came to us and said: 'Guys, I have the proposal to go higher'. We never stopped them.

"Kalle is a talented young guy and we wait for his future."

### Tidemand aims for graduation

Pontus Tidemand has turned down another season with Skoda Motorsport in an effort to drive his career forwards to a sustained World Rally Car programme.

The Swede, who has won the WRC2 and Asia Pacific titles with the Czech manufacturer in his four years in a factory Fabia R5, admitted remaining alongside Jan Kopecky and Kalle Rovanner for 2019 would have been the easy option.

Tidemand (above) told MN: "I have been here for four years, they offer me one more year, so we had a chance to stay here, but the years are flying now. I'm 28 soon and if I want to become a WRC driver then I need to do something else. We are working on some opportunities to do something in a World Rally Car. [Rally] Sweden would always be a wish and that's certainly one of the events where I think we could make a result. For my career the time has come for me to move on."

Ahead of his departure Tidemand praised his team-mate Rovanner's speed, saying: "Watch this guy. Honestly, he is something special. We didn't see anything like him before. He learns so quick and finds speed quickly."



## GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

# DAVID EVANS

"Loeb is now a genuinely free agent"



**E**ighteen-year-olds don't scare easily. Especially not 18-year-olds who spend their working life throwing rally cars between the trees at 100mph... and their home life doing pretty much the same on a quadbike, skidoo or jet-ski, depending on the season.

But in one sentence I'd managed to frighten the life out of Kalle Rovanner. I'd asked him if he had much to say on stage at Skoda Motorsport's annual press conference in Prague last week.

"No," he said, cautiously.

I replied that I was mildly surprised.

"Why?" he said, "what have you heard? I don't have to talk, do I?"

Briefly, I was tempted to push this one further, but that would have been unkind. I put him out of his misery.

He grinned and laughed the laugh of a deeply relieved man. Boy? Man? Youngster? Teenager? Teenager.

"I don't like that sort of thing so much," he said. "Actually, days like today are the hardest part of the job. I prefer to drive the car."

Seeing Rovanner walk through the lobby of one of Prague's fancier hotels, he absolutely had the look of a man who longed to be elsewhere. Ideally, behind the wheel of a car. Any car. Anywhere.

As you'll read later in this issue, Skoda's end-of-season presser also tied in with the opening of its all-new motorsport facility in Mlada Boleslav. It's a pretty impressive place and a clear statement of intent that the Czech firm has a long-term future in rallying, which is very, very good news.

Which brings me on to another conversation with another rally driver I had last week. This one, it's fair to say, is at the other end of his time in the sport. With nine titles and 79 wins, there's not much left for Sebastien Loeb to achieve in world rallying. And he's been pretty relaxed about that. Until now.

It's that thing about having something and not really wanting it, then not having it and really wanting it. It happens to me a lot with chocolate biscuits. When they're in the house or the office I'm not bothered about them. But the minute there aren't any, I would walk over hot coals for a chocolate-coated digestive and actually risk incarceration to get to a milk chocolate Hobnob. It's the same for Loeb, except it's rally cars he's craving now.

I must admit, I was always fairly sure Citroen would sort him out with something. I know there was all that stuff about Sebastien Ogier not wanting part-timers back, and there was speculation about contract clauses to that effect, but still, a Seb-Seb line-up for the reds in, for example, Corsica would surely be too good an opportunity to miss out on.

But it's really not going to happen now. Loeb might actually have run his final race with Citroen – and potentially his last world championship outing. And that makes me sad. The story he provided in Salou was one of the highlights of the season and just having the world's fastest Alsatian back where he belongs was something special. I can't believe, now he's a genuinely free agent for the first time in 20 years, nobody can find a home for the WRC's very own living legend.



Marshall has a new job

### Marshall swaps to Toyota team to line up alongside Meeke

The World Rally Championship's worst-kept secret was delivered earlier this week, when Seb Marshall was confirmed as Kris Meeke's new co-driver at Toyota Gazoo Racing.

Marshall, who moves to Toyota after four years with Hyundai, admitted the decision to jump ship was a tough one. He will replace Meeke's former co-driver Paul Nagle alongside the Northern Irishman in a

Yaris WRC next season.

"I really had to think about this one," said Marshall. "Hayden and I have only worked together since last year, but in the short time we've achieved a great deal and my time with him has been my most successful in the sport, with stage wins and podiums. I'll never forget those moments or Hayden and the fantastic team at Hyundai I'm leaving. "But this opportunity with

Kris was one I felt I really couldn't ignore. I know Paul has left some very big shoes for me to fill, but I'm hugely excited about the year ahead with Toyota Gazoo Racing and my first ever full season in the World Rally Championship."

Marshall and Meeke will work together in a rally car for the first time when they begin their pre-Monte Carlo Rally testing next week.

### Rossi against Suninen for Monza glory

Valentino Rossi will chase a seventh Monza Rally Show victory at the Italian circuit this weekend – but he will face strong competition from M-Sport Ford World Rally Team driver Teemu Suninen.

The Finn is competing at Monza for the first time and will take time to acquaint himself with the stages, using every possible iteration of the track close to Milan. MotoGP star Rossi is, however, a Monza expert. Nobody has more wins at the end-of-season spectacle and the Italian took his first success aboard a Ford Focus RS WRC 12 years ago.

He and Suninen will drive Fiesta WRCs this weekend.

The event starts on Friday afternoon and finishes after nine stages (including two runs – one in the dark on Saturday evening – at a 27-mile Grand Prix stage) and close to 100 stage miles around the circuit and its link roads at lunchtime on Sunday.

● Prior to the start of the Monza Rally Show, all four WRC manufacturers will display their current World Rally Cars in Piazza del Duomo, in the centre of Milan in an effort to widen mainland Italian appreciation of the WRC.



**Oliver Solberg came within an ace of beating his three-time world champion father Petter at Saturday's Gymkhana Grid event in South Africa. With an engine fault aboard his Citroen Xsara WRC, the 17-year-old might have edged his Volkswagen Polo R Supercar-driving dad. Double WRX champion Johan Kristoffersson won the event. Naturally.**

# RALLY NEWS NEWS ANALYSIS

BY COLIN CLARK

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Citroen will slim down to two cars for 2019



Evans is on the hunt

## HOW THE WRC DRIVER MARKET HAS REACHED CRISIS POINT

With Citroen down to two cars, the next few weeks are crucial for many

**U**ntil Thursday last week Craig Breen, Mads Ostberg and Sebastien Loeb were all vying for a third Citroen C3 WRC. A day later, the seat had gone. Along with Abu Dhabi, Citroen's principal backer for the last six seasons.

Now what? With six-time World Rally champion Sebastien Ogier onboard and the charismatic and mercurial Esapekka Lappi in the second seat, all appeared to be heading towards a full assault on both championships with a full complement of drivers. But nope, that's not happening.

Now I'm sure we'll eventually hear the reasons why, but for me it's all a little baffling. Sources within the Abu Dhabi camp are indicating the split is only a temporary one, they'll be back in 2020 and that's even more confusing. Why take a year out when you have the best chance of glory for years?

What does that decision mean for the driver market? The competition for the one or possibly two seats remaining just got a whole lot more intense.

Breen, Ostberg, Hayden Paddon and Elfyn Evans are all staring at a climb up the most precipitous rock face imaginable. How any of them find a way to the top, I'm really not sure.

The one who might yet have a choice of seats is Loeb.

Before Rally of Spain, I thought the highest level in the WRC, where you're capable of fighting regularly for wins, had moved beyond the reach of Loeb. Salou changed all that. He's lost none of his speed, ability, reactions or

guile. The wealth of experiences he's banked in a decade of dominance is as relevant today as it was six seasons ago. He's a contender.

And that's the important thing. If, as he's said, he only wants to do a part-time programme, say six rallies, then he will almost certainly be capable of winning any of those events. And that's the big difference. Our other four, highly capable, highly skilled and highly motivated pilots just aren't at that level. Yes, Ostberg has won, as has Evans and Paddon, but they are far from regular contenders for the podium's top step.

Breen is still on the upward curve and hasn't reached his peak yet. Whether he's allowed to determine just how high that peak might be is yet to be seen.

Loeb offers that tantalising prospect of taking the fight to our WRC elite of Ogier, Ott Tanak, Kris Meeke, Jari-Matti Latvala and Thierry Neuville. Let's face it, Meeke is only at Toyota because he offers exactly the same possibilities. He can win any rally. When you come looking for a seat to any team, that line on your CV can't be ignored.

That line could well be jumping out at Hyundai chief Michel Nandan and slapping him forcefully in the face.

Nandan and Hyundai need Loeb. They need titles in 2019. The rumours would suggest Hyundai Motorsport's management is under the most enormous pressure to deliver. Hyundai has poured many millions of Euros, perhaps hundreds of millions over the past five years into the WRC project, and it wants a return on that investment.

Until a few days ago, Nandan had a very big headache: how do you change the outcome with the same tools at your disposal? Yes, we can expect a

few upgrades to the i20 but even with that in the pipeline, I'm sure he still had doubts. Many of them.

Neuville is the real deal. He's one of, if not the best driver, of his generation. He's come close to the title in the past two seasons, very close this year. But it wasn't quite enough. He had to drive the wheels off his i20 just to stay in contention. And when the stresses started to show, and the results started to falter, the support just wasn't there.

What M-Sport and Ogier have shown over the past two seasons is the need for focus. It's focus and support that win titles.

There are two ways your number one driver can benefit from the support of his team-mates. One is by his team-mates getting in front of the opposition and taking points off them, as Tanak did for Ogier in 2017. The other is by dropping behind the team leader to give him the odd point or, as we saw in Australia with M-Sport, a more advantageous road position. Both scenarios work if you have a defined team leader. But clearly, the stronger position is where top dog has the support of one, or ideally two team-mates able to scrap at the very top and take big points away from rivals.

And herein, perhaps, lies Hyundai's biggest problem.

In 2017, Hyundai started with two drivers, Paddon and Neuville. Both came with the intention to be drivers' champion. Clearly, that was impossible. There can be only one winner. It was neither of them.

This year, same situation; two drivers both wanting titles. This time it's Andreas Mikkelsen and Neuville. Again, it was neither.

For 2019, my guess is that Hyundai has learned from the past and will make

Neuville the unequivocal number one with a clear objective to win at all costs.

Who supports him? Mikkelsen has won in the past but, just at this moment, he looks to be a long way from a regular winner. Paddon and Dani Sordo, you could argue, are in a similar position. Yes they can be consistent, but can they be consistent challengers? I'm not sure.

Loeb is that consistent challenger. If I were Nandan I'd be pulling out all the stops to get the unemployed Frenchman onboard.

It looks as if there's already a plan to rotate three of the four contracted Hyundai drivers next year, so it's not such a huge upheaval to make it four drivers (Loeb, Paddon, Sordo and Mikkelsen) rotating between 28 starts.

And what would that give Hyundai? It would give them a second potential winner on at least six events. I don't reckon Loeb wants to do too many more than that. And it gives the other three drivers premium road position for the gravel rallies, certainly in relation to Neuville's probable opponents. You could also argue there's potential in this plan to secure maximum manufacturer points and, as we know, that championship is often coveted more by the marques.

I think Loeb will have options. M-Sport needs a winner almost as much as Hyundai. But it will come down to who can offer Loeb what he wants and who can reward him most generously for his efforts.

I'd love nothing more than to see one of the younger drivers getting any available seat, but reality surely says both Hyundai and M-Sport need a winner. And the only one of our drive-less drivers showing winning credentials right now is the old man of rallying: Loeb.



Seb Loeb has shown his class



Hyundai needs a top-line man



Neuville (r) needs support



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## 'BTRDA Rallycross to return to Knockhill'

Sporting Scene, p29



Photos: Jakob Ebrej

## STEP CLOSER TO SCOTTISH CLOSED-ROADS



Jim Clark Rally had closed-roads

The return of closed-road motorsport in Scotland has become more likely after the nation's government has launched a phase which outlines the law that could be passed.

The 'consultation phase' is a period where the government invites the public to make its thoughts on a bill known and is necessary for all legislation.

Private legislation exists in Scotland, which is how the Mull Rally and Jim Clark Rally were able to run for so many years, but under that bill insuring the events has become impossible. In England and Wales, the respective governments have already passed this legislation, which devolves the decision on whether an event can get a closed road permit to the governing body – in this case Motorsport UK – and the local authority relevant to the area of the event.

It has allowed the Tendring and Clacton Rally in England and Wales Rally GB to make

use of closed-road stages in those countries.

The process in Scotland has been delayed. After deaths on the Snowman Rally in 2013 and the Jim Clark Rally, a fatal accident inquiry was launched and wasn't resolved until 2017, delaying the start of Scotland's attempts to push through the same change as made in England and Wales.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson said: "Scotland has a long and proud tradition in the world of motorsports and we recognise the need to balance economic benefits with safety considerations – both for spectators and participants."

"Following the tragic rallying accidents of recent years, Scotland has lost two major events from its sporting calendar and has been unable to host any motorsports on closed public roads. This is

detrimental to local economies and something which we are seeking to address. We must be mindful that motorsports can be dangerous and that risk needs to be correctly assessed and managed.

"It is important that the people who understand the sport are put at the heart of this assessment and also to ensure that local knowledge is fully taken into account. That is why the Scottish Government is seeking views on a two-stage authorisation process which would allow decisions to be taken at a local level – empowering communities to hold events which benefit those locations and beyond."

The Kelso area, where the Jim Clark Rally took place until 2014, and the Isle of Mull which held an event until 2016, have both campaigned for the return of those events for the hundreds of thousands of pounds they bring to the local economies.

## The power is in your hands

MOTORSPORT NEWS says...

It's been a tricky time for Scottish rallying without two of its best and most iconic events in the Jim Clark Rally and the Mull Rally.

With this consultation, we have a legitimate first step towards making these events possible again, and that can only be a good thing. With lessons hopefully learned from the tragic events of recent years – the Jim Clark (2014) and Snowman (2013) fatalities – the events are ready and chomping at the bit to come back safer and stronger.

This consultation phase will undoubtedly raise some in protest of the bill, and that is why, if you want closed-road motorsport in Scotland, you must respond at the link below.

Rallying is poorer without these two iconic events, and the legislation, if passed, would allow events to pair stages together by linking access roads to create longer stages. More fun for competitors, less stress on marshals, medical and other volunteers. That's a win-win.

Even if you don't quite grasp what the consultation is about, and you only take one thing away from this page, let it be this: If you want to see closed-road motorsport in Scotland, respond to the consultation below. There's a blue box at the bottom which says: 'Give us your views. Begin consultation'. That's where the path to closed-road motorsport return begins.

Jack Benyon  
transport.gov.scot/consultation/  
consultation-on-motorsports-on-  
closed-public-roads/

## THE STRAIGHT-TALKING SCOT

## JOHN FIFE

"Desperate times call for bold ideas"



**T**he Scottish Motor Racing Club has taken a bold step with the appointment of a full-time commercial and development manager. The club has head-hunted Rory Bryant from the newly created Scottish Motor Sport organisation which is based within Sport Scotland's offices in Edinburgh.

Bryant has been with SMS since its inception four years ago and has been the driving force behind the adoption of new ideas and practices, creating and initiating new developments, generating promotional opportunities and working directly with clubs, Sport Scotland, the Scottish Government and Motorsport UK.

In fact it was an inspired move by a club like the SMRC to make this approach and we all wish Rory well in his new post.

This is also a move which should inspire other amateur organisations. MS UK has its own commercial arm, International Motor Sports, which organises and promotes Wales Rally GB while pursuing other revenue generating streams. The British Rally Championship also has professional expertise at its helm while many other championships like British Touring Cars all have a strong professional individual or group behind them.

And perhaps this idea should be explored and considered by other events, championships and some of the bigger clubs.

Given the ever increasing complexities of event organisation, regulation and promotion these days, many smaller clubs will get left behind. That means there is a need for more clubs to work together to assemble appropriate organising skills and man/womanpower.

If the clubs think this is a step too far, how about the Regional Associations adding this topic to their agenda for discussion at their next meeting?

Oddly enough this idea was first mooted over 30 years ago when the Scottish Rally Championship suggested that the two East and West Associations of Scottish Car Clubs join together to appoint a full-time sports development and commercial manager. Someone who could chase sponsorship for all types of event and then promote and publicise these events.

Sadly there was little support for such a bold idea then, but perhaps the time is right for such an idea to be considered more seriously once again. Bryant will need to be replaced at SMS to continue the work he started and which is currently being carried on alone by Gillian Sefton, SMS development officer.

Either, SMS could broaden its brief or the Scottish Association of Motor Sport Clubs could seek to appoint their own PR/promotional professional to generate revenue streams.

The sport needs more than development and promotion, it needs to attract more investment from commercial sponsors/partners who in turn will need specialised support and advice to generate a measurable return.

Desperate times call for bold ideas.



E36s have successful Caribbean series

## Calls for drivers to sign up to new BMW Compact series

Ryan Champion has called for drivers to enter a new single-make championship for the BMW Compact which is starting in the UK next year, after competing in Barbados in an E36 for the first time last month.

The BimmaCup is a Caribbean championship which has over 40 Compact E36 318tis, the organisers of which have now launched a UK variant. The winner of

this series will win a funded trip to Barbados to compete in the final round of the Caribbean counterpart.

"For a relatively small investment they are a lot of fun to drive," said reigning East African Safari Rally winner Champion.

"Somebody can potentially build one of these cars for £5000, and you're doing a single-venue based championship, and

win a drive in the Caribbean. It's unique."

The BimmaCup UK will head to the Jack Neal Memorial Rally at Blyton in February, followed by the Lookout Stages, Abingdon Car-nival and Pendragon Stages.

Interested competitors should contact Rob Brook – Rob@RB-Motorsport.co.uk – for regulations and further details.

## Two days for next year's Guernsey Rally

Next year's Guernsey Rally will incorporate two days' competition after organisers, Guernsey Kart & Motor Club, announced they have obtained permission to run several completely new stages.

In a raft of changes to what is only the second-ever stage rally on the island, the route will include eight more stages than in 2018.

Additionally, a major revamp of the format means the opening loop of tests will take place in the dark on Friday February 22 followed by a full day on Saturday 23.

The rally will consist of 24 stages, giving competitors

approximately 30 competitive miles on the island's tight and twisty lanes. The precise route has not yet been published but the first loop will run between 1800hrs and 2200hrs on the Friday, before two further sessions in daylight on Saturday.

GK&MC chairman Karl Marshall says 2018's inaugural rally was well received by residents and competitors alike.

"We are delighted to receive so much support and that the local authorities have given permission for a second rally to go ahead; we have been very careful to follow the correct procedures to obtain the necessary approvals," he said.

## Mini Tempest to make long-awaited return

One of the South East's most popular single venue rallies, the Mini Tempest, will run for the first time in a decade on December 29 and will use roads at Deepcut Barracks in Surrey, a venue new to rallying.

The Sutton and Cheam Motor Club-run asphalt event was a favourite with clubman competitors for over 20 years; formerly based at Goodwood and the Transport Research laboratory at Crowthorne, it last ran in 2009 at Longcross Test Track near Camberley.

It has been resurrected as a one-off event using Brunswick Road and Pirbright ranges, which are part of Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut. The Ministry of Defence will close the Barracks

on January 1 2019 and SCMC's website states: "We have a brief window of opportunity to hold what may prove to be the only single-venue rally at the venue."

The rally will consist of eight short stages, giving competitors about 24 competitive miles. It will feature a format – well-liked by competitors – where cars contest a stage in an east-west direction before entering a holding control. They then contest the same stage in reverse, followed by a short service halt.

There will also be two special awards for the leading driver and co-driver using a Ford Escort. These will honour Shawn Rayner and Steve Dear, who lost their lives in a rally accident at Bramley, Hampshire last year.

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

# RALLY NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Martin Walsh

# FIRST RIGHT-HAND-DRIVE HYUNDAI TO BREAK COVER

## Carmichael plans to give i20 R5 a debut on Grizedale Stages as Mini is rebuilt

### SEEDING ENTRY LIST

Grizedale Stages		
NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Josh Moffett/Keith Moriarty	Ford Fiesta R5
2	Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
3	Peter Taylor/Andrew Roughead	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
4	Tom Preston/Carl Williamson	Skoda Fabia R5
5	Jock Armstrong/Cameron Fair	Subaru Impreza
6	Russ Thompson/Andrew Murphy	Mitsubishi Lancer E9
7	John Wink/John Forrest	Hyundai i20 R5
8	Peter Stephenson/Patrick Walsh	Ford Focus WRC06
9	Michael Binnie/Claire Mole	Mitsubishi Lancer E9
10	Alan Carmichael/Ivor Lamont	Hyundai i20 R5



A right-hand-drive i20 will compete

By Jason Craig

**The first Hyundai i20 R5 converted to right-hand drive will break cover on this weekend's Grizedale Stages.**

The car is owned by Philip Case Rallysport – the same business that is carrying out the conversion. PCRS says it will be the first i20 in both the UK and Ireland to be converted – a practice common in Ireland although it voids the homologation of the car – and it is in response to growing customer demand.

Ballymoney's Alan Carmichael is set to steer the car on the loose surface meeting alongside Ivor Lamont.

Carmichael's usual Mini John Cooper Works WRC is currently out of action as it undergoes a complete rebuild at Prodrive – a process that will not be completed in time for December 8.

"That left me with two options: a left-hand-drive R5 or a two-litre Subaru Impreza World Rally Car – but neither really appealed to me," said Carmichael. "It would have meant me going there half-hearted, so when the option of doing it in a right-hand-drive i20 R5 came up I immediately went for it."

"We will test the week of the event to get a feel for the car, and to see how it behaves on gravel. I'm sure it is going to be a learning process for everyone, but PCRS is a professional team. They know the car well."

"I'm excited to be a part of the project. It's great to get the chance to drive the first right-hand-drive i20. I went to the Grizedale Stages last year not really knowing what to expect and I was pleased with my pace and where I came. Fifth overall was the result and I'd like to think we could do that again."

Carmichael will start the event as the 10th car on the road. Irish Tarmac and Forest Rally champion Josh Moffett has put in a late entry and is set to drive a Ford Fiesta R5 as car number one.

Also set to fight for victory is 2017 BTRDA Gold Star champion Stephen Petch and Peter Taylor in a pair of Fiesta RS WRCs, 2017 Wales Rally GB National winner Tom Preston and 2016 Scottish Rally champion Jock Armstrong.

This Saturday's event features 40 road miles in the Grizedale forest and just 42 road miles, making it a staple on the rally calendar as the last major gravel event of the year.

### Greer targeting more events in Sierra

Irish Tarmac and British Rally Championship regular Jonny Greer is targeting more events in a newly-built Ford Sierra Cosworth – his first entry in a Historic class – after finishing sixth on last weekend's Killarney Historic Stages Rally.

Greer's father David – head of well known preparation firm DGM – competed in a similar car briefly in the early 1990s, and the car has been liveried in Q8 colours as a homage to Alex Fiorio and Francois Delecour, who competed in the WRC in a Sierra in period.

"We only finished the car on Thursday night and Moll's Gap was the first real test and that was an eye opener," said Jonny Greer, co-driven

by Kirsty Riddick.

"We had a few niggling issues but that was to be expected, everything else worked really well which is a great tribute to the guys at DGM."

"I found it very hard to get my head around the braking, I was probably braking too early. On the high-speed stuff the car doesn't have the same grip as the R5 which takes getting used to, especially with the notes, you can't carry the speed."

As for another outing, he added: "I really enjoyed and it was a great experience but I don't know really."

"Maybe my Dad will take me out, but I would like to do some more historic type events."



Greer finished sixth on Killarney with Sierra Cosworth



Irishman ran as course car on Killarney until propshaft failure

### Breen enjoys driving Metro 6R4 for first time

Craig Breen said driving a Metro 6R4 for the first time exceeded his own expectations at last weekend's Killarney Historic Stages.

The Citroen driver ran his family-owned Metro as course car on the event, but he and co-driver Paul Nagle, ended the event disappointed following propshaft failure on the second run at the Ballaghbeama test.

"I remember standing at the side of the road watching my Dad come past in one of these," he said, "so to finally be on the stage with something like that screaming away behind me was really something special. It was far beyond what I expected."

"To take a car like that up the [Molls] Gap was just amazing. In the end we only lost a couple of stages because of the prop, but that was incredible. The car handled well but, to be honest, you don't drive that car, you go to war with it, but what a way to go to war!"

Breen now turns his attentions to finding a full-time seat for next year's World Rally Championship, with his chances of securing a fourth season with Citroen having faded following the loss of Abu Dhabi backing.

Breen's best hopes now remain a seat with Hyundai or M-Sport – negotiations with both are understood to be ongoing.

### Bogie to continue testing "incredible" Escort

David Bogie will increase testing of his new "incredible" Ford Escort Mk2, after suffering reliability issues with the car on its debut in Killarney.

The car suffered throttle motor issues during testing and it was this issue that put the 2011 British Rally champion out of the Killarney Historic Rally's modern section.

Bogie will test before switching back to his regular Skoda Fabia R5 ready for the first event of the BRC, the Cambrian, in February.

"The car itself is incredible," said Bogie. "Unfortunately we've had a few issues in testing which have cut things short. We went to the rally without the amount of mileage we would have preferred."

"We'll go away and do some testing and development on it and hopefully next time I'll be there or thereabouts. The plan was to have the car ready earlier and I knew Killarney was the last event of the year and if we missed that, we'd be out of the car some time."

### Tynemouth offers BTRDA Junior prizes

Legendary timing operation Tynemouth Computer Services turns 40 years of age in 2019, and to celebrate founder Martin Liddle will support the BTRDA Junior Rally Championship with cash prizes.

Liddle and the BTRDA have also been linked for 40 years with Tynemouth taking care of the series' points and results.

The first, second and third drivers in the Junior series will receive £150, £100 and £75, respectively, on each event. Co-drivers will be awarded

£75, £50 and £25, respectively.

In a move which is expected to help support the revival of the 1400 Championship next year, Fuchs Lubricants has partnered with the class.

Seeding rules changes mid-way through 2018 mean organisers are able to position lower-powered cars at the front of the field to receive better conditions. It is hoped more 1400 entries will return to gravel rallying after enough lead-time to rejoin at the Cambrian Rally opener in February.

# RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Martin Walsh, Kevin Money, Kevin O'Driscoll

## MURPHY HOLDS ON IN THRILLING FINISH



Murphy/Nestor took narrow win

### Killarney Historic Rally

By Martin Walsh

**Organiser:** Killarney and District Motor Club  
**When:** December 1 **Where:** Killarney, Co. Kerry  
**Championships:** Irish Tarmac Historic Rally Championship, PlasticBags.ie Southern 4 Historic Rally Championship, Kingdom of Kerry Rally Championship.  
**Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 144.

**Leading from the start, reigning Irish Tarmac Historic Rally champion Owen Murphy (Talbot Sunbeam) survived a final-stage blitz from the Ford Escort Mk1 of Mark Falvey to win the Killarney Historic Rally by a mere 1.1 seconds.**

Welsh ace Neil Williams (Escort) was a minute and 50.5 seconds further adrift in third. A 9.6-second gain from the iconic Moll's Gap gave Murphy the perfect start as Falvey,

running out of sequence after he had to secure the battery, had to contend with his Escort popping out of second gear.

Welsh favourite Phil Collins (Opel Ascona) was 20.6 seconds further behind in third but then lost significant time on the second stage at Ballaghbeama with a puncture. Murphy went 13.7 seconds clear on SS2 but Falvey responded by clawing five seconds back on the run through Caragh Lake.

Both their service crews were busy; Murphy's team fixed a rear-axle mount that snapped on SS2 and Falvey's engineer sorted a misfire. After slotting into third on SS2, Marty McCormack retired his Escort with an electrical glitch.

Williams therefore was

running third on his maiden trip over the classic Killarney terrain from fellow countryman Melvyn Evans (Escort), who was slowed by a small flock of sheep on SS2, but retired on SS5 with transmission troubles.

Meanwhile, Escort pair Tomas Davies and local ace Ray Hilliard were next in the classification.

On the repeat of the loop, Falvey could only manage to trim a second from the deficit as Davies (Ford Escort) edged out Williams for third.

Murphy looked home and dry with a 9.6-second lead after the penultimate stage at Kilcummin, but Falvey's performance on the repeat of the same stage almost dislodged the long-time leader, who hung on for a famous win.

Williams got the better of Davies to secure third ahead of Daniel Jones (Escort), Jonny Greer (Ford Sierra) and Escort debutant Cathan McCourt, who set the best time on the final stage. Denis Cronin, Hilliard and Barry Jones completed the top 10.

#### Results

1 Owen Murphy/Anthony Nestor (Talbot Sunbeam) 1h10m38.3s; 2 Mark Falvey/James O'Brien (Ford Escort RS1600) +1.1s; 3 Neil Williams/Anthony O'Sullivan (Escort); 4 Tomas Davies/Shane Buckley (Escort); 5 Daniel Jones/Gerwyn Barry (Escort); 6 Jonathan Greer/Kirsty Riddick (Ford Sierra); 7 Cathan McCourt/Barry McNulty (Escort); 8 Denis Cronin/Helen O'Sullivan (Escort); 9 Ray Hilliard/Conor Walsh (Escort RS1600); 10 Barry Jones/Brian Quinlan (Escort).  
**Class winners:** Greer/Riddick; Ray Cunningham/Kevin Keane (Morris Mini Cooper S); Tom O'Brien/Scott O'Brien (Austin Mini); Maurice Meskell/Stephen Meskell (Ford Escort); Davies/Buckley; Duncan Williams/Guy Weaver (Ford Escort); Jones/Barry; Les Allfrey/Keith Fellowes (Peugeot 205 GTI).

### Gallagher survives high attrition rate to win

Declan Gallagher and John McCarthy (Toyota Starlet) were impressive winners of the Modified Section of the Killarney Historic Stages Rally, with one minute and 40 seconds to spare over second-placed Enda O'Brien/John Butler (Ford Escort Mk2).

Gallagher survived a lurid first stage spin on Moll's Gap to put in an impressive performance as his rivals fell by the wayside over the tough Kerry stages for his second win on the event.

In damp and dark conditions it was Colin O'Donoghue, who had borrowed his dad Kevin's BMW M3 for the weekend, that took the Killarney bragging rights on the opening test, just 0.3 seconds ahead of Rob Duggan (Ford Escort Mk2). Duggan was aiming for his third successive win on the event and forced the pace over the next two stages to move into the lead as the crews headed to the first service.

Gallagher had moved back to second place ahead of Chris Armstrong.

Engine problems then forced Duggan out on stage four, the second run over Moll's Gap, and Gallagher's lead over Armstrong stood at eight seconds. The second loop ended the hopes of

several of the top contenders with Jonathan Pringle clipping a rock on stage five, Ballaghbeama, which damaged the axle.

David Bogie had travelled from Scotland in a new Escort and it took him a few stages to acclimatise but, as he was getting closer to the pace, a throttle motor failed and sidelined him on stage five as well. One stage later and Gary Kiernan was gone from third place with engine maladies. Gallagher's lead was 28 seconds over Armstrong, but it all became academic on the penultimate test when Armstrong's Escort ground to a halt. This pushed Gallagher's lead out to 1m40s over O'Brien with one stage left, but this was cancelled due to deteriorating conditions.

Kevin O'Driscoll

#### Results

1 Declan Gallagher/John McCarthy (Toyota Starlet) 57m39.1s; 2 Enda O'Brien/John Butler (Ford Escort Mk2) +1m40.5s; 3 Martin McGee/Denis O'Mahony (Escort Mk2); 4 Colin O'Donoghue/Eddie Doherty (BMW M3); 5 Raymond Conlon/Damien Fleming (Corolla); 6 Richard/Brian Harney (Escort Mk2); 7 Jason Black/Karl Egan (Toyota Starlet); 8 Patrick McHugh/Pauric O'Donnell (Escort Mk2); 9 John Devlin/John McCarthy (Escort Mk2); 10 Stephen Bawn/Chris O'Donnell (Escort Mk2).  
**Class winners:** Kevin Flanagan/Vanessa Hamilton (Austin Mini Cooper S); David Fleming/Kevin Doherty (Austin Mini); Tommy McDonagh/Paul Hickey (Escort Mk2); Lloyd Hutchinson/Willie Fitzpatrick (Austin Mini); Black/Egan; Conlon/Fleming; O'Brien/Butler.



Gallagher won comfortably in the end after tough rally

### ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Welsh champions Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey finished their highly successful season by taking victory in the final round of the series, **The Eagle Rally**. The pair led throughout the event.

The win means that Gilbey completes the year with a maximum possible championship total of 800 points.

Despite having to stop to rectify lighting issues in a neutral section, George Williams/Dan Stone led at Petrol, but a series of wrong slots soon after the restart consigned them to fifth at the finish. One place further back was Mark Lennox, this result being enough to secure for him the ANWCC Drivers' title.

Motorsport UK chairman David Richards appeared on his first road rally for over 40 years, navigating for former World champion co-driver Phil Mills. But they had a troubled run virtually from the start as their

newly-built hired Escort developed fuel starvation problems. This led to their retirement at the fuel halt. Richards was disappointed not to have been able to fully experience road rallying in its current format.

Owen Turner/Andy Ballantyne won the 40th running of the **Preston Rally**. A bumper 90-car entry competed on what might be the last running of this legendary event.

Ian Mills

#### Results Eagle Rally

**Organiser:** Newtown & District Auto Club **When:** December 1/2 **Where:** Mid-Wales **Championships:** WAMC & ANWCC **Route:** 120 miles **Starters:** 70. 1 Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey (Subaru Impreza) 3m10s; 2 Mark 'GT' Roberts/Dylan Jenkins (VW Golf GTI) +20s; 3 Paul Morgan/Jamie Mills (Honda Civic); 4 Richey Williams/Will Atkins (Vauxhall Astra); 5 George Williams/Dan Stone (Ford Escort); 6 Mark Lennox/Ian Beaman (Escort); 7 Gari Evans/Arfon Griffiths (Escort); 8 Telor Pugh/Cadog Davies (SEAT Ibiza); 9 Elliott Stafford/Lewis Sim (Mazda MX-5); 10 Craig Bowler/Chris Whittall (Civic).  
**Class winners:** Morgan/Mills; Mckorley Cronie/Rob Williams (Proton Satria GTI); Steve Fletcher/Ross Kenyon (Satria).

### Hat-trick goes to King/Miles at Rockingham

#### Rockingham Stages Rally

By Peter Scherer

**Organiser:** Middlesex County AC, Thame MC **When:** December 1/2 **Where:** Rockingham Motor Speedway **Championships:** EMAMC, AEMC/AEMC, ACSMC and BMW Cup **Stages:** 12 **Starters:** 70 and 26 (Sunday rally).

Paul King and Alicia Miles's Ford Escort was never headed as they took their third Rockingham Stages win at the final public event at the Northamptonshire circuit.

It was wet and greasy for the first half of the event with grip at a premium.

Over the first two stages, King managed to pull out a 23-second lead, with Escorts filling the top five places. Ian and Oliver Hucklebridge were second, from Stephen and Jack Tilburn, with Peter and Arron Rayner and Robin Adams/Ray Keith following, as Andy Corner/Ade Campo's Peugeot 205 GTI completed the top six, despite having no brakes on the opener and spinning on stage two.

Darryl Morris/Mark Regan had been second on stage one, but a wrong tyre choice soon

dropped them to eighth, behind Tim Hill/Paul Spooner's Fiesta.

The lead was up to 47 seconds after the next pair of stages, but with Hucklebridge spinning on stage three, he was down to sixth and Rayner became the new man in second, from Tilburn, with Corner and the recovering Morris tied for fourth.

While King played it safe over the two night stages, Morris flew and ended day one back in second place, with 11 seconds in hand over Tilburn, with Rayner and Corner joint fourth.

The lead trio remained unchanged throughout Sunday's stages, giving King a 13-second victory. Hill held fourth place from stage nine and was only two seconds away from snatching third position from Tilburn, despite damaging a wheel and disc after contact at a merge.

Corner had been in the top six throughout but a blown engine on stage 10 put him out, which moved Tony Robinson/Mark Witherspoon's Millington-powered Proton up to fifth, with Hucklebridge just keeping



Win went to King/Miles at final event to be held at Rockingham

Rayner at bay for sixth position.

Having led Class 1 all weekend, Richard Bromley/Adrian Lloyd's Vauxhall Nova pulled off on the penultimate stage, which handed the win to Trevor Hancock/Joanne Watson's Mini.

Stuart Bliss/Richard Marsh's Honda Civic led Class 2 all day and claimed ninth overall.

After pulling his entry to the Glyn Memorial Stages the week before, John Stone took a fitting victory of the Rockingham Sunday Stages. Having won the first rally at the venue in 2004 by a second over Steve Simpson, Stone won the final ever motorsport

event at the circuit as the venue becomes a holding facility and an auction site. With co-driving son Alex alongside, the Ford Fiesta RS WRC duo were fastest on all but two of the six stages, beating Mark Jasper (Escort Mk2) by 36s.

#### Results

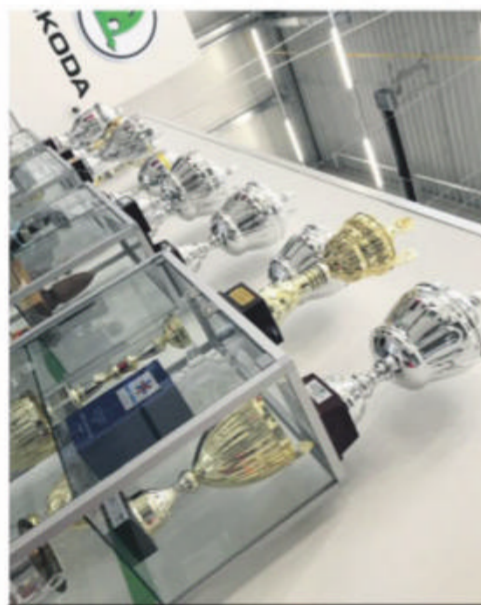
1 Paul King/Alicia Miles (Ford Escort Mk2) 1h40m14s; 2 Darryl Morris/Mark Regan (Escort Mk2) +13s; 3 Stephen/Jack Tilburn (Escort Mk2); 4 Tim Hill/Paul Spooner (Ford Fiesta RS); 5 Anthony Robinson/Mark Witherspoon (Proton Millington); 6 Ian/Oliver Hucklebridge (Escort Mk2); 7 Pete/Arron Rayner (Escort Mk2); 8 Robin Adams/Ray Keith (Escort Mk2); 9 Stuart Bliss/Richard Marsh (Honda Civic); 10 Alex Cannon/Alan Carrae (Subaru Impreza). **Class winners:** Trevor Hancock/Joanne Watson (Mini Cooper S); Bliss/Marsh; Morris/Regan; King/Miles; Hill/Spooner. **Sunday rally winners:** John Stone/Alex Stone (Ford Fiesta WRC).

## FEATURE

David Evans visits the impressive new production line for the Fabia R5

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

# SKODA PLANS AHEAD FOR THE NEW GENERATION



Skoda has a huge heritage



The cars can be fabricated at the firm's new headquarters



There are 10 bays for working on the build of customer cars

**T**he stores manager nodded, smiled thinly, and moved slowly to the side. For the Skoda Motorsport team, a full-access media visit to its shiny new factory didn't come easily. Don't forget this is a team which doesn't always let its drivers know what they're doing from one rally to the next.

But there we were, in a wintry Mlada Boleslav, with me asking somebody to step aside so I could get a clearer picture of rack after rack of hubs. Then I wandered into fabrication, the engine room, had a poke around some offices before getting a cup of coffee in a room with a Fabia R5's wiring loom pinned to it.

Skoda is, understandably, chuffed with a new 16,400-metre square facility that comes complete with 10 build bays – six of which are designated for customers and the other four for the factory cars.

The Fabia R5 brings Skoda full circle in its rallying story. The Czech firm was always known for its ability to clinch class victories with the 130LR and a Norwegian called John Haugland. Since those days of the diminutive rear-drive 130bhp Skoda, the company stepped up to the main World Rally Championship field with the Octavia and then Fabia WRC. After seven years of full-

blooded competition, but little to show beyond a single podium and five stage wins, time was called and Skoda moved back to the classes with the Fabia S2000 in 2008, with the R5 following in 2015.

Standing alongside fashionably grey walls, almost to a man, the media had one question for Skoda Motorsport director Michal Hrabanek. What is the precise purpose of the new factory?

Any answer which deviated from: "This is the facility which underpins the development of an all-new Fabia WRC," wasn't welcome.

Hrabanek provided an unwelcome answer.

The script on the theme of the World Rally Car hasn't wavered for the last two years.

"Not at this moment," he said. "Because now the current programme is R5 through our WRC2 engagement and especially the opportunity to co-operate with Skoda dealers and importers around the world. We have sold 250 Fabia R5s around the world and you can imagine you need proper facilities with the workshop, the stores, everything. It is all important to you when you want to offer a service on the right level. The biggest motivation to build this new building was the customer programme."

The biggest motivation to build this new building was the customer programme.

He's telling the truth. Firstly,

there's no chance we would have been wandering about the place if there'd been a development World Rally Car underneath a dust sheet in the room next to the toilets.

And secondly, swish as the new place is, it appeared short of the sort of key ingredients needed for top-drawer World Rally Car development, including an engine dyno and dedicated damper rig. The dyno is in Skoda's old motorsport building across town and the suspension department was the only place deemed off limits for the media.

Skoda's head of technical development Christian Strube explains the efficiencies which will come with the new home for Czech motorsport's most famous brand.

"Skoda is 117 years old, that's 17 years older than the Czech Republic itself," said Strube, "and motorsport is part of our DNA, it's in our blood. Motorsport helps to emotionalise the brand. I can talk about the emotion



New 16,400 sq m headquarters

because, when I was visiting Rally of Spain this year, I set the alarm at 0500hrs and I went, with my children to the stages. There were so many cars parked, people had slept all of the night to find the best place to watch. And when the cars came, the emotion was just incredible – it was pure emotion.

"And, for Skoda, these cars are so close to our serial production cars. The engine, the base engine is the same 1.6-litre turbo engine that we make in Shanghai for our road cars. And, you know, that Sunday in Spain, when we won in WRC2, that was the day Czech Republic celebrated its 100th anniversary – that was a celebration.

"You came to our new building today, this is our building which prepares us for future challenges."

Future challenges... sounds interesting.

Hrabanek steps in again and highlights the use of the new facility in, for example, development work on electrification. While the FIA is pondering a way forward with World Rally Cars, Hrabanek says alternative energy is probably even further away for customer programmes like his in the sport.

"When we sell cars to private teams, it's not going to be easy to maintain electric cars," he said. "This is my personal opinion, but rally sport will not undergo electrification in customer programmes in the next two or

three years. It's so much more complicated than on circuits."

But, when customers do turn electric, Skoda will be churning silent Fabias out faster than ever thanks to what Strube refers to as an improved workflow. In the old factory, which is still very old, but now being used for another area of Skoda Auto, building rally cars could be a lengthy process. The bits were, literally, all over the place.

Not anymore.

A new Fabia R5 takes two mechanics 10 days to build. Every day, a pre-agreed, pre-set box of bits is delivered to each of the six customer car bays. So, for example, on day five, the Xtrac transmission is ready and waiting when the pair clock-on at 0830hrs. By day nine, the car is being driven up and down Skoda's test track in Mlada Boleslav. Interesting fact here: the track's only just over a mile away, but the cars still have to be trailered – driving a rally car on the public road outside of competition is illegal in the Czech Republic.

Day 10 is all about tightening, torquing-up and ticking boxes as another car is signed off and sent to Skoda Motorsport's shiny new delivery area.

A World Rally Car might or might not be part of Skoda's future, but the investment in this latest facility looks to have future-proofed the Czech firm's participation in rallying for some years to come. ■

## PRESENTS

Motorsport News's guide to the best of the Christmas gifts

## GOODIES UNDER THE TREE

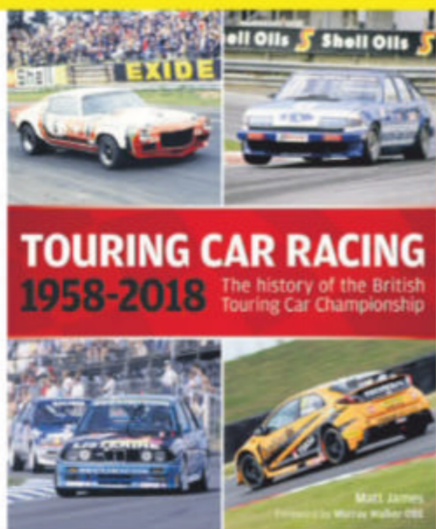
## BOOKS

**Touring Car Racing 1958-2018 - The history of the British Touring Car Championship**

RRP £60

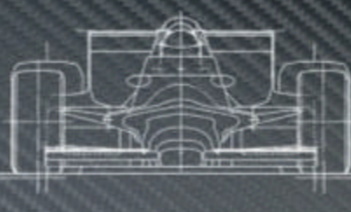
Website: evropublishing.com

This lavishly produced book, detailing every year of the tin-top competition in the UK, is packed with never-seen-before photographs and full statistical information on each season. It's our top pick – but then it would be: it is written by *Motorsport News* editor Matt James.

**THE PERFECT CAR**

THE BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN BARNARD

BY NICK SNEERS

**The Perfect Car**

RRP £40

Website: evropublishing.com

Recounting the technological revelations eminent designer John Barnard brought into Formula 1, this biography lifts the veil on a flawed genius whose stubbornness and snap decisions mean raw statistics don't come close to telling his full story (for an in-depth review, see page 31).

**The Unknown**

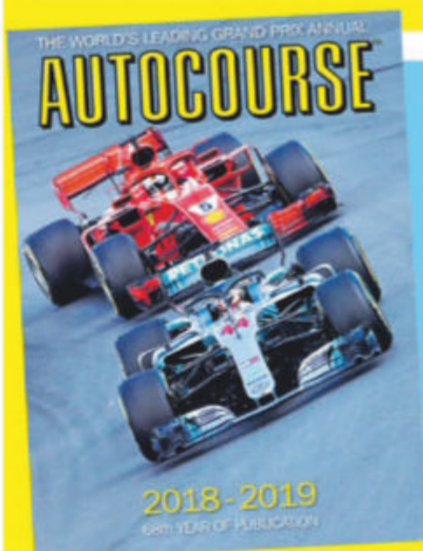
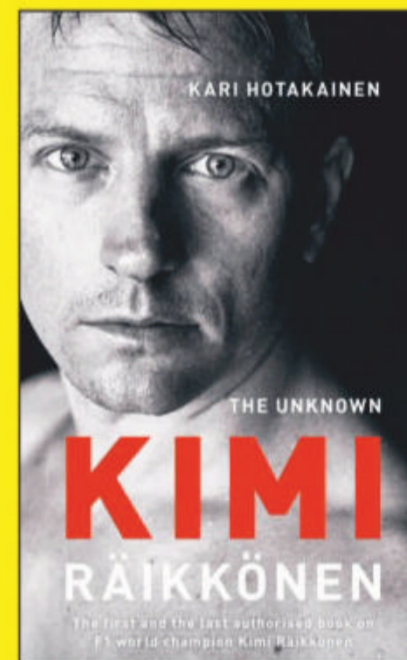
Kimi Raikkonen

RRP £20

Website: simonandschuster.co.uk

Renowned Finnish novelist and screenwriter Kari Hotakainen offers readers a rare glimpse into the life of the notoriously reclusive, and monosyllabic, Kimi Raikkonen.

The 2007 Formula 1 world champion's childhood, thoughts on Ron Dennis, personal life and more are set against a backdrop of never-before-seen photographs from the driver's own collection. As Hotakainen also won the trust of Ferrari, *The Unknown Kimi Raikkonen* takes you behind the scenes at grands prix as race strategies are formulated. Complaints about the direct, and therefore shakey, translation from Finnish are fair, but given it's billed as 'the first and last authorised' book on Raikkonen, it's likely to be the best we're ever going to get.

**Autocourse 2018-2019**

RRP £47.50

Website: autocourse.com

Now in its 68th year, the world-famous *Autocourse* annual includes detailed race-by-race reports from the 2018 Formula 1 season, in-depth features, comprehensive statistics, technical illustrations and stunning images.

**OR TRY THIS...****Porsche 956 & 962**

RRP £25

Website: haynes.com

Rather than walk you through the way to service your Ford Fiesta, this Haynes Owners' Workshop Manual reveals the anatomy of the apogee of Group C sportscars – the Porsche 956/962. It's a fine marriage of classic photography and an accessible narrative.

## GAMES

**Forza Horizon 4**

RRP £49.99

Website: forzamotorsport.net

The Horizon series, which alternates with the more racing-focused Forza Motorsport titles, is in a league of its own when it comes to bringing a realistic handling model to the public roads – albeit for Xbox One users only.

This time around, it's time to virtually disobey the local traffic laws in and around Edinburgh.

**F1 2018**

RRP £44.99

Website: formula1game.com

Codemasters hasn't tried to reinvent the wheel for its latest Formula 1 title, and F1 2018 is all the better for it.

The AI has been overhauled compared to the game's predecessor, which means rivals are smarter and more daring in wheel-to-wheel battles, and that helps to make racing more thrilling.

Off track, interviews have been reintroduced into the

For hardcore motorsport fans, there's still a lot to draw you in thanks to the diverse ensemble of cars – a 1992 Ford Escort RS Cosworth is among the choice for your first set of wheels. But if sticking to the racing line is more appealing, the 1971 Porsche 917/20 complete with its iconic 'Pink Pig' livery is well worth saving your credits for. Fortunately, the Scottish constabulary are willing to overlook its road illegality.

franchise and the greater variation, plus the fact that a player's responses directly impact your career, avoids past complaints of repetition.

Thanks in part to enhanced audio, expect a more immersive career experience that justifies upgrading to this latest instalment.

Further additions to the line-up of classic F1 machinery ensures that there's many a reason to keep coming back.



## SCALEXTRIC

**McLaren F1 GTR Le Mans 1995 #59 & #24**

RRP £40.99-£45.99

Website: scalextric.com

Fresh onto the market are a brace of McLaren F1 GTRs from Le Mans 1995. The winning Kokusai Kaihatsu Racing car, limited to a build run of 2000 units, commands a £5 premium over its Gulf-liveried counterpart.

**OR TRY THIS...****Ford Falcon XC Bathurst 1978 #17**

RRP £40.99

Website: scalextric.com

And now for something completely different – a model that neither has Le Mans nor winning pedigree. Scalextric's copy of the Ford Falcon XC that Dick Johnson and Vern Schuppan shared to fifth in the 1978 Bathurst 1000 probably isn't going to be Scalextric's biggest seller. But it makes for a pleasing addition to the range thanks to its impressive detail, sheer size and oddball value.



on Christmas Day, these cars hold up on their own as something to have on show on the shelf. Working lights all round, the bubble on the MkIV's roof to accommodate Gurney's lofty frame, plus the sizeable and intricate diffuser on the contemporary GT are all welcome details.



## CALENDARS

**Autocourse**

RRP £11.99

Website: autocourse.com

The 2019 edition contains more than 70 images, 13 of which are full-page, courtesy of *Autocourse's* photographer Peter J Fox. It's ready for use straight away, as the final months of this year are also included.

**Jakob Ebrey**

RRP £13.50

Website: ebay.co.uk

Jakob Ebrey Photography captures an action-packed 2018 British Touring Car Championship. All the race meetings for the '19 season are pre-marked so you can plan your year accordingly.

**OR TRY THIS...****McKlein**

RRP £34.99

Website: mcklein-calendars.com

If you're looking to fill a lot of wall space, then McKlein's sizeable Motorsport Classic calendar will see you through from January's Ferrari 275P to the Lancia Fulvia and Mercedes W196 this time next year. For rally fans, McKlein's renowned World Rally Championship calendar is also on sale.

**OR TRY THIS... Dakar 18**

RRP £49.99

Website: dakarthegame.com

*MN's* left-field pick for the gaming Christmas wishlist comes in the form of taking on the gruelling Dakar Rally.

It's the first game to offer users a taste of the South American enduro in 15 years. There's 20,000 square kilometres of open world to explore in machinery ranging from

motorcycles and quadbikes up to the Peugeot 3008 DKR that took victory in the 2018 event. Dakar 18 is not the last word in refinement, although a series of updates since its release means you'll be buying a far more polished title than at first. What the game does offer is an authentic homage that captures the scale of the rally and its incorporation of navigational driving sets it apart from almost any other racing title on the market.

# AUTOSPORT AWARDS

The biggest names in racing came out to enjoy one of the nights of the year. By **Matt James**

## PUTTING THE CROWN ON A GLIT

**A**t a awards ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane in London, motorsport's great and good gathered on Sunday night for the traditional Autosport Awards.

Marking the biggest successes of the year, trophies were handed out across all disciplines and many of motor racing's iconic names were there to help celebrate a season of highs.

We run down the winners and the highlights of the evening.



### INTERNATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR AND BRITISH COMPETITION DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Five-time F1 world champion Lewis Hamilton was one of the most celebrated drivers at the Autosport Awards ceremony as the Mercedes man picked up both the International Racing Driver of the Year accolade and the British Competition Driver of the Year.

It was the sixth time that the Briton, the

UK's most successful grand prix driver of all time, has lifted both gongs.

He was unable to attend the event, but sent a video message to acknowledge his trophies, while the silverware was collected by his racing brother Nic.

Lewis's message said: "I remember my first

time at the Autosport Awards and getting to meet so many great people. I know it is an incredible event that gets bigger every year. I wanted to say thank you to the fans who voted for me – thanks so much for your support over the year. And to all the other nominees and contestants, and winners, congratulations."



Nic Hamilton (c) accepted prizes for his brother

Hamilton collected two of the top Autosport awards



### 2018 AUTOSPORT WILLIAMS ENGINEER OF THE FUTURE

Owen Heaney has won a two-year placement with the Williams F1 team after scooping the Autosport Williams Engineer of the Future prize.

He went through an evaluation process which included individual and group

tasks to put the fourth-year Williams Lowe said the engine difference

### NATIONAL DRIVER OF THE YEAR

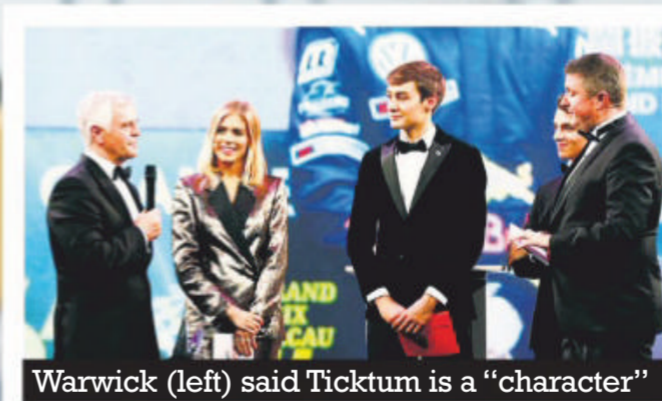
European F3 Championship runner-up Dan Ticktum scooped the National Racing Driver of the Year trophy in recognition of his stunning single-seater season, during which he finished second in the F3 series and clinched a second Macau Grand Prix in a row.

The Red Bull junior driver also raced in the final F2 round of the season in Abu Dhabi and also took part in two Super Formula races in Japan, which is where he is expected to race next term. He was unable to attend the award as he was flying to the Far East, and the trophy was collected by former F1 driver Derek Warwick instead.

"He deserves to be in F1," said former BRDC president Warwick. "He says what he thinks, before he thinks, but I think that's good in F1. There are too many vanilla drivers so it is nice to see someone a bit controversial."



Ticktum made his mark at Macau again



Warwick (left) said Ticktum is a "character"



### RALLY CAR OF THE YEAR

M-Sport has been at the top of its game over the last two seasons, with multiple champion Sebastien Ogier at the controls of one of its Ford Fiesta WRCs.

Despite a lack of works backing, the Cumbrian team has kept Ford at the very front of the World Rally Championship chase, and Ogier held off two rivals to bring the Fiesta home in top spot. Although the Frenchman is leaving to rejoin Citroen, the combination signed off on a real high.

Collecting the award, Wilson said: "We want to be in the WRC at the highest level, and there are a lot of things to sort out. We will miss Sebastien, we have had an incredible two years but it is time to regroup and see what we can do."

# ENTERING MOTORSPORT SEASON

## RACING CAR OF THE YEAR



The class of the field

Mercedes has undoubtedly been the kings of the walk in F1 since the introduction of the V6 turbo-hybrid era in 2014 and, once again, its W09 chassis was unsurpassed over the course of the campaign.

Mercedes sealed the Constructors' championship for a fifth time in a row, which is the same amount of times it

has won the Racing Car of the Year.

Racer Valtteri Bottas sent in a video message offering his congratulations to the team, while the award was collected by chief engineer Phil Prew and designer John Owen. Prew said: "As the season progressed, we got stronger and stronger and we did enough to win the championship."



Heaney (c) will now work for Williams's F1 team

improve his worth and he becomes a person to claim the prize. As chief technical officer Paddy Heaney said: "An F1 team is its staff, typically the engineers are the ones who make the difference so this is a fantastic scheme."



Ogier's Ford Fiesta WRC was a title winner



Heaney: already planning ahead

## GREGOR GRANT AWARD



Jacky Ickx (above) and Stephane Ratel honoured

Six-time Le Mans winner Jacky Ickx was one of the stars of the show at the Autosport Awards as he collected a Gregor Grant trophy to celebrate a lifetime of achievement in motorsport.

The eight-time grand prix winner was handed the award by Tom Kristensen, the man who finally eclipsed Ickx's win record at La Sarthe.

The Belgian said: "It was nice to drive for John Surtees, Bruce McLaren and Jackie Stewart, who gave me my first lesson. Safety in those years... you could not leave home on Friday and be sure that you would be back the next Monday."

Two-time F1 world champion Mika Hakkinen was also honoured with a

Gregor Grant trophy on the 20th anniversary of his first title with the McLaren team. He retired from racing after competing in the DTM from 2005 through to 2007.

GT sportscar racing guru Stephane Ratel was recognised for his contribution to long-distance motorsport with a Gregor Grant accolade.

His Stephane Ratel Organisation runs the Blancpain GT Series, the Intercontinental GT Challenge and the British GT Championship among many other series.

He began his career with the BPR Endurance Series before branching out on his own in the mid-1990s.

## PIONEERING AND INNOVATION AWARD



The life-saving halo

World governing body the FIA and its boss Jean Todt were recognised for their impact in improving safety in F1 with the introduction of the halo device, which has now spread throughout motorsport.

Frenchman Todt was a strong

advocate of the new device and it was introduced in grand prix racing and also in F2, and it is due to be rolled out in other categories too such as F3 and Formula E.

Todt said: "We saw the loss of Henry Surtees [in an

Formula 2 accident in 2009] because of one wheel hitting his head.

"It is worth fighting the resistance to save a life. I want to thank all the people who have been participating in the research and the teams."

## JOHN BOLSTER AWARD



Input of Wolff (c) was recognised

The John Bolster Award is named after the co-founder and former editor of *Autosport*, and is given to recognise an exceptional contribution to motorsport technology and Toto Wolff, who has overseen Mercedes's incredible success in F1, was the victor.

His is only the second team to have won five F1 titles in a row – the other

was Ferrari under Jean Todt – who was presenting Wolff with the silverware.

Speaking to Todt, Wolff said: "It means a lot to receive the award from you – you were an inspiration in your time at Ferrari and you were the first to call and say that it was an honour to be in the five-time winners' club with you."

## RALLY DRIVER OF THE YEAR



Ogier (c) was the top rally driver

On the back of his sixth World Rally Championship title, it was hard to look beyond Sebastien Ogier being named as the Rally Driver of the Year.

The six-time title winner scooped back-to-back global titles with the Cumbrian squad and prevailed in a three-way showdown on Rally

Australia to land his most dramatic success yet. He will leave M-Sport now and return to Citroen for the fresh campaign.

"I really had the chance to work with a fantastic human in Malcolm, I never had a better boss in my career," said Ogier. "This will stay in my heart forever."

## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR



Back-to-back winner, Ferrari's Charles Leclerc (1)

For the second year in a row, Monaco-based driver Charles Leclerc claimed the honour as the Rookie of the Year.

The new Ferrari recruit picked up the trophy in 2017 after a superb season in Formula 2, but made real waves with a step up to Sauber in F1 this term.

"It has been a great season," said Leclerc. "I did not expect it to be so positive or the promotion. That is quite crazy and I don't

quite fully realise what is happening.

"The first three races were quite difficult, a lot to learn and new things.

"After that it went smoothly and it was a great year and it was not possible without a great team behind me unlocking the car.

"We finished the year quite regularly in Q3 and it is all down to the team. I am really looking forward to the challenges in the next few years."

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# YOUNG DRIVER

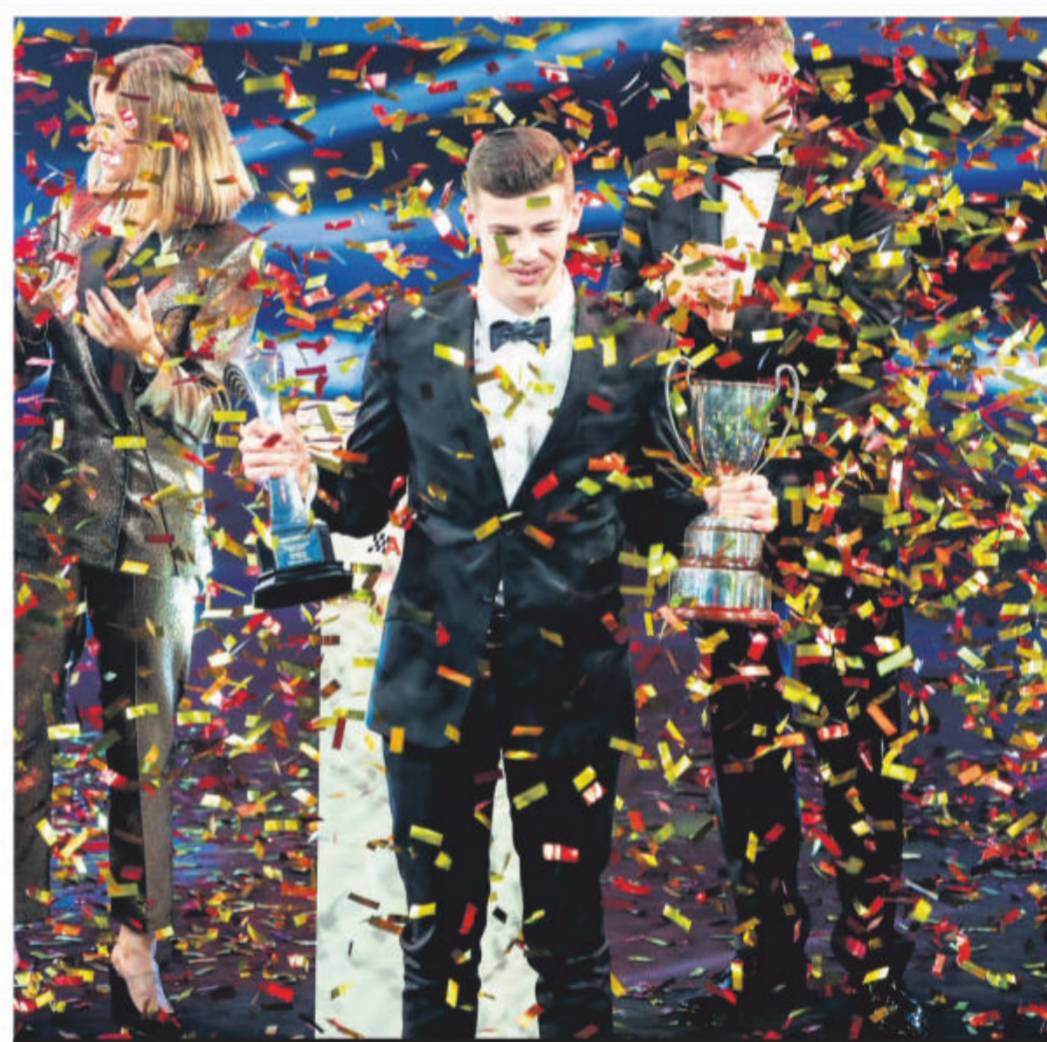
Photos: LAT

The teenager who scooped the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award. By **Kevin Turner** and **Matt Kew**

## THE GAMBLE THAT PAID OFF



Tom Gamble impressed the judges at Silverstone



Gamble fended off three other hopefuls to scoop the biggest prize



Gamble's run to fifth place in BRDC F3 wasn't without dramas...

**E**very now and again, drivers come along who can skip some of the usual rungs on the racing ladder. Red Bull star Max Verstappen is the most prominent recent example, jumping from European Formula 3 to F1 for 2015.

At the start of this year, Ginetta Junior champion Tom Gamble made the bold move from the British Touring Car Championship-supporting, baby GT category straight to BRDC British Formula 3. A more conservative route would have been to go to British F4, but after testing the 230bhp two-litre Cosworth-powered Tatuus, Gamble decided to make the jump.

"F3 has a really good learning car and a lot of people have driven it, for example Lando Norris raced in it, and a lot of other big names," he says.

"I definitely brought on my driving skills a lot and, coming into the season, I think the same as every young, single-seater driver, I wanted to get nominated for the final four of the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award."

Gamble, who was only 16 years old, joined Fortec Motorsports alongside Manuel Maldonado and, initially, Tristan Charpentier. Although Maldonado and Charpentier finished 1-2 in the reversed-grid race at the Oulton Park opener in April, Gamble was soon leading the Fortec charge.

He took pole in a wet-but-drying session in the second round at Rockingham and converted that to a wet-weather win in race one. But, in race three, a clash with Billy Monger led to disqualification.

In some ways, that was typical of Gamble's season. He often showed impressive pace, taking more fastest laps than anyone else (six, and he also set fastest lap in the rain-shortened Silverstone race) across the 24 races and scoring a second pole at Spa, but also made a few errors.

And at Donington Park he was excluded from the second race due to a non-performance-enhancing undertray infringement.

Without those exclusions, Gamble would have been third in the drivers' standings, behind title protagonists Linus Lundqvist (Double R) and Nicolai Kjaergaard (Carlin), both of whom had more single-seater experience. Those three, plus Maldonado and the highly-rated Jamie Caroline, who contested three meetings, were also the only drivers to win more than twice.

"I could have, should have been better," Gamble reflects. "But it was good to get two wins, two poles as well and six fastest laps. It was definitely a year of a lot of learning for me."

His campaign was enough for Gamble to be selected for the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award, along with Caroline, Formula Renault Eurocup champion Max Fewtrell and British F4 title winner Kiern Jewiss. Given the pedigree

### CV HIGHLIGHTS

#### TOM GAMBLE

Age: 17

From: Epperstone, Nottinghamshire

2018: Fifth in BRDC F3 with Fortec (two wins)

2017: Ginetta Junior champion with JHR/Elite (eight wins)

2016: Rotax Max Wintercup Senior runner-up

2015: Rotax Max Wintercup Junior champion

2014: Third in Super 1 National Rotax Max Junior

2013: Kartmasters British GP Rotax Mini Max champion and third in Super 1 National Rotax Max Junior



Ginetta Junior back in 2017

of his rivals (Caroline was 2017 British F4 champ) and the fact Gamble was the only finalist without a single-seater title to his name, it's probably fair to say that he was not the pre-event favourite.

If Gamble had found the jump from the 100bhp Ginetta to the 230bhp BRDC F3 sizeable, the step to 425bhp MotorSport Vision Formula 2, 420bhp Ligier JSP3 LMP3 and 500+ bhp McLaren 650S GT3 machinery was something else again.

"[The Ligier] was a really enjoyable car and, luckily for me, it was really similar to what I'd driven this year," adds Gamble.

"The GT3 car was obviously very different, ABS, traction control – I'm not used to those sorts of things. I could hit the brake as hard as I could and not need to worry about coming off. I was happy with the way I adapted to that. I felt like I got pretty fast.

"It was probably the best day of my life. That first day, getting to drive three different cars – something with a lot of aerodynamics, something with not much and something in-between – was phenomenal."

It became clear that Gamble had done his homework, having spoken to as many relevant people as possible, and was ready to throw everything at winning the award. Each finalist had their own MSV F2 car for the two-day Silverstone test and, once he had settled in, Gamble moved up the timesheets to challenge the early pacesetter, again mixing it with his more experienced rivals.

Gamble was even more impressive in the other two cars. The McLaren – which is heavier and softer than the drivers are used to, and has ABS and traction control – takes drivers outside of their comfort zones and the Ligier was new to the award for 2018.

After runs on used rubber, the finalists were given one new-tyre run in each of the rooved racers. Gamble was quickest in both, his efforts in the

Ligier being particularly strong. His commitment into high-speed corners had benchmark driver Alexander Sims reaching for the telemetry...

"Tom was extraordinary in the LMP3 car," recalls award head judge Derek Warwick. "He was brilliant in the McLaren and he was there or thereabouts with everybody, a little bit above everybody, in the F2. That surprised us a little bit with his experience and his age. We wondered exactly how he would come out for the second day but he just continued onwards and upwards. It was really impressive."

The final day of running was entirely for F2 cars, this time with limited access to 'push to pass' boosts of an extra 75bhp. Once again, Gamble was quickest on one of the two new-tyre runs, before acing the 10-lap 'pursuit' session, which concluded the tests.

He impressed the three teams running the trio of cars, as well as the judges, to once again overcome his experience. He was announced as the surprising, but very worthy, 30th winner of the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award last Sunday, capping off an impressive rookie season.

"To say I've won the Autosport Award, and having beaten some of the best drivers my age in the UK, is phenomenal," Gamble enthuses. "It's definitely going to take a while to sink in!"

"Having this award on my CV will definitely make me a lot more appealing." ■

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# RETRO

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Experienced racer returns to the Formula Atlantic cockpit. By **Matt James**

# FLUX

## ROLLS BACK THE YEARS



Crosby (l), Flux (c) and Hayes-Harlow

**I** was getting £40 a week in wages, 50 per cent of the prize money, I had a Renault 16 company car and they gave me a flat in a tower block in Bletchley," remembers single-seater wannabe Ian Flux. "I was living the dream."

The firm paying the wages was Ehrlich. The Austrian car constructor had hired Flux to drive in F3 in 1976 and he then remained with the marque through to Formula Atlantic in the early 1980s.

He drove the Ehrlich RP5B in 1982 – a car he was reunited with at Silverstone in November, rolling back nearly four decades of history. He tested on the National circuit and the old feelings came flooding back.

Flux raced the 1600cc Ford BDA-powered RP5 throughout the 1981 season up against the dominant Ralt RT4 of Ray Mallock, and continued with the updated machine the next year. Flux finished fourth in the points in that 1981 season and went one better in 1982. It is a car he has fond memories of.

The chassis is now owned by prolific historic racer John Hayes-Harlow. He has had the project for a couple of seasons, and has recreated the car faithfully. "When John bought the car, he would phone me quite often to ask for help: he had a bunch of bits and needed to know where they went. I ended up trying to help him construct the car from the end of a phone line – it was quite

tricky," explains Flux. "However, it was done well and it certainly is a proper restoration. Whenever I spoke to John, I said I would love to have a go in it when it was finished. When he called and offered me a run in it, I was delighted."

Dr Joseph Ehrlich was passionate about motorcycles and formed a successful working alliance with Mike Hailwood in the early 1960s, which included his self-built machine running right at the front of the 125cc class of the world motorbike championships. Ehrlich then moved into the world of karting before creating his first F3 car in 1969 and he remained loyal to that division – and to Formula Atlantic – through to the mid-1980s. He then returned to the world of motorcycles.

Flux explains: "The car was originally an F3 car that was converted to Formula Atlantic specification, because the landscape was changing in UK motorsport then and Atlantic was the way to go."

Formula Atlantic was expected to boom in the early 1980s. The domestic Aurora F1 series had been mothballed for 1981, and that encouraged entrants into Formula Atlantic, but that galvanisation was short-lived and the category petered out in 1983.

In that time in the early 1980s, though, the series was strong, featuring stars such as Flux, Mallock and David Leslie, but the return of the British F1 championship in 1983 took organiser Motor Circuit



The car ran in the UK in 1981

Developments (the original owners of Brands Hatch) in a different direction. The series moved under the control of British Racing Drivers' Club and the British Racing and Sports Car Club. It lasted only one more season before the axe fell.

"They were some fantastic times racing for the innovator Dr Ehrlich – I even remember being jailed when we raced in the Atlantic series in New Zealand in 1980," recalls Flux. "I blame [current WSR boss] Dick Bennetts, who was running a car out there: he had ambushed me in the hotel and wrapped me in ice, so I decided to set the fire sprinkler system off briefly to get him back. However, once I had set it off, I couldn't stop it and it flooded the hotel. I got banged up and taken to court. It was all over the TV news out there. I think I got a fine of a few grand."

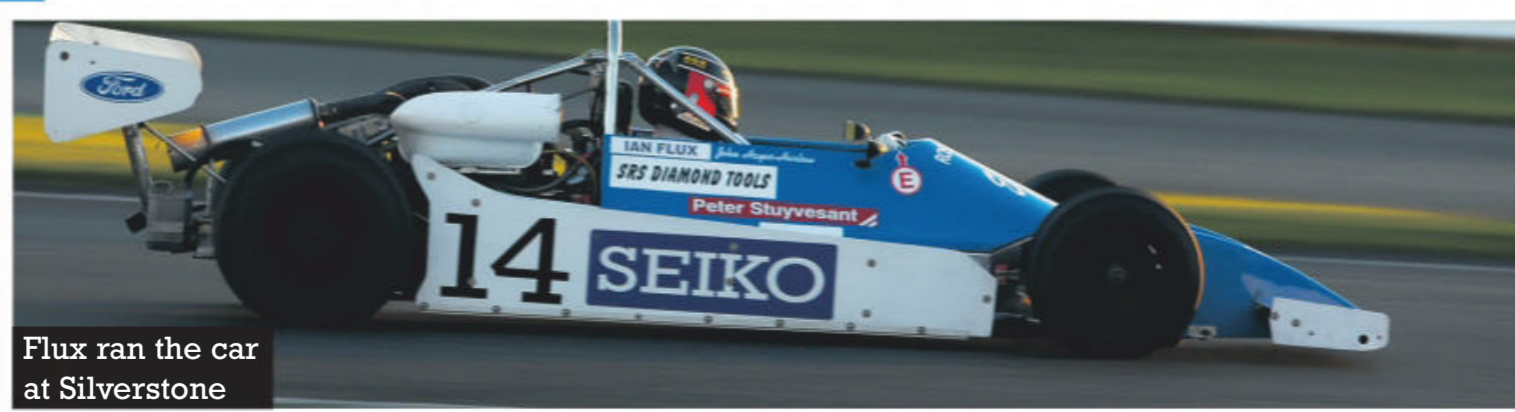
The drive in Hayes-Harlow's car was a treat for Flux, who has been a regular in the Super Touring series this year. "There were a few fuel pressure issues to cure, but when we sorted that, it was amazing," says Flux. "The car always had a short wheelbase, so it was very easy to get the back a long way out of shape: sometimes too far! I certainly remembered that about it. "But John's car was well set-up, and whatever he has done with the damping on the car has worked wonderfully, because the handling was really good. I could push on. It really did come straight back to me. I loved it and I was flying around the National circuit with a huge grin on my face. I was really grateful for the opportunity."

Not only was Hayes-Harlow there to oversee the test, Flux was joined by Paul Crosby, who was the man

responsible for bolting the car together with the driver all those years ago. "Paul was getting involved too, getting his hands dirty and offering pointers as we progressed through the test," says Flux. "It was as much of a reunion for him as well as it was for me."

"When I did the test at Silverstone, I had my daughter Coral there to watch and my grandson George too. That was a really special thing for me – when I was racing that car originally, I wasn't even married and the thought of kids was a long way away."

The decades might have passed, but the meaning of Flux's reunification with the Ehrlich was not lost on the man himself. The next task will be to find a TVR Tuscan Challenge car to help the 1996 champion commemorate the first round of that one-make series in 1989. There are more chapters to be written. ■



Flux ran the car at Silverstone



Flux has been Super Touring racer in '18

# INSIGHT

With works teams leaving, what is the future for World Rallycross? Hal Ridge explores



Audi and Peugeot are quitting WRX

## WORLD RALLYCROSS RIDES

**T**he latter half of the World Rallycross season has undeniably been a difficult period for the series,

arguably the most difficult in the five years since the mixed-surface discipline achieved FIA world championship status.

In August, Audi released its 2019 competition strategy in which it declared it will focus on Formula E and DTM. Rallycross didn't even get a mention in the news release, despite having backed Mattias Ekstrom's EKS team with factory support since the start of 2017. As the marque had increased its contribution to the Swede's squad for 2018, the news was a surprise, but not quite as much of a shock as the announcement that followed two months later.

Almost a year after Peugeot had confirmed increased commitment, on the same day ironically that Ford and Ken Block's Hoonigan Racing Division outfit had pulled the plug on its World RX attempt, the French marque announced that it was terminating its works rallycross programme after the final round in South Africa.

While Audi Sport boss Dieter Gass cited to *Motorsport News* that "three works programmes was too many to

support" and it needed to focus on DTM alongside Formula E as its internal combustion and electric projects, what Audi's withdrawal really meant was that it wouldn't be committing to entering the planned electric World RX switch from 2020.

As Audi didn't sign up for EWRX for the August 15 deadline, VAG Group bedfellow Volkswagen didn't sign either, although, according to Volkswagen Motorsport boss Sven Smeets, only because it knew there were not enough marques (the minimum required number of three) ready to put pen to paper.

Peugeot did sign, but when the FIA and World RX promoter were forced to delay the electric introduction until 2021 to give manufacturers more time, Peugeot – which like Audi had been a vocal advocate of the concept since talks were initiated – decided that the discipline no longer fitted within its marketing timeframe. Having plugged its SUV range with its Dakar programme, Peugeot had switched to rallycross, taking its support of Kenneth Hansen's team in house for a full factory effort. The plan was two years in the current series, then to launch an electric 208 road car in 2020, marketed by its rallycross effort.

"Peugeot will concentrate its resources on developing new [electric sports] vehicles and has therefore decided to withdraw from the WRX

championship at the end of the 2018 season, whose evolution towards electrification is uncertain," said Peugeot brand boss Jean-Philippe Imparato when the news was released.

"This announcement is not linked with our results in the competition or our drivers. The decision to stop WRX appears as very brutal, but my mission as a CEO is to make decisions at the right moment to ensure the sustainability of the company."

Independent outfit Olsbergs MSE also announced in October that it would again withdraw from World RX for the second time in three years, having returned in 2018 with a new Ford Fiesta ST. The Swedish-based firm cited rising costs, and an intention to step away while focusing on finding

a manufacturer to buddy up with for an EWRX entry. Then, at the end of the season, half an hour after yet another defeat from the dominant force of 2018, PSRX Volkswagen driver Johan Kristoffersson, 2016 champion Ekstrom announced he was ending his full-time driving career with immediate effect.

If the timing of the double DTM champion's decision was unexpected, the decision itself was unsurprising. Since he claimed the 2016 title without works-support, the Swede had reiterated time and time again that he wouldn't continue to drive without that kind of back-up. With Audi on the move, he kept his word and closed his rallycross chapter.

At this stage, the future of the EKS squad is undecided. Ekstrom owns the cars, but Audi has dibs on its engines so an agreement needs to be met before deals with customers either renting the seats or buying the cars can progress.

There has been a clear divide in pace and performance between the three manufacturer supported efforts in World RX in 2018 and the private squads.

Volkswagen's customary ability to enter any given series and become dominant won't have helped, but that VW's form was a precursor for Audi and Peugeot's departure is largely unfounded. While Kristoffersson won 11 of the 12 rounds this year, team-mate Solberg netted only five podiums and

finished fifth in the points. On fastest lap time pace alone – taking an average across the campaign – the 208 and S1 were within 0.2s of the Polo, which in rallycross is far less significant than on an all-asphalt race circuit. But the Polo, coupled with a seriously in-form Kristoffersson, proved near unbeatable.

So, what of the future for World RX? In the immediate term, the question raised most is of who will be on the grid in 2019. But there's a bigger picture, and really it hinges on the proposed 2021 propulsion switch.

The EWRX deadline for the minimum of three manufacturers to sign up is March 29 next year, but in order for Volkswagen to maintain its support for Solberg's PSRX concern, it needs a clear indication about the future before then, according to Norway's most successful world champion (see *Sporting Scene*, page 29).

Prior to Peugeot's departure, Smeets had gone on record as being comfortable with the delayed timeline for EWRX. The question now hangs over if there are two other marques ready to join too.

Having stated that the uncertainty over the future of the powertrain package in World RX as a reason for "pausing" its programme at the end of '17 (although Ken Block's new Amazon Prime Gymkhana Files series suggests it was more that the American star was frustrated at

**"Three works operations are too much"**



Dieter Gass



Ekstrom has walked away from WRX



Cronholm's team is aiming for works deal



Smeets (c) remains committed to WRX

# THE 2019 SPEEDBUMPS

being unable to fight for the title) Ford has been on the list of those interested in joining EWRX for some time, and World RX's managing director Paul Bellamy says talks are still progressing.

"Peugeot [leaving] was a total shock for sure, but they've pulled out of all motorsports as a works team," says Bellamy. "We were talking with them about electric right up until the last minute. It is frustrating but that happens in life. We're talking to VW at high levels every week. For them it's very clear, it's all about electric in the future. From our perspective, when Peugeot pulled out we carried on with our plans for 2021. There's a couple of other manufacturers as well, one is totally new and the other isn't a surprise."

Asked about the 2019 line-up, Bellamy says: "It's always the same at this time of year, teams are looking at their budgets and they're all trying to push the dial in terms of being better. Car numbers; if everybody comes in you could end up at 17 or 18 cars, with the people who are saying they will be in for next year you could be at 13 or 14. I'm confident that we'll have a good line-up."

There are, however, two years of competition before 2021 – if EWRX does go ahead. Of the existing outfits, GC Competition entered a multi-year programme with its Prodrive-built Renault Meganas at the start of 2018

and is expecting to return next year with at least two cars. "Collectively the teams are looking to make some changes to the regulations and operations in the championship to fit their budgets which are coming under a bit more pressure," says team manager Karl O'Sullivan.

"It's a challenging time for motorsport everywhere but we have been very clear from the start that this is a long-term programme and we are bang where we want to be, we are going into the off season and looking at a round one next year [in Abu Dhabi] that's going to be new for everybody and we're seeing opportunity. We're all in."

Marcus Gronholm's GRX squad is also working to return to the fold with its WRC-derived Hyundai i20 Supercars. "That's not nice [that Audi and Peugeot have left]. Next year everything is a little bit open, but I hope we can be there and I hope the championship will be good and have some good drivers and teams," says the two-time WRC champion. "We have just done one year now so we have everything in place and we can improve the car a bit. The target is to try to be back and to do a new season."

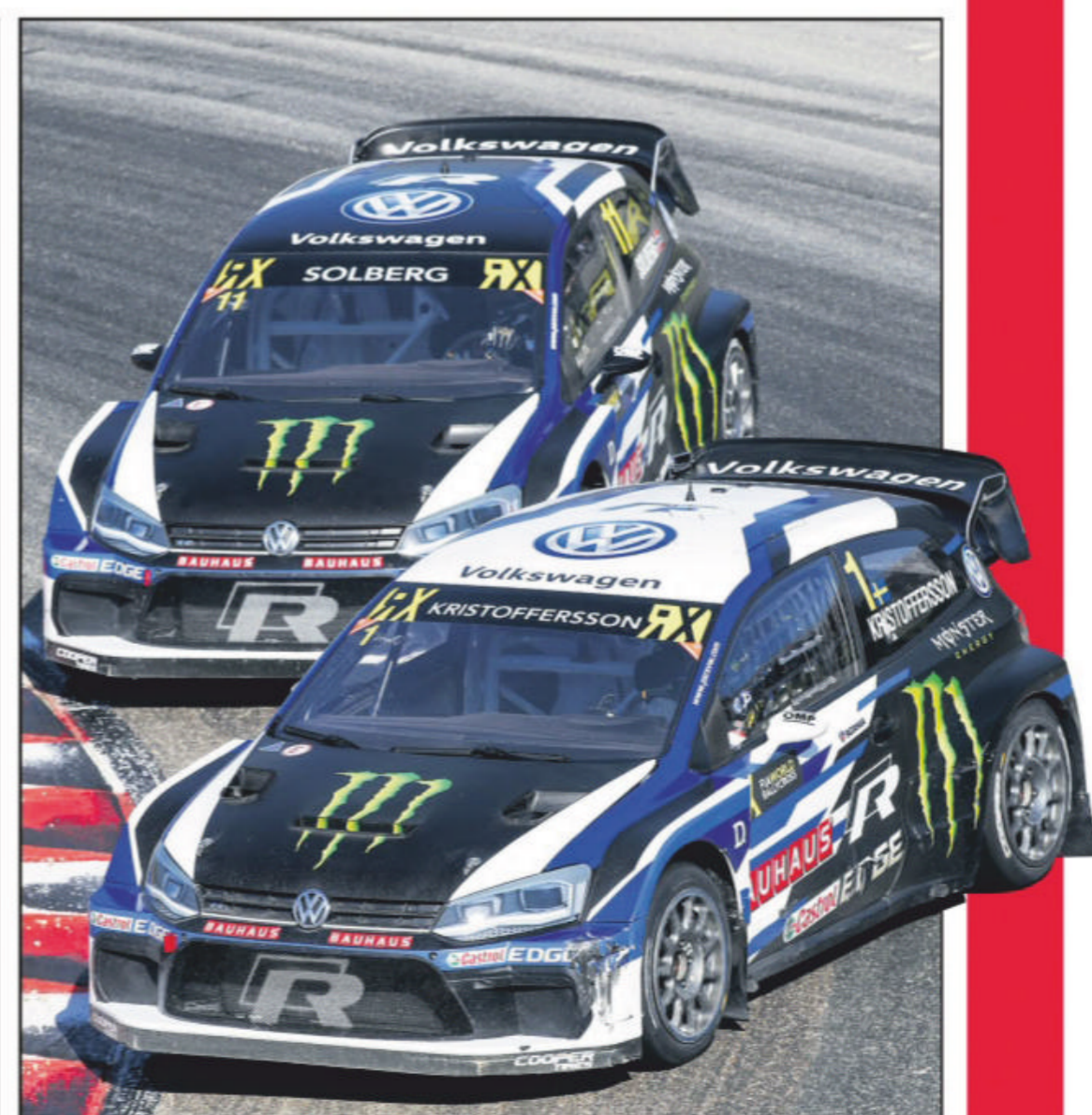
While the team currently doesn't have factory Hyundai support, the Finn hasn't given up on securing increased backing in the future. "I would like to have a test car next year, so the drivers can drive more. So it's a possibility we can run three cars sometimes," he notes. Manfred Stohl's STARD team ran just

one car full-time in 2018, down from two the previous year, but will build new cars this winter. It's the producer of the only publicly-aired electric rallycross Supercar prototype to-date, so is keen to remain in the series, not least to prepare for a possible 2021 entry, and is working on retaining Latvian driver Janis Baumanis and filling a second car.

Then there's the works-built Peugeot 208s. Based on the cars used this year alone, it can be assumed that there are at least six 2018 cars sitting in Velizy that will otherwise be gathering dust. Both Sebastien Loeb – whose own squad started what was planned to be a multi-year programme in World RX this year with Gregoire Demoustier – and Kenneth Hansen are in talks with Peugeot about the possibility of taking over the running of the cars. Seemingly there are enough to go around, if deals can be got together.

ES Motorsport is preparing to compete with a new Skoda Fabia next term, which will likely be piloted by Nasser Al-Attiyah, while sometime rallycross driver Timo Scheider, who has increasingly strong links with Rene Munnich's Munnich Motorsport squad, has hinted at a full-time return.

This winter will be a decisive period for the future of World RX. The series has enjoyed a steady upward trajectory since 2014 and, as Solberg has iterated, clarification on the electric transition is set to play a significant role in the next chapter. ■



Volkswagen's domination of the championship hasn't put others off

## FEATURE

Photos: Paul Lawrence

The Jackson dynasty has three champions and brothers Dominik and Cameron both claimed titles in 2018. **Paul Lawrence** reports

# THE JACKSON THREE



Cameron Jackson (l) and brother Dominik



Cameron Jackson has sampled Formula Junior



Cameron Jackson enjoyed racing his Lola T200 in Formula Ford



Ex-single-seater man Dominik Jackson has tackled Radicals in '18

**S**imon Jackson and his sons Cameron, 31, and Dominik, 34, are all accomplished racers and in 2018 Cameron won the hugely competitive Historic Formula Ford title while Dominik clinched the Radical Challenge. Meanwhile, dad Simon raced his Formula 3 Chevron to second place in the French Classic F3 Championship. A year earlier he won the corresponding British-based series.

"Dad has raced forever," says Cameron. "Particularly in Caterhams in the 1990s, and we grew up around cars and race tracks. We went karting and raced at British Championship level."

Though the brothers started out in karting, their racing careers took rather different trajectories. "I raced karts against people like Oliver Turvey and Tom Onslow-Cole," says Cameron. "I then went into BARC Formula Renault and was just getting up to speed when I had a huge off at Croft and wrote the car off. I took a fair whack to the head and we decided not to continue. I was a drummer and wanted to pursue being in a band. So I had 10 years off from racing but I always said once I could afford to go racing again and do it properly, I would."

Dominik, on the other hand, progressed well up the single-seater ladder before the funds and opportunities were exhausted. He says: "When I did Formula BMW in Europe I was only Brit there. Lewis Hamilton was doing F3 and I was doing FBMW in the DTM paddock. Sebastian Vettel was my team-mate and Adrian Sutil was there as well. I beat them both at some point in the season."

He raced single-seaters in the USA and raced the Tottenham car in the Superleague Formula before calling time on a professional career.

Instead, he and Cameron developed property businesses in the Lincoln area and both resolved to return to racing when funds allowed.

"I went to the Silverstone Classic and saw Formula Juniors racing and loved it," says Cameron. "So it went from there and we've got a Brabham BT2."

This season, armed with a Lola T200 from the Neil Fowler stable, Cameron won an enthralling Historic FF1600 Championship after a wheel-to-wheel contest with Ben Mitchell.

Dominik, meanwhile, took the Radical route for his racing return. "I got back into racing last year in Radicals after about 10 years out. It was great to get back in the car and it was a big challenge as it is very competitive at the front of the Radical Challenge field. I had a warm-up year in 2017 and that gave me more experience for 2018. Steve Burgess was the big rival," he says.

With two and a half years between the brothers, they are at a similar stage in life and both have young families. In fact, the impending arrival of Cameron's second child almost gave Dominik a chance to race his brother's beloved Formula Junior Brabham at the Goodwood Revival. "I was stand-by driver for Cameron's Formula Junior at Goodwood and had a test there in the wet," says Dominik. "They are fantastic bits of kit but totally different to drive to what I've done before."

Dominik was privately relieved when he was not needed as the possibility of damaging his brother's car was uppermost in his mind.

The brothers are close and support each other in racing. "Dom and I have worked together for years and we get on great," says Cameron. "We live less than two miles apart. But we've got different approaches to the sport. I love the historic element and the close racing. I didn't race at anywhere near as high a level as Dom did when I was younger. He was very focused on his career in motorsport and he did very well."

They do jointly own a rare Classic Formula 3 Euroracing 101, but it has proved a troublesome project and each of them has only raced it once or twice in the last three seasons as ongoing engine issues have hampered progress. If the project was sorted it would offer the chance to take on dad Simon.

After their twin successes this season, thoughts are turning to 2019. "It has been an amazing season with 13 wins and eight second places," says Cameron. "I led the Formula Juniors at Goodwood but lost out in the end. I would like to drive other cars and help sort them for owners. There are a lot of very quick drivers and preparers in historic racing."

"I'm working on plans for 2019 and it is difficult to get as good racing every time you go out as there is in Formula Ford. I'm a bit addicted to that! I love driving the Junior and will definitely do some of that. If I was to do Formula Ford again I'd want a challenge, maybe taking on and developing a different car. I absolutely love the Lola but I like that there are so many chassis that can win and I like the idea of a challenge with a new project."

With two young children and another on the way, Dominik's time for racing is restricted. "In an ideal world I'll do more sports and GT racing with racing at Le Mans as the obvious target. We have lots of conversations when either of us is racing. For everyone else in the family it's pretty boring," he laughs.

Will they ever get to race against each other? "We've always been competitive with each other," says Cameron. "We've never raced against each other, which is probably for the best. It could end badly! But we've had fun in rental karts."

Dominik adds: "We've not yet raced against each other yet but I quite fancy having a go at some historic stuff: it's a really nice paddock. I don't think there's a lot in it between us, but it would be interesting to see!" ■

# SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Hal Ridge, fiaworldrallycross.com

## SS ROUND-UP

The 2018 MSA British Sporting Trial champion Ian Wright won the final round on Sunday at the **Gloster Trial**, having not won since September.

A fabulous climb during the afternoon as conditions rapidly deteriorated, gaining seven points on second placed Roland Uglow helped him to glory.

Having returned to his live-axe Sherpa, Josh Veale led at lunch but, three hills from the end, broke something in the drivetrain and dropped to eighth.

Boyd Webster completed the podium just ahead of autumn form man John Fack, Stuart Beare and Julian Fack who all tied.

Arthur Carroll just pipped Veale to finish top live-axe, with Andy Wilks and Jerome Fack completing the top 10 tied on 68. Pat Henson had a great day to win the intermediate independent class from Martin Grimwood.

Richard Sharp returned from a broken arm, having had the cast off in the week to finish midfield, while Darren Underwood won the Rookie class and Phil Haines won the clubman class.

### Duncan Stephens

#### Results

**Gloster Sporting Trial**  
Organiser: 750MC Western Centre Where: Stroud, Gloucester When: December 2 Starters: 32

1 Ian Wright (Sherpa Indy, 36 marks); 2 Roland Uglow (Crosse, 42 marks); 3 Boyd Webster (Crosse); 4 John Fack (MSR); 5 Stuart Beare (Sherpa Indy); 6 Julian Fack (Crosse); 7 Arthur Carroll (Sherpa); 8 Josh Veale (Sherpa); 9 Andy Wilks (Crosse); 10 Jerome Fack (MSR).

# KNOCKHILL RETURNS TO BTRDA RALLYCROSS ROSTER

## Clubmen competition set to finish north of the border

### CALENDAR

#### 2018 BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross

NO	DATE	CIRCUIT
1	March 24	Blyton Park
2	May 18	Pembrey
3	May 19	Pembrey
4	June 30	Blyton Park
5	August 10	Pembrey
6	August 11	Pembrey
7	Sept 28	Lydden Hill
8	Oct 20	Knockhill



Knockhill last ran rallycross in 2014

By Hal Ridge

**Rallycross is set to return to Scotland next year, with Knockhill pencilled in to hold its first rallycross event in five seasons.**

The Fife circuit will host the eighth and final round of the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship in 2019 in an agreement that will also include running the 2020 finale at the British Touring Car Championship venue.

Rallycross hasn't been held in Scotland since British RX last ran at the track in 2014, while the Clubmans series hasn't travelled North of the border since 2011.

"We are delighted to be hosting rallycross again at Knockhill," said Stuart Gray, director of events and marketing. "It will be five years since we last hosted rallycross and we know the track will be exciting for the drivers and the Scottish fans, who will love to see its return after so long."

The Clubmans series will be held over eight rounds in 2019, starting at Blyton Park on March 24, in a clash with the opening round of the British Rallycross Championship at Silverstone.

Then, the BTRDA Clubmans series will head to Pembrey for a double-header weekend on May 18/19. Blyton will host round four on June 30, before a second double-header in South Wales at Pembrey (August 10/11).

A return to Lydden Hill for the second

time in two years is planned on September 28, with the season concluding at Knockhill on October 20. A rallycross test day will be held at the Scottish circuit on October 19.

For the first time since the BTRDA Clubmans series was rejuvenated at the end of 2013, Croft Circuit doesn't appear on the calendar, series bosses citing a lack of available dates at the North Yorkshire venue as the reason for its absence.



Volkswagen has been a supporter of the electrification of World RX

## Solberg urges World RX bosses for electric decision

Petter Solberg has warned that his PSRX team could lose its Volkswagen support if the electric future of the World Rallycross Championship isn't confirmed in the coming weeks.

Volkswagen had planned to sign up for the electric switch for 2020, before it was forced to be postponed until 2021. While the German marque is still keen to be part of the concept, following Peugeot's recent withdrawal, Volkswagen would need to be joined by at least two other manufacturers for the transition to be confirmed for 2021.

The deadline for marques to sign up is March 29 next year, but Solberg says his team needs a clear idea about the future in advance of that date if it is to maintain Volkswagen backing for the next two years. "I think there has to

be a very clarified plan that we have to go electric, just to put down the foot and this is how we're going," Solberg told *Motorsport News*. "Time is going, it just has to happen pretty soon with the commitment and I think that's the only thing that can happen for the future. It has to happen. It's very clear."

He continued: "It should be clear before that [March 29 deadline], that's for sure. If nothing has happened before the end of December then it will be a different thing. For next year, as I said, things have to happen around the electric, that is the key for everything and for the future." Ford has publicly made noises about its interest in the series, while *MN* understands a third brand is in talks about a possible entry.

Petter Solberg is concerned

## Ovenden looks to step up to Supercar assault

Two-time Supernational rallycross champion Tristan Ovenden is eyeing a move to the headline Supercar class in the future, but thinks it likely that he will defend his crowns in the two-wheel-drive Supernational category next year as well.

The Canterbury driver told *Motorsport News*: "At the moment we'll be doing Supernational again next year, but it's a long winter and we'll try and come up with something else to move on."

Ovenden won a pair of single-make Swift Sport titles before moving to Supernational with a Renault Clio V6 last year.

"I've really enjoyed developing myself and the Clio. It's been a great journey and I think we've made really good progress with it," he said. "Supercar is the dream, that's ultimately the next step that I'd really like to have a go at, so I hope that one day we will be there."

## Kenneth Hansen targets a return to the World Rallycross Championship with his own two-car operation

Fourteen-time European Rallycross champion Kenneth Hansen is working on a return to the World RX as a team owner in 2019.

The Swede ran his own rallycross concern until the end of 2017, when the Team Peugeot Hansen squad, in which Peugeot had supported Hansen's efforts since 2014, was changed into a full factory team.

Hansen continued to work for the factory outfit as team manager, but following Peugeot's withdrawal from

the series, he is aiming to reform his own team. "It didn't take so many minutes [after discovering that Peugeot wouldn't continue] before you start to reconsider what is possible now," Hansen told *MN*. "Of course rallycross is our passion and the thing we are best at. We have even been to China to try make it work."

The Hansen family had already been working on plans for a satellite rallycross programme with their own team before the Peugeot decision. That

has now been escalated into trying for a World RX effort with wife Susann and sons Timmy and Kevin all involved.

Hansen Sr added: "We have been in the top of rallycross for many years and to only focus on a national championship or European championship is not so motivating. We target to go in the world championship. Of course with the shortage of time before next year it's definitely not easy, but we are trying at least."

Hansen says that if budget can be

secured, the most efficient way to operate in top-level rallycross is as a two-car team. "The best way would be to run two. That's most efficient and it's not too big - it's quite controllable to do it and you can do it in a quite clever way to do it cost-efficiently, but also performance-efficient."

Like World RX colleague Sebastien Loeb, Hansen is in talks with Peugeot Sport about running ex-works 208 Supercars in the series next year.



Hansens will look for 2019 berths

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

### MN SAYS...

## Take a punt on Tom, it's no Gamble

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner shows that taking a risk can pay off

Huge congratulations must go to Tom Gamble, who was crowned as the 30th McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year at the Autosport Awards ceremony in London on Sunday night.

For him, it was another step forward in his rapid career progress. Jumping from the Ginetta Junior Championship into BRDC British F3 was a risk: it was almost like learning to run before you can walk, but he took the transition in his stride. He was up against some vastly more experienced opposition in that competition and came fifth in the points in 2018. There were others among the final clutch of drivers – which included Jamie Caroline, Max Fewtrell and Kiern Jewiss – who, on the face of it, have stronger CVs in terms of on-track success.

But it validates the work put in by the judges as the drivers go through a two-day shoot out at Silverstone. The key for those assessing each driver is not just the one lap pace – although that is important – but it is about attitude and approach. It seems Gamble has all of these in abundance.

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



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



ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S  
FAVOURITE OF  
THE WEEK!

Dean Chilvers was in the right place at the right time to capture Nico Hulkenberg's flip



Wales Rally GB fanzone, by James Lomax



David Harbey's shot from Prescott hill



Jack Goff, from John Henderson



Ben Forrester, 14, caught this Escort slide



Peter Atkins's pic tribute to Rockingham



Britcar Into the Night atmosphere from Brands Hatch recently, taken by Gary Hill



Drama from Abu Dhabi's last ever GP3 series race, captured by Dean Chilvers



Chris West, photo by Richard Salisbury



Rich Cranston's shot of a Mustang GT4



Callum Grant, aged 14, took this shot of a classic Lancia Stratos at Cadwell Park

GOT AN OPINION?

LET US KNOW: LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

## TV GUIDE



Alonso leads from pole and took first win in Hungary, 2003

Tune in for **Ferrari Challenge Europe** action from one of Italy's most famous tracks, Misano (Thursday, 1000-1100hrs, Sky Sports F1).

With Fernando Alonso retiring from Formula 1 – for now at least – what better time to relive the first of his 32 victories with **F1 Classic Races**. Travel back to the 2003 Hungarian Grand Prix where Alonso romped to a dominant victory in his Renault and showed the first sign of things to come (Thursday, 2135-2350hrs, Sky Sports F1).

Catch the final racing action of the year from the Ginetta GT4 Supercup and British Formula 4 Championship from Brands Hatch with **Motorsport UK** as titles were still up for grabs (Saturday, 0830-0930hrs, ITV4).

And finally, watch the season review of the **British Rallycross Championship**. A year-long battle between Mark Higgins, Julian Godfrey and Ollie O'Donovan went until the final round at Silverstone, but who would finish on top? Find out on Monday (1700-1800hrs, BT Sport 2).

## LISTINGS

### RALLY

#### SATURDAY

■ **Ambleside, Cumbria**  
**Hippo Motor Group Grizedale Stages Rally**  
**Starts** 0930hrs **Admission** free  
**Web** grizedalestages.co.uk

### SUNDAY

#### ■ **Knockhill Racing Circuit, Fife** **Knockhill Stages**

**Starts** 0900hrs  
**Admission** adult £10, children under 12 free **Web** knockhill.com

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

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## BOOK REVIEW THE PERFECT CAR

The case of legendary designer John Barnard is one that demonstrates the limitations of statistics. Pure numbers of races and titles won by his cars suggest a good career, but not necessarily a great one.

Yet in technical achievements Barnard is possibly unparalleled. Something made plain in his recently released biography, *The Perfect Car*, written by Nick Skeens.

Skeens describes the carbon monocoque of Barnard's McLaren MP4/1 as "the greatest innovation in motorsport since the engine was moved behind the driver", and it's hard to argue. Barnard also introduced into Formula 1 the paddleshift gearbox and coke-bottle chassis that remain in use by all teams three decades on.

These landmark developments are but a few examples of his relentless inventions, which this book and its appended list of his milestones make clear. Barnard's perfectionism raised technical standards wherever he went.

This is a biography written with the subject's close involvement. Yet crucially it is no hagiography, as there is another side to Barnard, about as readily associated with him as his innovation: a short and

volcanic fuse, a brusque manner and uncompromising 'my (perfect) way or the highway' stubbornness – encapsulated by his 'Prince of Darkness' nickname. He also, at points of his career, seemed – justified or not – quick to mistrust and perceive slights, and was needy of acknowledgement.

Together they contributed to many broken relationships and opportunities lost. Some career decisions seem oddly, or quickly, motivated. He regrets more than one of them and they all go some way to explaining the relative shortage of statistical success.

As does Barnard's appetite for step-changes; constant refinery did not motivate him. "I found tweaking really boring," he says. That restlessness also manifested itself in his moving teams often too early as he pursued the next ground-up challenge. When reminiscing about leaving Ferrari in 1989 on the eve of its upturn in form, he says: "I never follow it through to the end."

This, Skeens suggests, is "the cost of progress". A more conciliatory character likely would not have forced such vast strides. Therein lies Barnard's paradox.

*The Perfect Car* is immensely

detailed, searching and comprehensive – aided by Barnard's photographic recall as well as by no corner cutting in Skeens' research. It covers each stage of Barnard's life and how they relate to each other forensically, including his childhood years, an early career that included a successful stint in America, when Barnard appeared his most content, then F1.

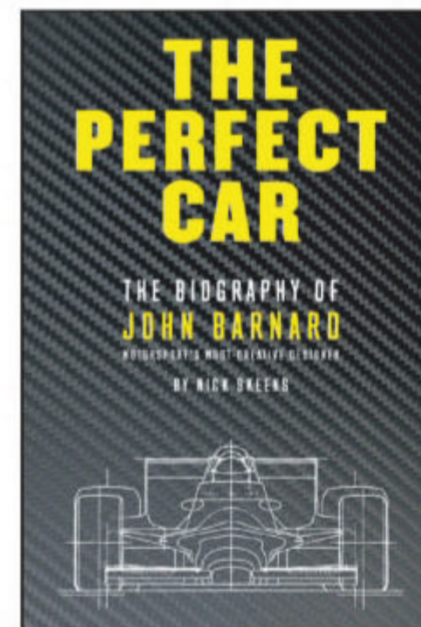
Skeens' background is not in racing but in design, yet you'd never know it as he explores each subject with authority and enthusiasm. In a weighty tome – nearly 600 pages – *Motorsport News* only spotted three minor factual errors. The book contains a vast range of contributing voices, including from the 'other side' of disputes. Contentious issues are dissected unflinchingly, including those wherein Barnard does not emerge flattered. The prose is engaging and the necessary technical sections rarely feel inaccessible.

Plenty will endear you to Barnard. He is open and reflective about his own shortcomings and mistakes.

His commitment to family is a running theme. He is willing to concede when others have



Barnard's story is told in book



*The Perfect Car* RRP £40.00

better solutions. He works constructively on the 'big picture' – noting that it's sloppiness on small things that incites his temper. He is loyal to close colleagues and many talk of their invaluable learning as they worked for him.

The book also details that Barnard had more than his fair share of genuinely unpleasant experiences. One criticism is related to the book's weight, however – it could have benefited from greater editing. Some of the

anecdotes, digressions and explanations seem wandering and unnecessary, though the latter group, *MN* imagines, was included with a non-motorsport audience in mind. Perhaps, too, the addition of diagrams and sketches could have aided the understanding of technical passages.

Yet these are minor points. *The Perfect Car* is a fitting record of the life and career of one of motorsport's most complex, and most vital, contributors.

**Graham Keilloh**

## NEXT WEEK

## OUT WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12

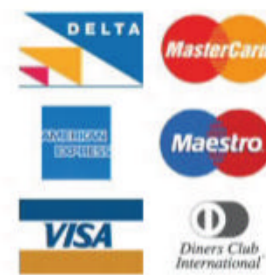


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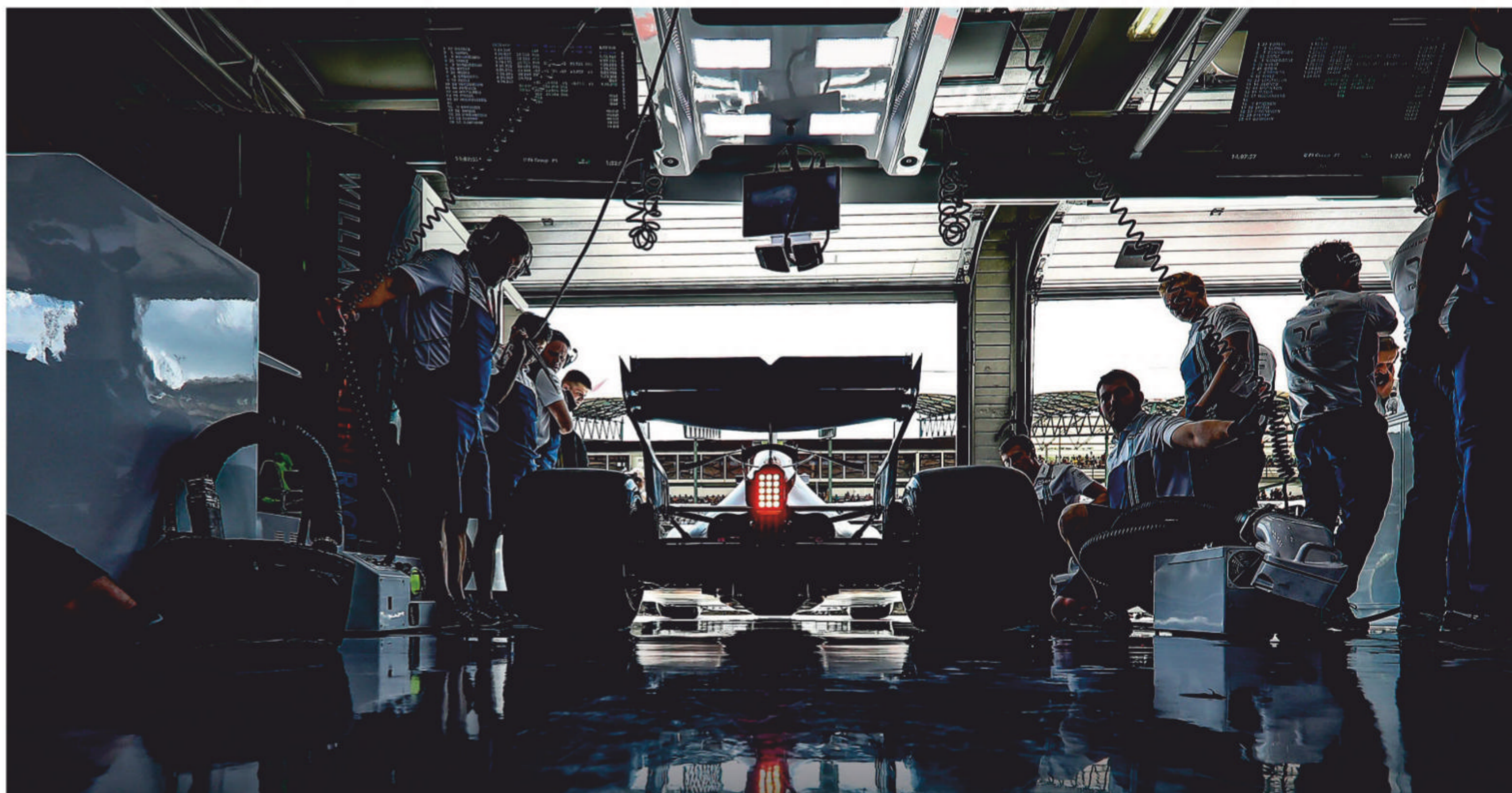
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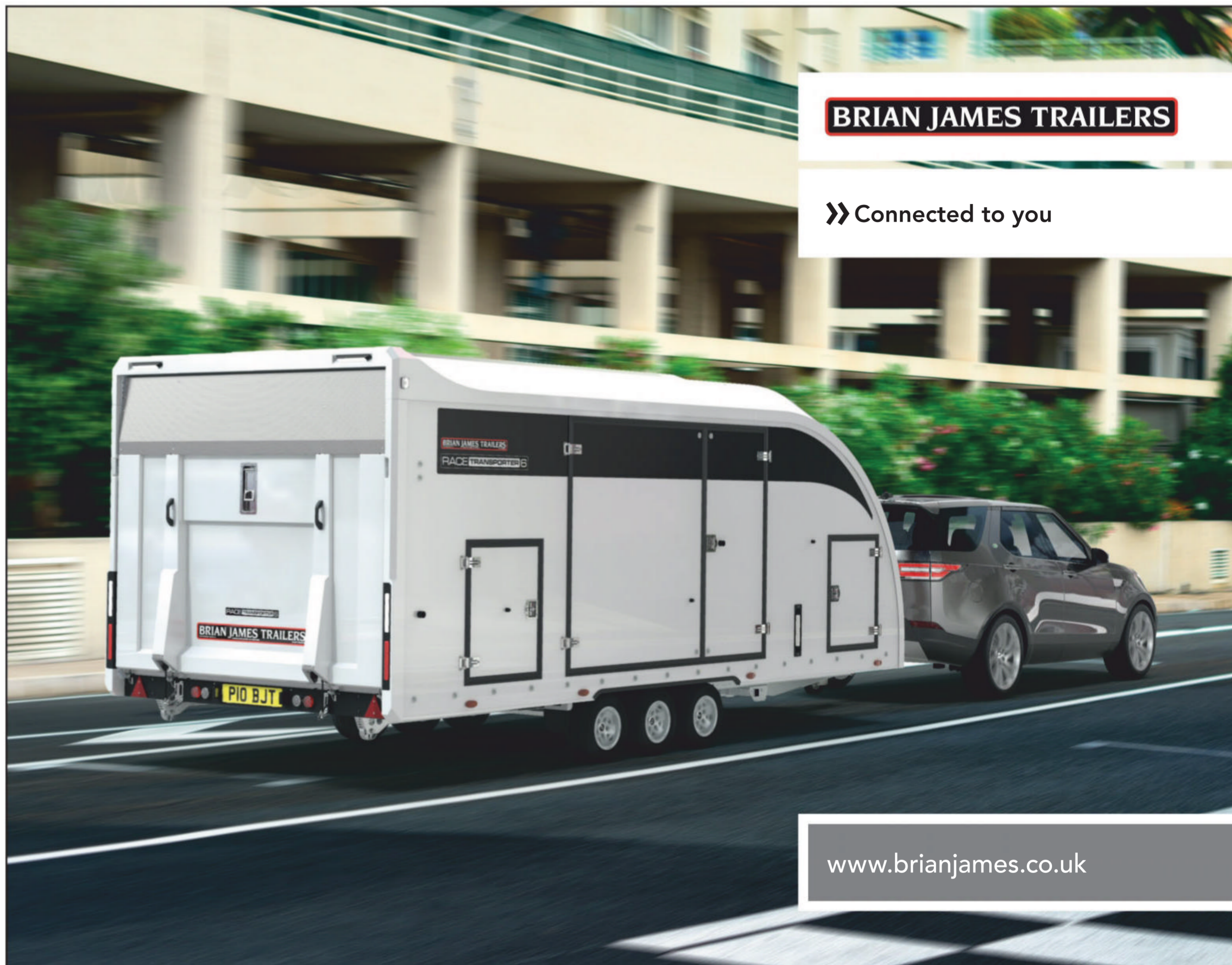
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# CUPRA ATECA



NAVIGATE BY HEART. NOT GPS.

#### CUPRA ATECA. CREATE YOUR OWN PATH.

When we created a sport SUV with 300HP, DSG Automatic Gearbox and 4Drive, we were not following the crowd. When we crafted each detail, inside and out, we were not taking an easy road. When we chose to have 19-inch alloy wheels in aluminium and carbon fibre details, we didn't settle for the standards. We only knew. Not what we would find along the way, but exactly where we wanted to go. And here we are. Made for those who create their own path.

Average fuel consumption in mpg (litres per 100km): 31.7 (6.5) to 43.5 (8.9).

CO2 emissions 168 g/km. Standard EU figures for comparative purposes.

May not reflect real driving results. Comparisons may be unreliable.

For more information see [cupraofficial.co.uk/wltp-ateca](http://cupraofficial.co.uk/wltp-ateca)

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