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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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ALL THE BANK HOLIDAY REPORTS

Seeding order row resolved to boost British scene

RULE CHANGE TO REVIVE UK RALLYING



Innovation: David Richards

By Jack Benyon

British rallying has been handed a lifeline following a U-turn on critical seeding rules from British motorsport's governing body.

Rallying has suffered since the enforced introduction of seeding regulations dictating fastest cars run first on the road, leaving two-wheel-drive and historic machinery struggling on stages damaged by high-powered cars ahead.

MSA chairman David Richards, the architect of this change, told *MN*: "There was a huge consensus, and it was a real problem for two-wheel-drive and historic cars."

Full story p2-3

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New running-order rules could stimulate

RALLYING SEEDING



Lower-powered two-wheel-drive cars are set for better road conditions due to new rule

By Jack Benyon

A rule change allowing two-wheel drive and historic entries to run at the front of rallies for better road conditions could help rejuvenate poor entries in gravel events, according to Motor Sports Association chairman David Richards.

Following the Motorsport Event Safety Review, carried out by the Scottish Government in 2014/15 after four deaths on the 2013 Snowman and 2014 Jim Clark rallies, one of the findings was that the fastest and most powerful cars should run at the head of the order.

There had been problems where rallies running slower

cars further forward had created an influx of spectators mid-stage as they arrived for the so-called more exciting and more powerful machinery later in the order, causing safety risks by moving around between cars.

After identifying it as one of his most pressing issues before taking over the chairmanship of the Motor Sports Association in January, Prodrive boss Richards has worked to bring around those in charge at the MSA and has succeeded with a new format.

Event organisers now have the ability to run separate fields, and the first tranche can be run in reverse order, placing slower cars at the front. Organisers also have the authority to seed by class.

The previous seeding format meant powerful cars went first and damaged the roads causing ruts. The chewed-up surface then caused damage to two-wheel drive and historic entries, which were forced to run further back. It decimated those entries at a rapid rate as competitors were

unwilling to risk their machines.

Richards said: "There was a huge consensus, and it was a real problem for two-wheel drive and historic cars. It was one of the things I was told about at the end of last year and we started on it straight away. It's just taken a little while to get it all through."

"It wasn't difficult: it was a case of everyone understanding the situation. It [fastest first seeding] was brought in rather quickly after the Fatal Accident Inquiry after issues that had been observed with spectators. It would appear now, due to better spectator instructions, better marshalling and better handling of safety issues, I don't think it's so much of a problem."

The format of running two fields is similar to a new system brought in this year called Rally2WD, which showed huge signs of success on the events it has been part of in 2018.

It pioneered the two-field format, split into two- and four-wheel-drive cars, but the fastest of each



Classes can be grouped

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: Chicane Media, Jakob Ebrey, Writtle Photographic

rally entries

BUOYED BY RULE CHANGE



David Richards intent on seeding fix



group would still have to run first.

Due to the time constraints of those two fields running as a separate event, it also meant it was only suitable for rallies with a service park close to the stages, and meant long days for marshals and volunteers.

Despite the complexities of Rally2WD, it proved hugely effective as it attracted back a number of two-wheel drive and historic crews that had not competed since the previous seeding change.

Rally2WD has gained praise from competitors and spectators and has boosted British Historic Rally Championship entries already this season.

The ability to seed by class has also been lobbied for by series like the British Rally Championship. This will help with parity, as keeping cars together in the order for longer events will mean they start and finish at a similar time. Crews have already talked of increased camaraderie from the change of running close

together on the road with immediate rivals.

The rule change, which comes into effect on July 1, is part of an ongoing look at helping MSA licence holders.

Next on Richards' list is another cause of debate and frustration with many current competitors.

"There's still other things we have to look at," he added. "We're looking at safety belts and fire extinguishers. It's very easy to put in safety regulations and they can be very well thought through, but one of the things we have to do is to consider the impact that it has on the sport.

"If it takes away many of our competitors as a result of it and has a very negative financial impact on our licence holders then it also has to be taken into account and carefully weighed up.

"If it's a safety issue then it's our responsibility, safety is a key issue, but we also have to factor in the affects that it has on our licence holders."

Swift nature of the change shows Richards is ready to adjust the MSA

Make no mistake, there's a reason this story appears so far forward in *Motorsport News*. It's a massive win for rally competitors across the UK.

I'm certain that without agreeing to the change to run fastest first in 2015, as was recommended by higher authorities than the sporting ones, gravel rallying would have ended at that point.

Although the change was brought in quickly, and perhaps with a bit less justification than it probably warranted, at that point talks going on behind the scenes meant it was a necessity and not a request.

Outgoing MSA chief executive Rob Jones copped some flack for that decision, but it really was a lose-lose situation, in fact where there wasn't a

decision to make. Agree, or gravel rallying ends.

Put it like that and it's easy to feel more sympathetic to the Jones and the MSA's plight.

Since then, the governing body has been working to improve safety on events. While that has been overwhelmingly successful, it has put a strain on rally organisers who have far more bureaucracy to deal with. Hopefully this seeding change gives them something to feel rejuvenated about. It is

something that will make all those extra hours on planning and pre-event safety preparation more worthwhile.

Rejuvenation is a fitting word, as it is exactly what the MSA is crying out for, and what it appears David Richards has provided since his

January arrival. While he shouldn't be given all the credit for everything that comes out of Colnbrook from here on in, this change is on him. It's certain that without Richards this change wouldn't have happened, or at least would have taken a lot longer and had a lot more lobbying to get through.

Keeping in mind this change has taken about two months to flesh out, the signs for those calling for changes in the governing body is good. It's certain this is a switch to an organisation focused more on promotion and on its customers, rather than just regulatory function. Up until now, it's been all talk, but this is undeniable, concrete and swift action.

The music to the ears for rally competitors has had the volume turned up another notch now, too, as Richards picks out belts and fire extinguisher rules as

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NEWS**
says...

the next on his hit list. If I had a pound for every complaint I heard about 'belts shouldn't be thrown away after five years' and 'fire extinguishers shouldn't need servicing each year', I'd be rich.

After what feels like a number of years of gloom on the whole for rallying, the swiftness of this change to such a difficult issue, based on the fact that safety implications come into play, show signs are good for change.

Rallying is ready for a resurgence, and Richards has proven his sleeves are rolled up in a bid to help.

Jack Benyon

Jones: tough decisions



RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Nice problem

Mercedes head Toto Wolff reckons having multiple candidates for the seats at his F1 team is a "good problem to have". Both Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas have contracts that expire at the end of this season, while Mercedes junior Esteban Ocon is impressing at Force India. There's also Briton George Russell, who has indicated that Mercedes will help him into F1 next season if he performs well in F2 this year. "We are very satisfied how Valtteri is going these days, and Lewis, we don't need to talk about – he is the best of the current drivers in my opinion," said Wolff. "Then we have the kids growing up – Esteban and George. I'm very optimistic about the future Mercedes line-up."

Baku hurt

Valtteri Bottas reckons his heartbreak in Azerbaijan will only serve to make him a stronger driver. Bottas was robbed of an almost certain win when he ran over debris in the closing laps and picked up a puncture, ceding the lead and the win to Lewis Hamilton. "Of course it was disappointing, but life and especially motorsport includes disappointments," said Bottas. "I always find that disappointment can be your best opportunity to be stronger if you take it the right way. So I am planning to be stronger for the rest of the year."

F1 Draft?

F1's owner, Liberty Media, has begun exploring the possibility of creating a fan-led event to fill the off-season, similar to the Draft held in the NFL American Football league. The NFL Draft is a hugely popular annual event where teams get to recruit new players in a one-off event during the off season to boost fan interest and engagement. Liberty's Chase Carey said F1 needed to do something during the winter break to hold fan interest. "We need to figure out how to make this sport something that engages fans for 12 months a year," he said. "It doesn't mean we will race that long – our season is not going to go to 12 months. But the NFL has created events that are interesting for fans that aren't in the season. We need to look at ways of doing that."

Fuel boost

Renault is expecting a hike in performance thanks to a fuel upgrade from supplier BP. Both the Renault works team and McLaren will have access to the new fuel for Barcelona, but Red Bull will not as it switched its supply to ExxonMobil. Renault Sport's Cyril Abiteboul said: "We will be helped by a step on the engine side with new fuel, and some aero tweaks. We hope this will be a move forward, but we also recognise that many other teams will bring upgrades."

LEWIS WANTS MORE SPEED

Champion fears Mercedes pace is not yet strong enough

By Robert Ladbrook

Lewis Hamilton says he feels no comfort in holding the world championship lead heading into the Spanish Grand Prix, adding that his Mercedes team cannot rely on more "weird races" to bolster its title challenge.

Hamilton scored his first victory of the season last time out in Azerbaijan, after his team-mate Valtteri Bottas suffered a puncture and dropped out of the lead in the closing stages. The result brought Hamilton's run of six races without a win – stretching from the 2017 USA GP – to an end and moved him into the championship lead.

Although the four-time world champion holds a four-point lead over Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, Hamilton is well aware that Mercedes hasn't enjoyed the sort of performance advantage over Ferrari it had in recent seasons.

When asked if he felt the Baku victory could be a springboard toward a fifth world title, Hamilton said: "Honestly, I don't feel that way. Ultimately being in the lead of the championship is great. Not that we're not planning to, but if we continue on the current trajectory we're on, it would need tricky races like this to keep us within... There's only been two weird races where it's kept us within the mix. But you can't rely on those for the next 17 that are left.

"We need ultimate performance and confidence in the car. I've got the pace within me, and the car I think has got the pace within it, but we're not unlocking it, both of those things are not intertwined, in perfect synergy to extract the perfect equation. That's what we're working towards. We've definitely got to improve in lots of areas, and I will continue also [to try and improve], I mean myself as well, and that's what I'm going to work towards."



Briton is now top of the table



Hamilton says he has lucked in to the lead

Mercedes eyes customer car plans

Mercedes would be open to building a technical partnership with its customer teams in the future, mirroring the relationship Ferrari has with Haas.

The issue has been raised since speculation linked Williams backer Lawrence Stroll – father of racer Lance Stroll – with a push to make Williams into a de facto Mercedes B team. Those rumours have been scotched by Claire Williams, who said her team would strive to remain fully independent.

Mercedes supplies engines and control systems to Williams, as well as engines, electronics and gearboxes to Force India.

Mercedes head Toto Wolff said he wouldn't rule out taking one of those relationships further in

the future in a similar model to Ferrari, which supplies many components as well as drivetrain parts and technical support to Haas.

"We have seen that the system between Ferrari and Haas has worked, and it has worked for both," said Wolff.

"It's an interesting revenue filler for Ferrari, and in terms of synergies, there is a lot you can work on, and it has functioned for Haas. They are a very competitive team without having built on a legacy, or without having built on knowledge that would have taken years and years to collect.

"So far that system has been very successful, and of course our thinking goes in that direction – whether it is Force India or Williams to collaborate."

New rules to aid overtaking in F1 met with mixed response

Formula 1 teams are split over the introduction of new, simplified aerodynamic packages, despite new rules being provisionally voted through for 2019 aimed at boosting overtaking.

The F1 Commission last week voted through a series of tweaks to next year's cars, despite the proposals not having unanimous approval. The plans involve teams simplifying their front wing designs with new endplates, as well as fitting larger rear wing

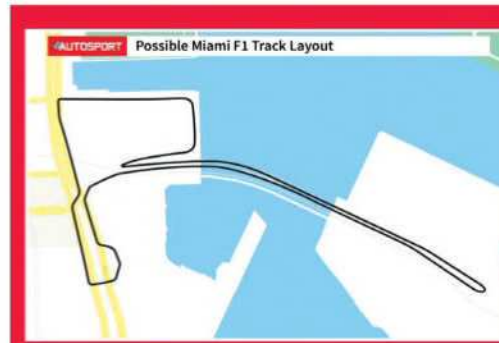
flaps to create a larger DRS effect. There was an additional proposal to simplify bargeboards, but that has not been agreed to. Research began following the Australian GP, which featured little in the way of overtaking.

The vote took place on April 30, the last day when the technical rule changes for the next season can be passed without unanimity.

F1 Commission rules say a plan can be pushed through with support from as few as

four teams. Only Williams was publicly in favour of the changes, and sources suggest it was joined by Mercedes, Force India and Sauber in voting yes. However, that means Ferrari, Red Bull, McLaren, Toro Rosso and Haas voted the ideas down.

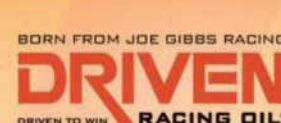
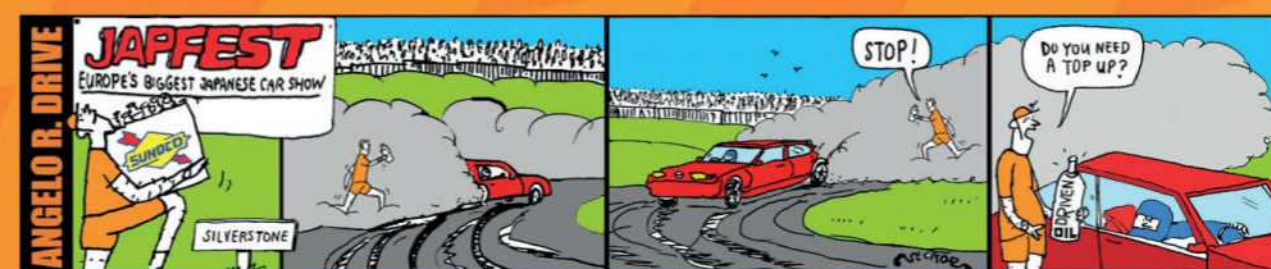
The final say will come from the FIA World Motor Sport Council, which must approve the changes before they can be implemented. Ferrari, though, could use its veto to block it.



Plan images for a new F1 circuit in Miami have been revealed, with the new design using sections of road previously featured in IMSA, CART and Formula E races. Plans for a new race in Miami, scheduled to start in October 2019, will be considered at a city commission meeting this week. Lewis Hamilton met the new design with some criticism, posting on his Instagram: "Just seen the design of the Miami track. Nah bruh, it's not the one. Let me design it."

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'Brabham reveals new GT car'
Racing news, p6



Photos: LAT



Ginettas just completed one lap in each practice

GINETTA LMP1 FAILS TO RACE IN WEC AT SPA

The new Ginetta LMP1 car failed to make its World Endurance Championship debut at Spa last weekend after the Manor team suffered cashflow problems.

A statement issued by Ginetta immediately after qualifying, in which the two Mecachrome-powered G60-LT-P1s did not run, cited problems with securing promised sponsorship funds from Chinese firm TRS – which is linked to the beleaguered energy concern CEFC.

It followed the two Manor cars only making a single installation lap in each of the three practice sessions, a situation the team refused to comment on.

The statement read: "The required funds for Ginetta were due some

time ago and while we understand that TRS has been working with its sponsors to sort the issues, without payment, Ginetta cannot allow the cars to race."

It added that Ginetta "remains committed to working with CEFC TRSM Racing [Manor]" and that "the current situation is a short-term cashflow problem" that should not affect its

participation in the Le Mans 24 Hours. LMP2 squad KCMG is the first entry on the Le Mans reserve list and is believed to have been told to prepare itself to enter in case one of the Manor Ginettas is unable to compete.

Out of the cars that did take part, Fernando Alonso was among the winning crew, completing a perfect WEC start for the Toyota driver.

The sister car was put to the back of the grid after qualifying on pole due to an administrative error with the "incorrect declaration of fuel flow meter".

It did fight back later in the race with Toyota instructing Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez not to challenge the Alonso, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima-driven machine after the final round of stops. Top privateer was the Rebellion R-13

Gibson of Gustavo Menezes, Thomas Laurent and Mathias Beche after the sister car was excluded for having an overly-worn skid block.

G-Drive Racing took a comfortable win in LMP2 with the ORECA of Jean-Eric Vergne, Roman Rusinov and Andrea Pizzitola finishing 21 seconds clear of the opposition – even with a late safety car.

Ford's Olivier Pla, Stefan Mucke and Billy Johnson took the honours in GTE Pro but there was trouble for the other car as Harry Tincknell suffered a head-on crash into the Eau Rouge barriers at one-third distance. The Briton was left "battered and bruised" after the crash and believes the car suffered some form of failure.

The GTE Am class was won by the older-generation Aston Martin Vantage of Pedro Lamy, Mathias Lauda and Paul Dalla Lana.



Alonso won his WEC debut with Toyota



DragonSpeed BR1 LMP1

Fittipaldi breaks both legs in Spa shunt

Pietro Fittipaldi suffered fractures to both of his legs in a frightening accident in qualifying for the World Endurance Championship opener at Spa.

The grandson of two-time Formula 1 champion Emerson, crashed his DragonSpeed BR Engineering-Gibson BR1 LMP1 at Eau Rouge when the car went straight on at the middle of the corner.

DragonSpeed boss Elton Julian said: "Everyone saw what happened, and it was pretty evident that there was an electrical issue because the lights flashed on and off.

"We need to go into it in detail with everyone involved, but it looks like he had no power steering. The big question we need to answer is why."

Fittipaldi was airlifted to hospital after the crash – which destroyed the car's chassis – and underwent a complex fracture of his lower left leg and broken right ankle and is expected to be out of action for eight weeks, which rules him out of the Indy 500.

Ticktum to race in two Super Formula rounds

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Dan Ticktum is to contest two rounds of Super Formula in Japan with Team Mugen.

The 18-year-old (pictured) winner of last November's Macau Grand Prix will fill in for fellow Red Bull junior Nirei Fukuzumi at the Sugo round on May 27, before competing at Fuji on July 8.

Fukuzumi's number one programme is in Formula 2, and he has to miss the next three Super Formula races due to date clashes.

Ticktum said his Super Formula outings were at Red Bull motorsport advisor Helmut Marko's request.

"Helmut is putting me there to see how I cope with jumping into something new and a bit quicker," he said.

"They [the Super Formula cars] are one of the last proper racing cars there are, so I'm very much looking forward to it, and there'll be no testing – I'll be straight into free practice."



QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Kevin Harvick claimed his fourth win of the NASCAR Cup season, after dominating a rain-interrupted race at Dover last weekend. The Stewart-Haas Ford driver finished seven seconds ahead of team-mate Clint Bowyer...

Formula E boss Alejandro Agag has made a bid to take full ownership of the electric racing series. In a letter addressed to

the chairman of the board of directors Agag says he would like to have greater influence over the future of the championship by assuming full control... Formula 2 race winner Artem Markelov has hit out at series organisers, saying the category's new car should not have been introduced until 2019.

Markelov, who was runner-up in 2017, said: "I said it in

the beginning of the year, that the car would be struggling this year, and that there was no escaping it. And instead of testing it for another year and only then approving it for racing, to avoid any problems, they ran it a couple of times and decided 'yeah, it's race-ready, everything will be fine.'" WTCR driver Yann Erhlicher has been testing

an updated F2 2018 with a new mapping system aimed to resolve the car's troublesome clutch... Scott McLaughlin claimed another pair of Australian Supercars wins in Perth last weekend, with the second triumph coming despite him starting down in 19th on the grid. He led from pole in the opener and used an early safety car to his advantage in race two to take the double win...



Harvick took fourth NASCAR win



Glock (1) made expletive-laden radio call after battle with Paffett

Glock hits out at "idiots" Mercedes after thrilling DTM battle

BMW DTM driver Timo Glock made an expletive-heavy radio call after the second race at Hockenheim last weekend, criticising Mercedes' decision to quit the series at the end of this year.

Glock had just enjoyed a great battle with Mercedes driver Gary Paffett – who dropped to third at the flag behind Mike Rockenfeller –

and immediately after crossing the line the German gave his planned message.

"The best f**king racing," Glock exclaimed. "F**king hell Mercedes, this is why you should not leave this championship, you f**king idiots."

Mercedes DTM boss Ulrich Fritz said it was "great" to hear Glock's emotional message.

"It's nice to hear that they value us as their competitors and as sportsmen," he said. "But if this changes anything [regarding Mercedes' future], I would doubt it."

Paffett had earlier won the opener from fellow Mercedes driver Lucas Auer. Mercedes announced it would quit DTM last year, to focus on Formula E from 2019.

RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT, Gary Hawkins



Eastwood will be back in a Porsche

Eastwood to race in Nurburgring 24 Hours

Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Charlie Eastwood will tackle his first 24-hour race this weekend as he takes part in the Nurburgring 24 Hours.

Eastwood, whose main campaign this season is in a TF Sport Aston Martin in both the World Endurance Championship and Blancpain GT Series, will make a return to the Porsche brand for the event.

The former Porsche GB scholar will compete in a Cayman GT4 Clubsport entered under the Care For Climate banner, alongside Daniel Blickle, Niklas Steinhaus and Thomas Kiefer.

"Porsche Germany needed a driver and there wasn't any factory guys available so they asked me," said Eastwood, who took part in the VLN opener in order to compete in the 24 hours. "It will be pretty special, but I still haven't driven at night. It's a scary place in the day, let alone during the night."



Palmer tested with MP in Barcelona

Palmer signs late deal to join MP for GP3 campaign

Will Palmer has signed with MP Motorsport for the 2018 GP3 season, after testing with the team last month.

Palmer finished as runner-up in the 2017 Formula Renault Eurocup with R-ace GP, and tested with Arden's GP3 car in the post-season running last year.

He was a late addition to the MP Motorsport stable for the final pre-season test at Barcelona – where the season gets underway this weekend – and impressed team boss Sander Dorsman.

"We had the test at Barcelona and I got on really well with the team and the engineering was really strong," said 2015 BRDC F4 champion Palmer. "It's a good atmosphere and I'm looking forward to starting the season."

Palmer's fellow Brits Callum Iliott and Jake Hughes, both graduating from European Formula 3, are among the favourite for this year's GP3 title.

The ART Grand Prix team took the top four spots in the championship last year and Iliott and Hughes lead their charge along with the highest-placed returning driver from last year, Anthoine Hubert.

Palmer's MP team-mates Dorian Boccia and Niko Kari are expected to fight for podiums, as is Trident's Giuliano Alesi, son of Jean. Arden's Joey Mawson and Gabriel Aubry could also push Arden into the top 10.



Brabham is powered by 5.4-litre V8 engine



New car will cost £1 million plus tax

BRABHAM UNVEILS FIRST NEW CAR FOR 26 YEARS

New BT62 is 710bhp hypercar and firm is targeting a Le Mans attack

By Rob Ladbrook

Brabham Automotive unveiled its first new racing car for 26 years in London last week, which it hopes can return the iconic family name to the Le Mans 24 Hours in the future.

The Brabham BT62 is a track-only 710bhp hypercar, which will be powered by a naturally aspirated 5.4-litre V8 engine.

The carbonfibre-bodied machine will be limited to a production run of just 70 cars – a number symbolic of the 70 years of Brabham racing heritage. The car

will cost £1 million, plus local taxes, and each of the first half produced will come decked in a tribute livery representing the colours of each of the 35 grands prix-winning Brabhams. The launch car was coloured in tribute of the livery Jack Brabham used to win the 1966 French GP.

While no official racing plans have been announced for the car, it appears likely to have been aimed at the GTE regulations used in the FIA World Endurance Championship, which demand a minimum production run of 25 cars for small manufacturers.

A Brabham statement read: "With a

long-term plan in place and a phased product development programme already underway, the company's ultimate goal is to see the iconic Brabham name return once again to compete on the race track, with the 24 Hours of Le Mans firmly in its sights."

The BT62 follows the BT60B F1 project from 1992 as the first new Brabham machine for almost three decades. The 1993 BT61 was an abandoned F1 project.

The new car has a dry weight of 972kg and a power-to-weight ratio of 730PS per tonne. Brabham says the carbon body can produce in excess of 1200kg of

downforce. Any buyers will be added to a new Brabham Driver Development programme.

Brabham Automotive managing director David Brabham said: "I set out 12 years ago to re-establish the iconic Brabham name, determined to see it return to global competition. My father [Jack] had an incredible determination to succeed and I've drawn on my experience as a racing driver, leader and mentor, never losing sight of that goal. What we have achieved is simply staggering. Today the Brabham legacy enters a new era."

Aston reveals plan for new GT3 car based on GTE Vantage

Another new GT car unveiled last week was a new Aston Martin Vantage GT3 model.

The British manufacturer revealed that the new car will be launched in the summer and is based on the GTE model that is being used in the World Endurance Championship this year.

The new car will share many parts with the GTE

version and will be powered by a V12 engine rather than a V8.

AMR managing director and Prodrive motorsport boss John Gaw said: "Basing the car on the GTE Vantage offers economies of scale; if you have developed a new gearbox it makes sense to use it in the GT3 as well.

"The new car will have different aerodynamics

and the driver aids allowed in GT3."

It will be powered by the same base engine, developed from the four-litre AMG-Mercedes turbo used in the GTE.

The new car, which will be available to customers for the 2019 season, will retail for £395,000. A new GT4 car will also be launched based on the latest-generation Vantage road car.



New GT3 car is set to be available for customers in 2019



Fencing on the GP loop has proved unpopular with fans

First meeting on Brands Hatch GP circuit since new fencing installed

The first meeting has taken place on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit since additional catch fencing, along with the closure of a viewing area, have been introduced in an effort to increase spectator safety at the circuit.

Higher fences have been added on the longer Grand Prix layout following a safety review by circuit owner MotorSport Vision that "coincided with discussions" about DTM returning to the Kent venue.

Now confirmed for August 11/12, it will be the first time the German touring car championship has held a round in the UK since 2013. Previously the series ran

on the shorter Brands Indy circuit, but chairman of the ITR Gerhard Berger has pushed to reintroduce more classic tracks to the DTM calendar.

A statement released by Brands read: "[Visitors will notice] new pathways and additional debris fencing in several areas. These changes have been made as part of an ongoing programme of spectator safety improvements."

"A small trackside section between Sheene Curve and Stirlings Bend will no longer be a spectator area."

All of the spectators *Motorsport News* spoke to at last weekend's Blancpain GT

Series Sprint Cup meeting were against the revisions.

Roger Barwell, 69, said: "This is just horrendous. I can't see anything, it's vandalism. I used to come and watch the grand prix here because it was so nice. But to see this today, I don't think I'll bother coming back."

When asked for further comment, MSV added: "Decisions to make changes are the result of careful consideration and detailed risk assessment by experts in the field from within MSV and the regulatory bodies, and it is not necessary or appropriate to provide the detailed explanation for every decision."

Photos: Richard Styles, Peter Scherer, Dan Bathie, Ollie Read

ORGANISERS DELIGHTED BY HUGE CITROEN C1 ENTRY



Far more C1s than this will be on the grid

Citroen C1 Challenge organisers have expressed disbelief at the large entry for the 'reserve' race they've put on alongside this weekend's 24-hour contest at Rockingham.

Entries for the inaugural 24-hour race at the Corby track filled soon after opening with organisers arranging a second event later in the year. And an extra three-hour race at Rockingham this weekend for those without entries to the main contest has attracted 35 cars.

"If we were being perfectly honest, and we were speaking this time last year after our first proper race and we had 14 cars, if someone had told us then we were going to Rockingham this weekend with a full grid for the main race, and 35 cars in the three-hour race we are putting on for cars who couldn't get into the main race, we would never have believed it," said series organiser Philip Myatt.

"We've got the complete spectrum [in terms of driver ability] from people like Andy Priaulx, who are respected professional drivers, to the guy who has just done his ARDS

test and this is his first ever race."

Myatt attributes the success of the C1 concept to a number of factors, including cost-effectiveness of the cars and the closeness of the racing.

"People spend more money on hospitality than we spend on a season's racing," added Myatt. "The cars are also very evenly-matched and good fun to drive. Endurance racing is another factor - a lot of people have only done 15-minute or 20-minute races and want to get more track time."

The capacity 53-car entry for the 24-hour race includes World Endurance Championship racer Priaulx, who is sharing with his son Seb and British Touring Car series director Alan Gow.

BTCC race winner Josh Cook will join them on the grid, fresh from his recent success at Donington Park in a Power Maxed Vauxhall Astra.

Ex-BTCC racer Lea Wood is also on the entry while Richard Austin, father of BTCC ace Rob, will return to racing in the 24-hour event after a break of a couple of years.

"I am really looking forward to racing again and Rob talked me into this, and it's just such great fun," said Richard Austin at the Rockingham pre-race test, adding that Rob could take part in the second Rockingham race later this year.

Jim Edwards Jr has set-up his own family-orientated C1 crew for the race.

"We run as Assetto Motorsport, a business I set-up with [his daughter] Jade's husband Simon Traves," he said. "But second daughter Chloe is also driving with Simon and so is [ex-VW and MX-5 racer] Kevin Taylor."

NOTABLE ENTRIES

Citroen C1 Challenge, Rockingham 24-hour race

| NO. | TEAM NAME | DRIVERS |
|-----|-------------------------|--|
| 301 | C1 Club | Anthony Reid/Jason Barron/Matt Maxted/Vicky Parrott/Mark Walton |
| 303 | C1 Club | Alan Gow/Andy Priaulx/Seb Priaulx/Richard Solomons |
| 317 | South Hurst Engineering | Pip Hammond/David Jones/Tom Grindall/Stephen Potts |
| 349 | Team C'est La Vie | James Macintyre-Ure/Chris Chadwick/Paul Dickinson/Matt Maxted/Robin Welsh |
| 359 | Assetto Motorsport | Jim Edwards Jr/Jade Edwards/Kevin Taylor/Simon Traves/Mike West |
| 372 | WRC1 | Josh Cook/Ryan Bensley/Oliver Cook/Jon Maybin/Joel Shtiption |
| 377 | OAP Racing | Lea Wood/John Chambers/John Collinson/Sam Healey/Martin Morris/Tim Storrar |
| 398 | See One Racing | Gary Prebble/Adam Prebble/Michael Harris |
| 402 | Team Safety Devices | Alan Kirkaldy/Paul McElean/Greg Graham/Carl Owen |
| 433 | Team Cobra | Richard Austin/Matt Jewkes/Jim Loughran |

BTRDA Silver Star champion Davies to race C1 on his stag night

Reigning BTRDA Silver Star Rally champion Ash Davies will have more reasons than most to remember this weekend's C1 Challenge 24-hour race at Rockingham, as he will be competing for his stag night.

Davies had raced before in the MSV Trackday Trophy with a

Renault Clio, but this will be first time racing the C1, his first race at Rockingham and his first endurance race.

"I am swapping rally Ford Escort for the C1 and have my best motorsport mates joining me," he said. "I have got one rally guy, Ian Barnard, who I built the car with,

my rallying sponsor Andy Burton of Burton Power and best mate Clark Devey, who drag races and hillclimbs a 1936 Ford."

The team had a run out at the recent Rockingham test day. "We decided to sticker it up like a little ambulance as I am marrying a doctor," Davies added.



Davies's C1 car

British GT racers make European GT4 bow

Will Burns and Mike Newbould made their GT4 European Series debut at Brands Hatch in an effort to learn the full Grand Prix circuit ahead of its use by British GT in August.

The HHC Motorsport pairing joined a capacity 46-car grid and used the weekend as an opportunity to test their Ginetta G55 GT4 on the longer layout.

Newbould said: "I've not done much on the GP track so it's a trial run for British GT later in the year. I've watched onboard [videos] until it's almost coming out of my brain but until you've been on it it's very hard to assimilate."

It looked to have been a wasted journey when Newbould suffered a first lap retirement in race one following contact with Nathan Wolf in the V8 Racing Chevrolet Camaro GT4.R. Burns then led early on in race two but after the driver changes they wound up 33rd.

Meanwhile, British GT3 runners Ian Loggie and Callum Macleod made a return to the Blancpain GT Series to also hone the set-up of their Bentley Continental GT3. The Team Parker Racing duo wound up 17th in the first Sprint race before retiring from incident damage in the second.



Harper has had mixed start to '18

Porsche GB Junior Harper hoping for better luck in Carrera Cup at Monza this weekend

Porsche GB Junior Dan Harper is targeting a turnaround in fortunes at Monza this weekend after a difficult start to his Carrera Cup season.

The 17-year-old JTR driver currently sits sixth in the standings after suffering bad luck in three of the opening four races of the year.

He qualified an impressive third for the first race at Brands Hatch but dropped to 13th after contact with George Gamble caused a puncture. His fightback in race two was then limited by a red flag shortening the race.

He finished third in the first race at Donington Park and was on course for a strong result in race two when he suffered a broken radiator.

"I've not really had the best luck but I've showed the speed, which is the most important thing," said Harper. "If the speed is there, then the luck will come."

"A stone flicked up by my team-mate Lewis Plato broke the radiator. But that's racing, it's annoying but I know we can be up there."

"It was a massive jump up [to Carrera Cup from Ginetta Junior]

and I didn't expect to be quick so soon."

The Carrera Cup will visit Monza for the first time in support of the European Le Mans Series this weekend.

"I think Monza will be very exciting," added Harper. "A lot of drivers have never been before so it will even things out."

Title rivals Dino Zamparelli and Tio Ellinas have both raced at the Italian circuit in single-seaters.

"I won at Monza in GP3 so hopefully I will carry on with the same pace," said Ellinas, who trails Zamparelli by just two points ahead of the two Monza races.

OSS gets bumper entry for season opener on Silverstone GP circuit

Forty-six cars will be on the grid for the opening round of the OSS Championship on the Silverstone GP layout - with a further four places still available.

The British Racing & Sports Car Club championship will hold three races on the Northamptonshire circuit this weekend.

Created in 2009 for sports

prototypes, the eight different classes and relatively open regulations mean that it has continued to grow in popularity.

Alan Jenkins, coordinator of the championship, said: "We averaged about 28 cars last year and we've got a number of new guys joining us this year."

"I think the number is so high this weekend because it's the fact

it's the full Silverstone layout. It's a really good opportunity."

"We can take 50 cars but four people withdrew because of car problems otherwise we would have been 50. There's still places left."

"The championship has flourished in the last three years, we've become established, people like the format, it works."



Wide range of prototypes will take to the Silverstone track

RACING NEWS

Photos: Jim Moir, Jakob Ebrey

IN BRIEF

Grimes to Le Mans

GT Cup race-winner Bonamy Grimes and Ivor Dunbar will debut in the Michelin Le Mans Cup in the Road to Le Mans as part of a five-car entry from Nielsen Racing Ecurie Ecosse in the LMP3 class. Grimes and Dunbar are part of sportscar veteran Johnny Mowlem's Red River Sport management agency, and previously shared a Ferrari 488 GT3 in the Creventic Silverstone 12H, while Grimes has experience of the Ligier from sharing one with Mowlem in the LMP3 Cup.

Extra Equipe

The Equipe GTS series has secured additional track time at the MG Live meeting at Silverstone after its initial 58-car grid was filled within 15 minutes. Organisers expect the second grid to likely be full too, by the time of the June 2/3 meeting. The series often attracts large entries and always gets particularly high interest in its races at the MG Live event.

Century to GT Cup

Century Motorsport will enter a Ginetta G55 GT4 in the rest of the GT Cup season. The car will be shared by former GRDC and G40 Cup racers David Holloway and Phil Ingram, along with GT regular Piers Johnson. Holloway and Ingram are also set to tackle the British GT finale at Donington Park in September in the car.

Chapman's Mini swap

Scottish Mini Cooper race winner Hannah Chapman is targeting a switch to single seaters this year. Chapman has switched from Minimax to Cloan Motorsport in Scottish Minis, and she has been testing Cloan's Ray FF1600. "I'm going to be doing more testing later on this season and maybe enter one of the SMRC rounds too," Chapman added. "I've had no experience in single-seaters before but I feel it is a good way to develop as a driver."

Hot Hatch debut

Reigning Scottish Mini Cooper Cup champion Mark Geraghty made his SMTA Hot Hatch Fiesta debut at Knockhill last weekend, claiming a brace of second places. Geraghty, who took the title in a dramatic final race of the season last year, only finalised his place on the entry list on Saturday afternoon. The Perthshire driver has decided to switch focus from the one-make series for 2018, instead opting to take part in the 750 Motor Club Enduro series in his Mini Cooper S.

Welsh Sports & Saloons champion Edwards returns

Two-time Welsh Sports & Saloon Car champion Blake Edwards is returning to the series and competitive racing for the first time in 23 years.

Edwards won a single-race shootout in 1990 to become champion, before retaining the title in 1991 – the first year the WSSCC was a Motor Sports Association registered championship – before retiring in 1995.

He will race a Renault Clio in this weekend's Oulton Park round and also contest other rounds throughout the season.

"I was made an honorary member of the Welsh Racing Drivers Association and I've been going to a few meetings," said Blake, who recently turned 71 years old.

"I saw there were people aged 68, 69, 70 who were doing it and I thought if they can do it, then I can do it. Going to the races, it brings the bug back.

"I bought a Renault Clio that wasn't up to MSA-spec and spent three to four months and a lot of money upgrading it.

"I'm hoping for class wins, I can't see me getting outright wins but outright wins get the same points as class wins. I want to be seriously contending."



TCR UK had 13 cars on grid at Silverstone

PRICE JOINS TCR UK GRID FOR KNOCKHILL ROUND

Championship leader Lloyd returns, as do Backman siblings



Price will race Honda Civic

By Stephen Lickorish

Josh Price will become the second current British Touring Car driver to join the TCR UK grid, as he will compete in the second round at Knockhill this weekend.

The 19-year-old, who drives a Team BMR Subaru Levorg in the BTCC, will compete in a first-generation Honda Civic under the BMR banner and may contest the rest of the season too.

He had already tested the car during the winter and joins fellow BTCC racer Aiden Moffat in the series.

"I watched the opening round at Silverstone and the fact that we'd already got a TCR car meant it was an easy decision to do Knockhill," said Price. "I'm not making any predictions, but the racing at

Silverstone looked to be pretty close and I'm excited to be joining TCR UK for one of the early rounds."

Points leader Dan Lloyd is also going to be on the Knockhill grid this weekend. He won both of the opening races of the series at Silverstone but only had a deal to contest the first weekend with the WestCoast Racing squad in a Volkswagen Golf. That has now been extended for Knockhill and could continue further into the season.

The other two WestCoast entries at Silverstone, for siblings Andreas and Jessica Backman, will also be back on the grid in Scotland.

Despite the arrival of Price, numbers are expected to drop from 13 at Silverstone to 12, but organisers are unconcerned by the slight drop in entries, suggesting they always

expecting a decrease for Knockhill.

"The numbers will be lower at Knockhill because of the sheer cost and the geography but we have a lot of people interested [later in the year]," said TCR UK's Jonathan Ashman.

"You know the numbers are going to be small in year one but TCR is a credible proposition and it will grow and grow. We're happy for it to sit in the UK and let it develop. We always knew the UK would be toughest [market for TCR to crack] and that's why we left it to last. I think Silverstone was positive and the atmosphere was good."

● Both Moffat and his Laser Tools Racing team-mate Derek Palmer Jr completed demonstration runs in their Alfa Romeo Giulietta TCR cars at Knockhill last weekend ahead of the races at the Scottish track.

National FF1600 drivers sample reverse Knockhill

Leading British Racing & Sports Car Club National FF1600 teams raced at Knockhill last weekend to prepare for the upcoming TCR-supporting round at the Scottish circuit.

Kevin Mills Racing, Cliff Dempsey Racing and Team Dolan all made the trip to Fife for the second round of the Scottish Motor Racing Club's FF1600 Championship to gain experience on the reverse layout.

Karting graduate Hugo Bentley-Ellis claimed an impressive double podium on his first visit to the circuit for Mills, while Dolan's Matt Round-Garrido took victory in the second race of the weekend.

"This weekend is all about practice for the National round," said Round-Garrido.

"We've learnt a few things about this reverse layout that will come in handy in the races so it's definitely worth it."

Reigning Scottish FF1600 champion Ross Martin, who took the first win at the weekend and



Matt Round-Garrido won race

leads the standings, will drive in this weekend's National meeting as a guest entry.

The Graham Brunton Racing driver was meant to take part in a full season in the series this year, but budget troubles forced the teenager to abort his plans.

"The plan had always been to do the TCR round if we could," said Martin.

"We're in as a guest entry and we've got nothing to lose. It'll be good to test myself against the National boys again."



Photo: Gary Hawkins

Restored by official UK Porsche Centres, 15 986-generation Boxsters made their debut at Brands Hatch wearing famous liveries from the marque's racing history. The Porsche Classic Restoring Competition celebrates the model's 20th anniversary and will run a six-race calendar alongside the Porsche Club Championship. Notable designs included Pink Pig, Martini and Hippy homages to the 917K, with which Porsche won its first ever Le Mans in 1970.

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HISTORICS

'Tilley hopes to do the Classic'
Teenager's return, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

RICKARD RYDELL

1998 BTCC champion
Age: 50 Lives: Sweden

He was back at Silverstone

"The last time I was at Silverstone was with the SEAT in WTCC in 2006, I think. But it was 1998 when I won the BTCC in the Volvo S40 that I was driving at Silverstone last week. We won the title at Silverstone in the last meeting. I was champion after the first of the two races so it was a bit of a relief. I needed to score enough points in the first race to beat Anthony Reid so I was being really careful."

He'll drive a Volvo again

"I drove the S40 of Jason Minshaw on the Silverstone Classic media day and you feel at home when you sit in the car again, even after 20 years. In those years of Super Touring in the BTCC we were testing a lot. In one year I made 38 return trips to Sweden because we were testing every week. But I always stayed living in Sweden."

Testing was a big deal

"With the budgets we had back then, there was a lot of testing and development work. I really liked that and I enjoyed being part of the development of the car."

It is 20 years ago...

"Now I'm going to race the S40 at the Silverstone Classic and Jason will be running his car for me. He said I could come and drive his car as it is 20 years since I won the BTCC. Since I'm not racing at all anymore, I thought it would be a fun event to do."

He's an F1 commentator

"I retired from racing after my last full season in 2012 in Swedish Touring Cars. Now I'm an expert commentator for Swedish TV in Formula 1 and last year I went to 11 F1 races. But this year I am only doing eight races as I don't want to do too many. I've been travelling all my life and that's enough. I have three kids who are now between 21 and 26."

The BTCC seasons were good times

"If I look back at my career, being in a championship like the BTCC with big testing budgets makes it the most fun years. But it was also very tough and competitive and I enjoyed it a lot. It was one of the highlights along with winning Macau in 1992 and the GT1 class at Le Mans in 2007."



Rydell is back in Volvo



Atkinson has tested Hesketh

ATKINSON GETS A SHOT AT HISTORIC FORMULA 1

Racer goes "from a muddy trial to Monaco in two weeks"

By Paul Lawrence

Isle of Wight driver Chris Atkinson says the chance to race a Formula 1 car at Monaco this weekend will be the realisation of a boyhood dream.

Atkinson, 51, will race the Hesketh 308 owned by Irish racer James Hagan while the owner recovers from a skiing accident. Atkinson usually

drives the ex-Mike Hailwood Surtees TS8 Formula 5000 machine but will step up to DFV power for the street race.

"I've been to Monaco before but never to race, instead I drove the truck there for Frank Lyons!" said Atkinson. "James has a skiing injury and asked me if I wanted to do it. It is one of my boyhood dreams to race a proper F1 car and to do it at Monaco is amazing."

"I just want to finish the race and bring the car back home in one piece."

Atkinson has raced on the street circuit at Pau and had a shakedown test in the Hesketh on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit last week. "It's certainly lighter and more nimble than the Formula 5000," he added.

Ten days ago Atkinson and his father Ken competed in a Historic Sporting Trial in his

Cannon. "That's the two extremes of motorsport: from a muddy trial to racing an F1 car at Monaco in two weeks," said Atkinson. He also contested the 2017 London-Brighton veteran car run in his 1903 De Dion Bouton.

Atkinson warmed up for the Monaco race by racing the Surtees in the Derek Bell Trophy races at Donington over the weekend.



New Escort got UK outing

G-Cat's new Ford Escort finally makes UK debut at Donington Park

Tim Swadkin and Terry Caton fielded an immaculate Ford Escort Mk1 in the HTCC race at Donington Park as the G-Cat Racing project made its UK debut.

The two-litre BDG-powered car was finished late last season in

time for a race at Portimao and was running for the first time in Britain over the weekend.

"It's been built to full Group 2 specification like the Broadspeed cars of 1973 and '74," said G-Cat's Greg Caton, who is a part owner of

the car. "We've had the bodyshell for about four years."

While engine builder Swadkin and Caton Senior raced the Escort to a class win, Greg shared the Ford Capri of Ludovic Lindsay at Donington Park.



Keith-Lucas ran his Jaguar

European Touring Car BMW makes comeback

Thirty-five years after it raced at Donington in the European Touring Car Championship, a freshly rebuilt BMW 635 was back at the track for the Historic Touring Car Challenge race at the Historic Festival.

Nick Padmore raced the BMW on its first competitive outing since a complete rebuild by BMW expert Geoff Steel.

In the 1983 500km race it was driven by four drivers, including Italian Giuseppe Briozzo, but failed to finish as Martin Brundle spearheaded the driver line-up in the winning Jaguar XJS.

"We tested at Silverstone in the wet and only did a couple of laps, so this is the first proper run," said Padmore after qualifying sixth fastest. The car later retired mid-race.

F3 Nations Cup returns to Brands Hatch

The 2018 edition of the Historic Formula 3 Nations Cup will be held at the HSCC Legends of Brands Hatch meeting on June 30/July 1.

Organised by the 1000cc F3 Historic Racing Association, the Nations Cup is for up to two teams of three cars per country. Teams from regions or even UK counties can be entered and the idea was resurrected by the late Bev Bond, who was in Team GB

with James Hunt for the final edition at Thruxton in 1970.

This will be a return home for the Nations Cup as it was first held on the Brands GP Circuit in October 1966 and was won by the British team of Chris Irwin, Piers Courage and Peter Gethin. Irwin took the race victory in his Chequered Flag Brabham BT18 and that car is due to be on the grid 52 years later with Andrew Hibberd aboard.

Aannestad's nightmare as Alfa detained by UK border prior to Donington Festival

Svein Aannestad was unable to take part in his first Donington Historic Festival at the weekend after the trailer carrying his race car was detained at the UK border.

The Norwegian had been due to enter his 1963 Alfa Romeo Giulia GT under invitation in the Historic Racing Drivers Club's

Touring Greats for Pre-'60 Touring Cars race.

But a weighing error by the shipping company prior to making the ferry crossing meant he was unable to leave the docks at Immingham.

Aannestad said: "Our total weight came to 10 tonnes but DFDS put the cargo only

down as 10 tonnes. The ferry was 36 hours late anyway, but at Customs the automatic barrier wouldn't let us out because the computer hadn't recognised what we had declared."

To add insult to injury, because Aannestad had left his racing licence in the trailer,

he had to pay for tickets on the gate in order to go and watch the race he should have been a part of.

The carrier did pay the £1000 fine and will return Aannestad's car free of charge. The race was won by the father-and-son pairing of Mike and Andrew Jordan in a Austin 40.



The XJ12C is now up for sale

IN BRIEF

Meetings headache

Last weekend's Donington Historic Festival and this weekend's Monaco Historic Grand Prix have given some historic race preparation companies a hectic week. IN Racing fielded a total of 14 cars at Donington and then left its Nottingham base on Monday with six cars destined for Monaco. Only the Lister Bristol of Stephen Bond was entered for both events.

Walker's award

The organisers of the Silverstone Classic presented Murray Walker with a Lifetime Achievement Award last week to mark 70 years since he attended the first Silverstone Grand Prix in 1948. In a ceremony hosted by fellow broadcaster Tiff Needell, and staged in the pit lane at Silverstone, the accolade was presented by Nick Wigley from the Silverstone Classic.

Balfe's debut

British GT Championship racer Sean Balfe made his historic racing debut at Donington in U2T with a freshly-built Lotus Cortina. Balfe, who usually races a GT3 McLaren 650S, wanted a car for some fun racing on free weekends and had the Pre '66 car built up by Andy Wolfe. He hopes to tackle a couple more races this season around his GT programme.

Classic Jag runs

Jaguar expert Chris Keith-Lucas took his road-going XK150S to Donington for the Jaguar Classic Challenge fresh from completing a seven-day, 1000-mile tour of Northern Spain. "We polished it and changed the tyres," said Keith-Lucas of converting the 60-year-old car back into race trim.

Tilley in Junior

Teenager Benn Tilley returned to Formula Junior at the Donington Historic Festival when he had a pair of guest races in the Lola MK5 of Ian Robinson. Tilley also hopes to do the Silverstone Classic in July in the car most recently raced by its preparer, Iain Rowley. Tilley sat in the car for the first time before qualifying on Friday at Donington Park.

Broadspeed buyer

Michael Wilkinson drove one of the Broadspeed-built Jaguar XJ12Cs as the pace car for the rolling start of the Jaguar Classic Challenge race at Donington Park on Saturday. The former 1976 European Touring Car Championship machine was the first of only four such cars built for the Jaguar project, which was dropped at the end of the 1977 season. The car, which owned by regular racer Chris Scragg, is now for sale.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



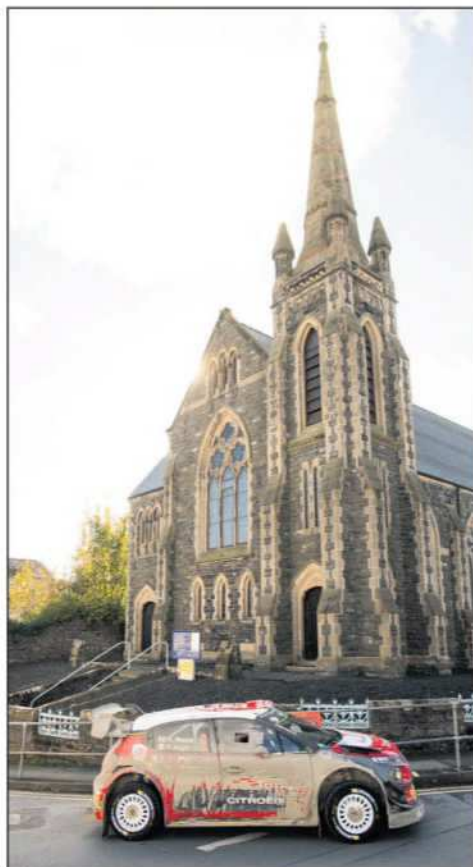
Evans enjoyed the 2017 showdown



Evans (left) says that some of the chances have been missed

EVANS QUESTIONS RALLY GB'S NEW ROUTE VISION

Last year's winner wants more stages in mid-Wales in 2018



Meeke is a fan of the refreshed Saturday route

By David Evans

Last year's Wales Rally GB winner Elfyn Evans has criticised the organisers of the October event for closing the wrong public roads on Britain's round of the World Rally Championship.

Evans hoped his favourite Gartheiniog test would be linked via a closed road to the Dyfi forest to produce a classic, 30-mile mid-Wales monster stage. Instead the organisers have gone for smaller road closures to link stages in the north.

Evans told *MN*: "It's not a bad route at all, but there's a lot of road closures in there and maybe that's to the detriment of the route. Don't get me wrong, I don't want to come across as moaning about this, I can see the benefits of the road closure in places like Penmachno, but they shouldn't do it just for the sake of joining roads. They should do it to open up fantastic stages and the one I would like to have seen is Dyfi and Gartheiniog; joining those two would have made a hell of a stage."

Evans added that he was also disappointed the route would only be spending one day in his native mid-Wales and two in the country's north.

He said: "We all know the rally has to be based in the north for the hotels

and service park infrastructure, but the stages for the rally are really in mid-Wales. The quality of stages we get in Dyfi or Hafren or Myherin are some of the best in the world. Those roads, the ones in the middle band of the country, are the ones to use.

"Don't get me wrong, Penmachno and the stages up in the north are fantastic, but I'm just not quite sure they have the same flow and feel as the ones further south.

"Having all the mid-Wales stages on Saturday [October 7] does give choice for the spectators on the day, but having the two days in mid-Wales was, for me, working quite well. I understand the need to come back to service in Deeside on one of the days, but it's a shame there's not Aberhirmant or Dyfnant on Friday – I think we could still have made lunchtime service with one of those as well."

Evans' fellow Brit Kris Meeke admitted he still struggled with the need for the Great Orme among some classic woods.

"We rally in Wales in the forests," he said. "That's what the rally is about. To offer five points for the Great Orme, where you cut over the kerbs and there's potential for damaging rims on gravel tyres... no, it's not what Rally GB is about. Wales has beautiful forest roads and it's those they should be showing off on

the powerstage – that's where rallying is."

Even though the powerstage points are now being offered on the second stage of the final day – the 10-mile Gwydir test – Meeke said he could see problems with that.

He added: "It's good that we're not using the Orme, but my only worry is that running the powerstage early [on Sunday] could compromise the television a little bit – if there's more than five seconds between cars, will you risk everything [your overall position] for those points?"

Meeke admitted he was a fan of the Saturday refresh, which includes all the mid-Wales stages in one day for the first time in 21 years.

"Saturday's a proper, proper day with Sweet Lamb, Hafren, Myherin, Dyfi and all those classic stages in one – that's really good," he said. "There's plenty of options for the spectators as well, hopefully we'll see plenty of people out there."

Rally GB managing director Ben Taylor stood firm on his selection of the route. He said: "We've been working on this for a year, to create a fantastic, innovative route that changes the format of the rally specifically for two main reasons: to address the concerns of the teams from previous years and to take this great event to the people to make new WRC fans. I wouldn't expect the

drivers to comprehend all the nuances of creating a rally route, it's not their job. But, over and above selecting challenging stages for the drivers' entertainment, we have a load of issues to take into consideration and then – after a few months of countless iterations and changes – we arrive at the best possible options for the whole event.

"I am delighted with this year's route, and in particular that we're able to finish with the Orme; we're predicting tens of thousands of fans – including a whole load of families and people new to the sport – on the streets on that final day. That's what we need to do if the sport is going to grow.

"Completely understand Elfyn's point about Dyfi and Gartheiniog; it's probably the most obvious use of the new legislation and we did look at it closely. But the new law was only in force at the start of February, so we decided we would only close roads in Conwy County this year, so we could make sure that we got the process right and didn't get over-ambitious in year one."

Hyundai team manager Alain Penasse couldn't see the problem with the route. "I like it," he said. "It's a good challenge. And I liked the Great Orme as well – I think it's good to see rallies being individual and doing their own thing."

MORE REACTION TO THE REFRESHED WALES RALLY GB ROUTE

PAGE 22



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'What are the next steps for the BRC?'
Is a UK rethink needed? p20



M-SPORT PROMISES FIGHTBACK



Ogier was off the pace in Argentina

M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson is confident his team will bounce back after a lacklustre Rally Argentina – with the Cumbrian convinced the Ford Fiesta WRC's inability to challenge at the sharp end was a South American-specific issue. Sebastien Ogier and Elfyn Evans finished a distant fourth and sixth in Argentina, but Wilson expects a return to normal service in Portugal next week.

The M-Sport Ford squad has identified the areas where it lost

out in Villa Carlos Paz and the only event where it could suffer the same issues is at Britain's round of the championship in October.

"It seems we were struggling a little bit with low grip," Wilson said. "It was the same last year. Yes, Elfyn [Evans] was a minute clear in Argentina at the end of day one, but where were Seb [Ogier] and Ott [Tanak] in the other cars? They weren't nearly as competitive and it was the same in Wales. So we have to look at the grip Elfyn had [from his

DMACK tyres]. We're absolutely not going to say anything about Michelin, everybody else had the same tyre, what we have to do is find a way to fix this."

The Cocker-mouth-based team lost ground to Hyundai in the makes' race, falling 15 points behind the South Korean marque in second.

"There's no panic here," said Wilson. "We're confident going forward to events like Portugal and Sardinia. Look what happened 12 months ago after Argentina, Seb went to Portugal

and was straight back on it. There's no question we weren't as competitive in Argentina, but that's going to be the nature of these cars a little bit.

"I'm sure Hyundai were scratching their heads after Corsica and Mexico – these cars can't be perfect everywhere, so we will find these holes."

● News from Friday's appeal to have Ogier's Rally Mexico 10-second penalty for hitting the chicane in the powerstage overturned is expected this week.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"The APRC is under serious threat"



Congratulations to Yuya Sumiyama. The Japanese won his first ever Asia Pacific Rally Championship round at the weekend. Congratulations must also go to Fabio Frisiero, who collected his first ever runners-up spot on the FIA's regional series.

And finally, well done to me. I was third. Bottom step of the podium.

Actually, I wasn't. But I could have been and most likely would have been. There were, you see, only two APRC finishers at last week's opening round, the International Rally of Whangarei.

Fifty per cent of the APRC field fell by the wayside when Mike Young and Fuyuhiko Takahashi retired before the finish of a brilliant Kiwi opener.

Four cars started last weekend's APRC. This is, of course, nothing new. Five started on the North Island last season. And, on occasion, the APRC's had just one finisher. By the time we get to India for the season-closing Coffee Day Rally in December, who knows how the series will be.

India has, of course, been one of the APRC's most ardent supporters in recent years, with the MRF Skoda team providing a brace of factory-spec Fabia R5s for the series. Local hero Gaurav Gill drove one of the cars and delivered a real return for MRF with three APRC titles in five years and domination of India's round. But it was the second car which delivered much of the interest for the world of rallying, as Skoda's junior drivers were farmed out to the Far East and beyond to see how they would fare on some of the world's toughest rallies.

Talk to the likes of Jan Kopecky, Pontus Tidemand and Esapekka Lappi about their time in Asia Pacific and they'll speak fondly of the challenge of the New Caledonian roads, the trick to getting the best out of Hokkaido or dealing with Malaysian mud. Lappi failed on all three of those events. Granted, he won the other three, but finished second in the 2013 APRC to Gill. MRF has gone now. Gill will tackle four WRC2 rounds this year with an eye to a full campaign next season.

If it's the APRC's apparent good times you're searching for, head for the early 1990s. In fact, look at the names that trailed much-loved 1993 champion 'Possum' Bourne: Colin McRae, Juha Kankkunen and Francois Delecour.

But that flattered to deceive. Kankkunen and Delecour scored on two rounds: New Zealand and Australia, the two 'local' WRC counters which qualified for the APRC as well. Mitsubishi and Subaru regularly sent drivers to events in Thailand or Malaysia, but this was no long-term solution for Asia Pacific.

This year's APRC is a six-round series touring New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, Japan, China and India. You would have thought a calendar including 50 per cent of the BRIC economies [Brazil, Russia, India and China] would have been a sensible proposition. Apparently not, even though the promotion of the series is solid enough.

But there's no escaping the geography. It's a long way between rallies and those logistics cost. But the FIA has to find a solution. We can't lose the APRC. The rallies and the region are too important for that.



Kankkunen on Rally Portugal in 1994

Kankkunen and Grist reunited in co-driver's 1994 Toyota

Juha Kankkunen and Nicky Grist will be reunited with their 1994 Rally of Portugal-winning Toyota Celica GT-Four ST185 on next month's Rallye Festival Trasmiera.

The car was originally built by Team Toyota Europe for Carlos Sainz in 1992. It was last used by Kankkunen and Grist in 1994. Grist purchased the Celica last year and then sat alongside Jari-Matti

Latvala, who drove it at Rallyday in September last year.

Since then the car has been converted back to left-hand drive and refitted with original 1994 TTE parts.

"I thought it would be good to get Juha back in the car, just to reconfirm the car's history," said Grist. "The Celica is different to when people saw it at Rallyday. It's back to original spec. It will be in Tarmac trim too; the

first day of the 1994 Rally Portugal was on Tarmac, followed by three days of gravel: it will be almost the same as when Juha and I started the event!"

Kankkunen and Grist aren't the only stars making the trip: Jimmy McRae will also be in north-east Spain this weekend driving a Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4. The event is a Tarmac demonstration event run in the foothills of the Pyrenees.

Ingram quits ERC rally after illness

Britain's Chris Ingram is aiming for an Acropolis Rally return to the European Rally Championship following his early departure from last week's Canaries Rally due to illness.

The reigning Under-27 European Rally champion started the second ERC round in his Toksport Skoda Fabia R5, but pulled over in stage three after feeling it was dangerous to continue. Ingram spent Thursday night in hospital in Las Palmas, discharging himself to start the event on Friday morning. He struggled through the first two stages in 21st position and then called it a day on the following Artenara test.

"I've been feeling a bit strange for the last week or so," Ingram said. "I thought once the adrenalin kicked in this morning it would improve, but it's impossible.

I feel miles away, I'm not getting near any apexes, it's a disaster. I just couldn't drive, so I had to pull over. I just feel dreadful."

Ingram was late arriving at shakedown on Thursday and only managed one run of the pre-event stage. Ingram's preparations of the event had been compromised by a minor testing shunt earlier in the week.

The 23-year-old made the perfect start to his ERC U28 campaign at the Azores Rally in March, winning the category and finishing fourth overall on his debut in a four-wheel drive car.

Ingram will now turn his attentions to Greece's ERC round on June 1-3. "Now I have to focus on the next rounds in Greece and Cyprus and making sure I'm there – I need to be doing those for any chance of the overall ERC title," he added.



Paddon took a record-breaking victory on the Rally of Whangarei

Paddon learns lessons on New Zealand stages

Hayden Paddon flies back to Europe to restart his World Rally Championship career in the best possible shape following his domination of last week's Rally of Whangarei.

Paddon drove the i20 AP4 developed by his own Paddon Rallysport team on former Rally NZ stages to, once again, break records in his own backyard. At last month's Otago Rally, Paddon broke the stage record on all 17 South Island tests – there was more of the same as he won all 18 stages in Whangarei last weekend. He also won the event by 7m26.3s over Ben Hunt's Subaru WRX STi.

Paddon's last WRC event with the factory team was Rally Sweden. Since

then Dani Sordo has driven the team's third car in Mexico, Corsica and Argentina. Hyundai fields four cars for Paddon, Sordo, Thierry Neuville and Andreas Mikkelsen in Portugal next week.

"It was good, everything went well," Paddon said. "I learned a couple of things with tyre management and different driving strategies between the first and second pass – things that will translate to overseas competition. It's the perfect confidence booster for heading back over [to Europe]."

Paddon is due to test for Rally Portugal this week, when he will be reunited with British co-driver Seb Marshall.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RALLY NEWS

Photos: Paul Lawrence, chasingthecars.com, Writtle Photographic

NICKY GRIST STAGES COULD BE FIRST EVENT FOR SPLIT SEEDING

Welsh event is targeting two-wheel-drive cars at the front of the field



Could new rule add entries?

By Jack Benyon

The Nicky Grist Stages could be the first event to run with split-field seeding under the new Motor Sports Association rules, according to clerk of the course Neil Cross.

The NG Stages on July 14 is a round of the BTRDA and Welsh Rally Championships this year and Cross, chairman of the BTRDA rallies committee, has already signalled intent.

"I'm hopeful we'll be running a split field, our event lends to it perfectly," said Cross. "I received the email last Friday and on Friday evening I applied to the MSA to run a split field.

"I think there's a few events that may try and bring it in before July 1, they might ask for special dispensation.

"The problem there is their regulations are already out, so the competitors who have entered have to agree to it. Split fields will suit some

and not everybody."

The BTRDA is one of the championships that could be boosted most by the new rules change. In 2014, before the fastest-first seeding came into force, the 1400 and Rally First championships had 86 points scorers. In 2017 the combined number was down to 31, and while that should be set against general entry numbers falling, it's still a drop of more than half.

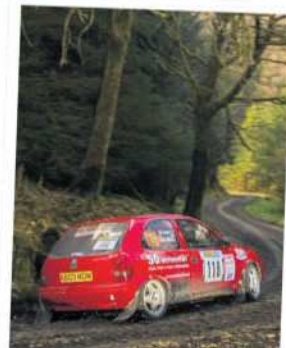
Cross is hoping new safety regulations brought in since don't put the clubmen competitors off.

"A lot of competitors have been lost," added Cross.

"It's the livelihood of the events that's at stake and we need them [the competitors] back.

"I think it could be difficult as you've got life for belts, life for fire extinguishers, HANS devices have all come in since they've drifted away.

"For some of them it will be a fairly hefty expense to get out into the forests. If



BTRDA wants 1400 boost

they're prepared to make that investment, they'll be back for the long term.

"They're going to have prime roads to start the rallies on, and the roads aren't cutting up as badly as they used to."

Cross confirmed that while the BTRDA hasn't made any final decisions on how it will seed, its initial plan is to have 1400 and Rally First entries at the front along with certain historic classes only.

Historic entries praise changes

The historic rallying fraternity has reacted with huge enthusiasm to the news that the MSA has revised the rules for seeding and running order on gravel stage rallies.

When the MSA moved to one field of cars in fastest-first order in March 2015, entries from the older cars plummeted. Drivers were not prepared to run fragile and increasingly valuable cars in the ruts of the main field, and cars were parked up in garages.

The formation of Rally 2WD for 2018 made major inroads into getting them back out, but it was always intended to be the best fix available under the prevailing rules. Now, the historic have the chance to have the best available road conditions for the first time since 2014.

Paul Lawrence

REACTION

Simon Wallis (Ford Lotus Cortina)

"This is everything we hoped for and lobbied for. In less than two months, David Richards has delivered a fantastic result for all of rallying, not just historic. People want to go rallying in the older cars, but they don't want to smash them to pieces in ruts. This is a fantastic result for rallying."

Guy Weaver (Escort Mk2 co-driver and chairman of organising club)

"Initial thoughts are that this is like the reinvention of rallying. The new running order will preserve the use of the Category 1 cars and under 1600s in the massively successful R2WD format and allow those learning the ropes in rallying the chance to experience iconic British gravel stages at their best."

Stuart Cariss (Ford Escort Mk1)

"What brilliant news! The

difference to the condition of our car after Rally North Wales and the Pirelli Rally where the 2WDs ran first, compared to previous events, has to be seen to be believed. We owe the guys at Rally2WD a tremendous thank you and, of course, to the MSA for the change. I'm sure this will maintain the upsurge in historic and 2WD rally entries just when we were thinking rallying was finished."

Dessie Nutt (Porsche 911)

"I have been privileged to have been involved in historic rallying for 26 years, with many great and enjoyable times. This was missing lately but will, I am sure, now return with this fantastic, and very sensible, change."

Ian Beveridge (Volvo PV544)

"It is great news that common sense has finally prevailed. As we hoped, [MSA head] David Richards understands rallying far better than the people actually running it!"

Malcolm Rich (Ford Anglia)

"Well done to those who lobbied so hard on our behalf. Hopefully now we can look forward to events full of Category 1 cars on a regular basis."

Dave Hopkins (Talbot Sunbeam)

"It was great to read this news after all of the hard work that has gone into promoting Rally2WD. There is no doubt that having Dave Richards at the top of the MSA has brought rallying back to the forefront and his enthusiasm and support for club rallying will benefit everyone."

Bob Bean (Ford Lotus Cortina)

"We welcome this great news, which can only encourage more historic cars to compete again. Common sense is prevailing, which is rare in this day and age."

Paul Mankin (Ford Lotus Cortina)

"This really is fantastic news. A

huge thanks to those behind R2WD – that format was enough to get the historic entries up and prove to the MSA that the demand was there if the roads were in acceptable condition. I can't help think that David Richards' background has also helped and, if so, that bodes well for the future."

Phil Harris (Mini Cooper S)

"I think great credit is due to those involved in the Rally2WD project for thrusting the issue to the fore and to the MSA for responding so positively. It is fantastic news and should encourage many more competitors to return to the forests."

Alan Walker (Ford Escort Mk2)

"I think this will be the catalyst for a real boom in historic rallying. It's the change we've been lobbying for and everyone should recognise that David Richards has given historic rallying a massive boost."



Dessie Nutt: "A very sensible change"



Simon Wallis: "Everything we hoped for"



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*'Barrable ignites
Irish Tarmac title bid'*
Rally of the Lakes, p18



SPEED AND RALLY SHOW

Photo: Floor it Photography, M&H Photography



Fans were greeted with a rallying extravaganza last weekend, as the Border 200 Road Rally and Speed & Rally Show ran in and around Oswestry. The revolutionary two-night format for the Border 200 drew universal praise from competitors, and was won by Daniel Jones/Gerwyn Barry (above right). On the Sunday, rally cars of all generations entertained crowds at the Oswestry Showground for the Speed & Rally Show in association with *Motorsport News*, while a special forum celebrated the *Motoring News* Road Rally champions.

Photo: Writtle Photographic

Pritchard aims for Manx redemption

Jason Pritchard is hoping to put the heartbreak of a late retirement from last year's Manx National Rally to bed with a strong showing at this weekend's event.

The 29-year-old, co-driven by Phil Clarke, was leading when an electrical fault cost him over six minutes on the penultimate stage, denying him a fourth-straight victory in his Ford Focus WRC05.

Pritchard will start this year's MSA Asphalt Rally Championship event as favourite – despite not having driven the Focus for 12 months.

"What happened last year still hurts and it makes me more determined to come back stronger this year," said three-time British Historic Rally champion Pritchard. "I love the Manx National, it's the one event we say we're doing at the start of every year. We forget about the times because it's

such a pleasure to drive the stages, and when it all works and clicks the times are there. If we go into day two and we have to up our pace, then I know we can do that."

Pritchard doesn't actually start as car number one this year, that honour goes to fellow Welshman Hugh Hunter. He won last year's event in a Ford Fiesta R5, and has upgraded to a Fiesta RS WRC for 2018. He used the car to finish second on his asphalt debut in the machine on the Rally Tendring and Clacton last month.

Completing a trio of Welshmen in the top three, Damian Cole is in his Fiesta RS WRC for the only regular event on the Asphalt series calendar he hasn't won.

Dan Harper, a Manx Rally champion (Mini John Cooper Works WRC) and Peter Taylor's Fiesta RS WRC could also fight for honours.

SEEDING ENTRY LIST

Manx National Rally, MSA Asphalt Championship, May 11/12

| NO. | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR |
|-----|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg | Ford Fiesta RS WRC |
| 2 | Jason Tauber Pritchard/Phil Clarke | Ford Focus WRC05 |
| 3 | Damian Cole/Jamie Edwards | Ford Fiesta RS WRC |
| 4 | Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell | Mini John Cooper Works WRC |
| 5 | Peter Taylor/Andrew Roughead | Ford Fiesta RS WRC |
| 6 | Jamie Jukes/James Morgan | Mitsubishi Mirage |
| 7 | Tristan Pye/Andrew Falconer | Subaru Impreza |
| 8 | David Hardie/John McCulloch | Subaru Impreza |
| 9 | Bob Fowden/Den Golding | Subaru Impreza WRC |
| 10 | Stu Bainborough/Jane Nicol | Mitsubishi Lancer E6 |



Welsh crew led last year before retiring

Friend finally gets R2 outing after delay

Ben Friend is finally set to get his prize drive in a Ford Fiesta R2 after it was delayed by the postponement of the Mid Wales Stages in March.

Friend will compete on the Plains Rally, and was chosen to drive the Fiesta because of his performances in the British Historic Rally Championship.

The car's owner is Pete Smith of Swift Caravans, and he has been handing the car over to

young drivers in a bid to give them a chance to impress. They still contribute to costs, but get the car for free.

"I'm not expecting too much on the first time," said 23-year-old Friend, who drives a left-hand-drive car for the first time. "I think the Plains will be an event that should suit us. I've done it two or three times, and we've done GB four times, so I'm familiar with Gartheiniog."

Mid Wales Stages canned for poor entries

The Mid Wales Stages Rally which was first due to run on March 4 has been cancelled due to a poor entry.

The event was initially postponed due to the storm weather which swept through the UK and Ireland on the original March weekend, and was then reorganised for May 6.

But due to poor take-up from competitors, and a struggle to find event organisers, the Newtown and District Automobile Club made the decision to cancel.

"We were faced with a potential loss of over £15,000 to add to the £5,000 loss from having to postpone the event from the original March 4 date," said clerk of the course Wayne Jones.

"I feel very sorry for the hard work that the organising committee have put in to organise both the March and rescheduled May event and I would like to thank them all for their efforts.

The event was due to be a round of the Welsh Rally Championship in 2018.

Edwards targets third successive rally win as BTRDA rolls into Welshpool for the Plains

Matt Edwards will lead the BTRDA field away for the Plains Rally this Saturday in search of his third straight rally victory.

Edwards, co-driven by Darren Garrod, is dovetailing a BTRDA and a British Rally Championship campaign, and has won the previous rounds of both series.

Luke Francis, runner-up on the Rallynuts Stages as he gets to grips with his new Ford Fiesta RS WRC, is car two ahead of Ford Focus WRC driver Paul Bird. Reigning champion Stephen Petch and Fiesta R5 driver Sacha Kakad round out the top five.

The top 10 has taken a hit

compared to the previous round, with a number of high-profile entries missing, including Julian Reynolds (Fiesta R5) and Fiesta RS WRC driver Hugh Hunter, who is competing on the Manx National.

NR4 class leader Russ Thompson heads a strong class entry, while James Giddings and Sion Cunniff

could extent their Fiesta ST Trophy lead while first-round winner Zak Hughes returns after retiring from the Rallynuts Stages. R2 Rallye Cup leaders George Lopley/Tom Woodburn headline that class entry, while Chris Powell's Talbot Sunbeam will challenge for 1400 honours.

REVELLING IN HISTORIC RALLYING

PAUL LAWRENCE

"It's the best news for gravel rallying"



The latest news from the MSA about changes to running order protocol is fabulous for gravel rallying in general, and historics in particular.

I am bowled over at how effectively new MSA chairman David Richards has grasped the problem and prompted swift and decisive changes.

I have been guilty of going on and on about the damage done to rallying by the imposition of one field of cars seeded in performance order. It dealt gravel rallying a devastating blow at a time when this branch of the sport was already on the ropes.

Those in older and smaller-engined cars voted with their feet and the decline in entries took some events to the brink of collapse. Club's resources have been consumed at an unsustainable rate to keep events alive. Now, in a matter of a few weeks, Richards has acted in the very best interest of the sport by making changes happen.

No one can fail to see that the MSA needed to act, and be seen to act, following the Scottish Fatal Accident Inquiry and many good things were done to protect the sport's future. But making all the cars run in one block was a step way too far and was, in my view, ill conceived.

In truth, despite ongoing lobbying, there was little appetite in the corridors of power at Colnbrook to revisit running order.

Then David Richards arrived as the new MSA chairman, with drive, vision and determination and, most importantly, the interest of the sport at heart. Suddenly, change was possible, but the speed at which it has arrived has taken everyone by surprise.

So, what has changed? Well, the permission to run a short, planned gap in the field allows the previously disadvantaged cars to return to running first on the road. Then, allowing the first group to be reverse seeded is manna for those in older, smaller and less powerful cars.

It is a massive boost to the sport and it will start happening a month from now. Historics, modern 1400s, Rally Firsts and all two-wheel drives can now look ahead to the prospect of running on quality surfaces rather than behind 40 or 50 four-wheel drives.

No one doubts that the more powerful two-wheel drives can damage the roads, but the new format will ensure that the roads stay good much further down the field. Ally that to the fantastic work being done on the Welsh forests by Rally4Wales and the quality of Kielder stages on the recent Pirelli Rally and you have the recipe for the best road conditions for years. It is a massive win-win for gravel rallying.

Now we need the organising clubs to embrace the possibilities and there are sure to be many discussions over coming weeks between clubs and championship organisers. Without question, these changes to running order rules mark the best possible news for gravel rallying.



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LUKYANUK DOUBLES-UP IN CANARIES

Russian takes second consecutive win as class of ERC field. **By Graham Lister**

Alexey Lukyanuk's reputation is one of a blindingly fast but all too often crash-happy driver.

Based on his double-winning start to the new ERC season, the blindingly fast bit remains spot on. Only it's a far calmer, measured Russian behind the wheel of the H-Racing Ford Fiesta R5.

Lewis Allen, previously Ott Tanak's rally engineer at M-Sport and now part of the Lukyanuk fold, is playing a big part in the transformation, developing the solutions that used to require driving to the limit and then a fair distance over it.

"It makes my progress slightly better," said Lukyanuk of his back-up man. "We have some fresh ideas to find something more and we work step by step and improve."

Although Laurent Pellier made full use of a drying line to go quickest on the second test, Lukyanuk was fastest on all other Friday mountain stages, returning to Las Palmas for the overnight halt – after two runs through a fan-friendly city stage – 21.3s clear of Nikolay Gryazin, the young Latvian.

It wasn't the biggest of leads for day two but Lukyanuk's new-found serenity meant it was managed with aplomb rather than squandered.

Granted he'd won on his two Rally

Islas Canarias appearances, including a dominant triumph 12 months ago, but, as in the Azores, Lukyanuk was untouchable. And full of belief.

"We were winning a lot of stages and showing good confidence," he said at the finish, having gone quickest on 10 of the 14 all-asphalt stages.

Twenty-year-old Gryazin – 17 years Lukyanuk's junior – was fastest twice but with his focus firmly on winning the ERC Junior Under 28 category for R5 cars, he didn't push to bolster that tally.

Having rallied and tested extensively since the start of 2018, like Lukyanuk, Gryazin is also embracing the need for on-stage calm.

"We are very happy because we are progressing," said the Skoda Fabia man.

"My driving is not at the limit and we can go faster and faster. But maybe this calm driving is better than pushing. Sometimes I have been quicker than Alexey when I am pushing. I am not sure if I am faster than him now but I will be faster in the future I think."

Double German champion Fabian Kreim completed the top three for his first ERC podium, although it was a tense end to the rally for the youngster after he arrived late for the final stage, having been held up by the side of the road for routine police checks.

What could have been a two-minute penalty wasn't applied, meaning Jose Suarez had to settle for fourth, albeit top Spanish championship points.



Russian pair repeat 2017 success

Pellier completed the top five for Peugeot but it would prove a rally to forget for Briton Chris Ingram.

The ERC Junior Under 28 winner in the Azores, Ingram had been feeling ill all week and spent Thursday night in hospital trying to recover. He managed two stages but stopped in the third when he realised he couldn't continue and flew straight back home for continued treatment.

Diogo Gago beat Martins Sesks in ERC Junior U27 as Brit Catie Munnings made it home ninth in class with a bit of help from Sergei Remennik, who pushed her ailing Peugeot over the line when a sensor issue hit on the last stage.



New style is working for Lukyanuk

RESULTS

European Rally Championship, round 2/8, May 3-5

| POS | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|-----|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Arnavtov | Ford Fiesta R5 | 2h06m23.6s |
| 2 | Nikolay Gryazin/Yaroslav Fedorov | Skoda Fabia R5 | +51.4s |
| 3 | Fabian Kreim/Frank Christian | Skoda Fabia R5 | +1m29.5s |
| 4 | Jose Suarez/Candido Carrera | Hyundai i20 R5 | +1m48.4s |
| 5 | Laurent Pellier/Geoffrey Combe | Peugeot 208 T16 | +1m49.9s |
| 6 | Grzegorz Grzyb/Jakub Wrobel | Skoda Fabia R5 | +2m04.5s |
| 7 | Bruno Magalhaes/Hugo Magalhaes | Skoda Fabia R5 | +2m21.1s |
| 8 | Ivan Ares/Jose Pintor | Hyundai i20 R5 | +2m23.1s |
| 9 | Eyvind Brynildsen/Torstein Eriksen | Ford Fiesta R5 | +2m25.9s |
| 10 | Lukasz Habaj/Daniel Dymurski | Ford Fiesta R5 | +3m07.4s |

Class winners: ERC2: Tibor Erdi Jr/Georgy Papp (Mitsubishi Lancer) E10; ERC3: Diogo Gago/Miguel Ramalho (Peugeot 208 R2); Under 28: Gryazin/ Fedorov; Under 27: Gago/Ramalho; ERC Ladies' Trophy: Emma Falcon (Citroen DS 3 R3T)

RALLY REPORTS

RALLY ROUND-UP

Darrians featured strongly on the entry list of the **Harlech Stages** held at Llanbedr Airfield, and came away with all three podium places – led by Richard Merriman and Kath Curzon from David Morgan and Alan Thomas, who had led for most of the event but slipped up on the penultimate stage.

Just a few seconds behind were Gareth Richards and Ian Jones, who had slipped to 10th with two stages to go, followed by Alan Oldfield's Darrian.

Winning Class 9 in sixth place was the first four-wheel-drive car – the Subaru Impreza of Mike Jewell and Seyyan John, followed by the Class 4 award winners Eric Roberts and Mervyn Williams in their ANWCC Championship-winning Ford Escort. They were just one second up on fellow class contenders Ian Sutton and Karen Phelps in yet another Darrian.

The top 10 was rounded off by Jack Ives and Dave Read (Escort) and Martin Farrar and Andy Ward (Impreza) – just 67 seconds separating the whole top 10 after an hour's competition.

Josh Payton and Marcus Mizen went fastest on all eight stages of the **Corinium Stages** at Down Ampney, to finish over a minute ahead of their closest rivals.

Andy Comer and Ade Campo scored one of their most impressive performances to



Down Ampney: Comer/Campo completed great drive to second spot

date in their front-wheel-drive Peugeot 205, fighting off a host of Ford Escort Mk2s.

The chasing gaggle and fight for the podium spots was sealed by Wayne Lloyd/Clive Meredith, finishing 18s adrift of Comer/Campo.

Remarkably, no four-wheel-drive cars finished the event with Darren Harris and Jeff Talbot's Subaru retiring on the last stage. Top 1400 honours went to Paul Davis/Keith Richings (Vauxhall Corsa).

Dave V Thomas

Results

Harlech Stages

Organiser: Harlech & DMC Where: Llanbedr Airfield, Gwynedd Championships: ANWCC; WAMC Stages: 8; Starters: 43
1 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darrian) 59m 58s; 2 David Morgan/Alan Thomas (Darrian) +30s; 3 Gareth Richards/Ian Jones (Darrian); 4 Carwyn Ellis/Dion Morley (Escort); 5 Alan Oldfield/Sion Cunniff (Darrian); 6 Mike Jewell/Seyyan John (Impreza); 7 Eric Roberts/

Mervyn Williams (Escort); 8 Ian Sutton/Karen Phelps (Darrian); 9 Jack Ives/Dave Read (Escort); 10 Martin Farrar/Andy Ward (Impreza). Class winners: Gethin Jones/Tomas Williams (Nova); Keith Anglesa/Martin Pendlebury (BMW); Merriman/Curzon; Morgan/Thomas; Jewell/John.

Corinium Stages

Organiser: Girencester Car Club Where: Down Ampney Airfield, Girencester Championships: CMSG Stage Rally Championship, ACSMC Rally Championship; ASWMC Sealed Surface Stage Rally Championship Stages: 8 Starters: 60
1 Josh Payton/Marcus Mizen (Ford Escort Mk2) 58m25s; 2 Andy Comer/Ade Campo (Peugeot 205) +1m01s; 3 Wayne Lloyd/Clive Meredith (Ford Escort Mk2); 4 Glyn Cartwright/Adam Wilks (Ford Escort Mk2); 5 Chris White/Alex Manning (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Barry Warman/Stephen Coaker (Ford Escort Mk2); 7 Roger Tildy/Michele Petrie (BMW 323); 8 Graham Davies/Gary Powell (Talbot Sunbeam); 9 Dean Davies/Cameron Wheatley (Ford Escort); 10 Jordan Reynolds/Richard Pashley (Ford Fiesta R2). Class winners: Payton/Mizen; Warman/Coaker; Reynolds/Pashley; Paul Davis/Keith Richings (Vauxhall Corsa); Dave Barbara/Steve Champion (Alfa Romeo 33).

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

With three-quarters of the two-night **Border 200 Road Rally** behind them, Mark 'GT' Roberts/Steve Price appeared to be cruising to a comfortable win. However it was Daniel Jones/Gerwyn Barry who were destined to take victory.

Welsh Border Car Club members had long harboured a plan to run a road rally over two consecutive nights on their patch. It finally came to fruition last weekend and was executed with a superb level of organisation.

Roberts/Price led from the off and by the end of the Friday night had a lead of a minute over Jamie Jukes/Dale Bowen, with Jones/Barry close behind in third. By Petrol on Saturday night the VW Golf duo's advantage was almost 1m 30s. Jukes had retired and Jones/Barry were clear in second. However it then all went wrong for the leaders; their car hit a large patch of water and faltered, a severe misfire caused them to drop over a minute. This allowed the winners to charge through to take a narrow win on, for them, unfamiliar territory.

The win gave Jones a remarkable double as he was also the winner of the last two-night rally, the Cilwendeg in 2003.

Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey had retired on Friday night, but came back to win the **Trophy Rally**, which ran alongside

the second night of the main event.

Douglas Humphrey/Chris Loudon took a maiden win on **The Berwick Classic**. They had a clear run and led for most of the event. Paul Crosby/Ally Procter made a poor start on Day One but recovered to take second.

Ian Mills

Results

Border 200 Road Rally

Organiser: Welsh Border CC When: May 4-6 Where: Powys Route: 220 miles Starters: 68.
1 Daniel Jones/Gerwyn Barry (Ford Escort) 13m28s; 2 Mark 'GT' Roberts/Steve Price (VW Golf GTI) +16s; 3 Kevin 'Penclaw' Jones/Alan James (Toyota Corolla); 4 Geraint Parkes/Ryan Griffiths (Ford Escort); 5 Kev Bolver/Richard Jerman (Talbot Sunbeam); 6 Rob Pugh/Ian 'Dude' Roberts (Ford Escort); 7 Russ Woolley/Dale Furniss (VW Golf); 8 Ian Lloyd/Cyril Jones (Ford Escort); 9 Paul Tod/David 'Garth' Powell (Proton Satria); 10 Rhydian Morgan/Mark Rodway (Peugeot 205 GTI).

Class winners: Parkes/Griffiths; Craig Bowler/Chris Whittall (Honda Civic); David Harding/Matthew Williams (Citroen C2). Trophy Rally: Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey (Subaru Impreza).

The Berwick Classic

Organiser: Berwick & District MC When: May 5/6 Where: Northumbria/Southern Scotland Championships: NESCR0 Route: 210 miles +19 tests Starters: 66.
1 Douglas Humphrey/Chris Loudon (Austin Cooper) 27m07s; 2 Paul Crosby/Ally Procter (Porsche 911) +21s; 3 Darrell Stanforth/Les McGuffog (Mini Cooper S); 4 Dan Willan/Marty Taylor (Volvo PV544); 5 Andy Beaumont/Andrew Fish (Hillman Avenger); 6 John Ruddock/Roger Burkill (Ford Escort Mexico). Targa Rally: Stephen Short/Rob Brook (Proton Satria).

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ITRC KILLARNEY REPORT

Photos: Martin Walsh

MANUS MAGIC

Kelly wins, Barrable joins fight for Irish Tarmac title. By **Maurice Malone**



Barrable took top points for ITRC, as Moffetts both struggled



Kelly's perfect Donegal prep

Manus Kelly came to Killarney as a test for his home International next month, and subsequently won with Donall Barrett aboard their Subaru Impreza. A hard-charging Robert Barrable took second and maximum overall Irish Tarmac Rally Championship points, as the Moffett brothers endured difficult weekends.

It's hard to beat Killarney on a May Bank Holiday weekend for atmosphere, and the route of 16 tests laid on by Killarney and District Motor Club included classics like Moll's Gap, Tim Healy Pass and Ardgroom, all stages steeped in folklore from times past.

A slightly foggy N71 greeted the crews early on Saturday morning, though the road surface was bone dry. Barrable was on a mission despite power steering worries on the startline and took an early lead, with Kelly 0.3s behind.

The Moffett brothers – Sam and Josh – both suffered handling issues,

both stating that the rear tyres were going off on the abrasive surface, while Desi Henry was an impressive third overall on his first Rally of the Lakes for many years. Declan Boyle was a non-starter.

The trend continued for the first half of the day, Barrable edging out a 23.7s lead after the first two loops on roads that were damp and greasy in places. Kelly was flying, having not competed in Killarney since 2009, and looked to be at ease and happy with his pace as he settled into the new motor ahead of his assault on Donegal.

Henry held third, with Sam Moffett fourth ahead of Daniel Cronin. Further back, Derek McGarrity withdrew with clutch issues, while Josh Moffett was an unusually subdued eighth after severe brake problems that resulted in a fire at the rear of his Fiesta.

Kelly took time out of Barrable on Saturday's closing test to whittle the gap down to 28.3s, as Henry continued to hold third with impressively consistent pace.

Sunday dawned dry and brightened up as the morning wore on, with suncream the order of the day for the assembled crowds.

Kelly was really flying now, taking chunks of time out of Barrable's lead on each stage despite a small gearbox issue at the end of the first run through the twisty and torturous Beallaghbeama pass.

Barrable did what he could in the Dom Buckley-prepared Fiesta R5 despite brake issues in the middle loop of stages, but the power advantage of the old two-litre Impreza was to prove too much in the end. Kelly's winning margin was 28.6s, though Barrable must be commended for such a strong performance, a drive that catapults him right back into contention for the Irish Tarmac Championship.

For Kelly, confidence will be massively high going into Donegal, as he aims for an unprecedented hat-trick in June. It won't be easy with other WRC car pilots like Donagh Kelly and Boyle chomping at the bit for a home win, but this performance is a big boost for he and co-driver Barrett, the crew appearing relaxed and happy with their pace throughout the weekend.

Henry and Liam Moynihan secured third, their speed increasing with every event, and a first Tarmac win surely can't be far away at this stage.

RESULTS

Rally of the Lakes, Killarney
Irish Tarmac Rally Championship, round 3/6, May 4-6

| POS | DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Manus Kelly/Donall Barrett | Subaru Impreza S12B WRC | 2h08m04.2s |
| 2 | Robert Barrable/Damien Connolly | Ford Fiesta R5 | +28.6s |
| 3 | Desi Henry/Liam Moynihan | Skoda Fabia R5 | +1m05.2s |
| 4 | Sam Moffett/Noel O'Sullivan Jr | Ford Fiesta R5 | +1m38.1s |
| 5 | Jonny Greer/Kirsty Riddick | Ford Fiesta R5 | +2m57.5s |
| 6 | Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes | Ford Fiesta R5 | +3m43.5s |
| 7 | Eugene Donnelly/Mark Kane | Hyundai i20 R5 | +5m45s |
| 8 | David Guest/Jonathan McGrath | Mitsubishi Lancer E9 | +11m38.8s |
| 9 | Keith Lyons/Sean Hegarty | Ford Fiesta R5 | +14m26.2s |
| 10 | Joe Connolly/Brian Connolly | Ford Fiesta R5 | +19m27.4s |

Class winners Kevin Dolphin/Martin O'Brien (Renault Clio S1600); Ian Hynes/Des Sherlock (Honda Civic); Guest/ McGrath; Barrable/Connolly; Kelly/Barrett.

Reigning champion Sam Moffett was fourth, with Jonny Greer another man displaying good pace in fifth. Josh Moffett was sixth, while Eugene Donnelly brought his Hyundai i20 R5 home in seventh after some good times on the last few tests. The performance of the MRF tyres seems to be varying quite a bit, so it will be interesting to see how they continue to develop for the rest of the year.

David Guest and Jonathan McGrath took eighth and the Group N spoils in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9, with Keith Lyons and Joe

Connolly rounding out the top 10, both men in Ford Fiesta R5s. Stephen Wright came in last in the International field, running under Rally 2 rules thanks to an off on Saturday's penultimate test that led to he and co-driver Arthur Kierans going OTL.

Attention now turns to the next round in Donegal, arguably the toughest challenge in Irish rallying. Barrable's performance has shoved him up to second in the title race with Josh Moffett just a single point ahead, as Sam Moffett lingers ready to pounce in third.

Duggan runs riot on home event to take Lakes national rally honours

Having achieved maximum scores on the first two rounds of the championship, reigning Irish Tarmac Modified Rally champion Kevin Eves' event was over almost before it had begun. The Pettigo man experienced electrical issues on stage one followed by an off on stage two that led to retirement due to a damaged rear axle.

Local hero Rob Duggan (with sister Tara alongside) set an incredible time over Moll's Gap, bettered only by Robert Barrable and Manus Kelly in the International event, to lead early. Barry Meade was holding second, with Gary Kiernan back in his blue Ford Escort and he commented that he was happy to get through the Ardgroom stages with all four wheels

still on the car, a much-improved outcome over 2017.

Duggan's charge was somewhat stymied by gearbox issues in the middle of the day, and he completed the first day with the flatshift function turned off. Despite that, he snuck into a narrow overnight lead ahead of Meade. Kiernan lay third, with Phil Collins and Vincent McSweeney completing the top five.

Sunday morning began with another run over Moll's Gap, with Duggan posting an identical time to the one he did the previous day. Kiernan was slightly despondent, and resigned to the fact that he couldn't match his rival on any of the runs over the famous stage, while Meade

punctured his right-rear tyre early into the test and had to stop and change.

McSweeney was putting in some good times on his second event in his self-prepared Mitsubishi Lancer E7, but turbo trouble meant he fell out of an interesting battle with Collins and John Bonner. Collins was thoroughly enjoying himself, although he conceded that the younger drivers had the edge on the fast stuff, and issues with the Ford Escort's differential meant he retired after SS14.

It was Duggan who emerged victorious come the end, ahead of Kiernan who was managing brake issues throughout the day, which resulted in some panel damage to the blue Escort after a big moment.

Meade and co-driver Eamon Hayes were third, ruing what might have been were it not for that puncture, while Bonner and Raymond Conlon took fourth and fifth respectively. A special mention must go to Sean Moynihan (son of rally prep guru John) and Liam Brennan, who guided their Class 12 Escort to ninth ahead of a raft of some much more powerful machinery.

In the Junior rally, championship leader Gary McNamee was a non-starter, so it was Colin O'Donoghue who cruised home to a home win after an early battle with Jason Black that unfortunately culminated in retirement for Black. Owen Murphy and Anthony Nestor

took the Historic honours in their beautiful Talbot Sunbeam Lotus, seemingly at their ease.

Results

1 Rob Duggan/Tara Duggan (Ford Escort Mk2) 2h13m42.3s;
2 Gary Kiernan/Keith Moriarty (Escort Mk2) +45.7s; 3 Barry Meade/Eamon Hayes (Escort Mk2); 4 John Bonner/Denver Rafferty (Escort Mk2); 5 Raymond Conlon/Damien Fleming (Toyota Corolla); 6 John O'Donnell/Jane Collins (Escort Mk2); 7 Jason O'Mahony/Jonathan O'Mahony (Escort Mk2); 8 Martyn England/Dawn England (Fiesta); 9 Sean Moynihan/Liam Brennan (Escort Mk2); 10 Charlie Hickey/Johnny Hickey (Escort Mk2).
Class winners: Paudie Callaghan/Danny Murphy (Toyota Starlet); Denis O'Brien/Michael O'Riordan (Opel Corsa); Darren Young/PA Lawlor (Honda Civic); Kevin O'Sullivan/Martin O'Riordan (Ford Escort); Moynihan/Brennan; Conlon/Fleming; Duggan/Duggan; Keith Naughton/Brendan Behan (Impreza); England/England; Richie Dalton/Ger Brett (Impreza); Ray Hilliard/Megan Costello (Escort RS1600); Duncan Williams/Liam Williams (Escort); Owen Murphy/Anthony Nestor (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus); Colin O'Donoghue/Eddie Doherty (Escort).

FEATURE

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, LAT, Jakob Ebrely

Brain training can be a big thing in motorsport, as **Robert Ladbrook** finds out

TUNING THE WINNING MENTALITY

The collecting area can be one of the most interesting places of any race track. If you've not taken yourself off there for a peak at the drivers before a race, then try it – you'll likely be amazed at what you find.

During a race weekend there are plenty of distractions, especially at the higher levels of the sport. But it's in the collecting area that things get serious. It's the final bit before the business of being a racing driver gets going. The pressure ramps up, emotions can be running high and you'll notice variation in physical activity up and down the grid.

Some pace about nervously, some sit serenely. Some listen to music, some seek the solace of a last-minute conversation with their engineers or coaches. The one thing they all have in common is mind management.

Training for motorsport isn't a straightforward thing, mostly because actual time in a car on track isn't easy to obtain whenever you want. There's a real pressure to perform and get value each time a driver does head out.

Pressure ultimately leads to either motivation or stress, depending how each driver deals with it, but there's a fine line between the two. The path to widening that line lies in the mind – a key area that many drivers can benefit from training.

Hints Performance is one of the world's leading human performance firms. Established by former McLaren team physician Dr Aki Hints, the company supplies coaches to many current Formula 1 stars, as well as looking after drivers around the world in other disciplines.

Fergus Mumford is one of Hints's senior performance coaches, and has looked after drivers up and down the motorsport ladder. He says that mind training is an often-overlooked aspect in motorsport, with pressures arising even before drivers get behind the wheel.

"In all sports there's a big mental component, and motorsport is one of the most demanding," he says.

"Motorsport has many of the typical mental demands of other sports but has unique challenges of its own. One of the biggest hurdles is that of budget. It's an expensive sport and without significant financial support it is difficult to progress. This can be a frustrating element for drivers, but it is an area they must learn to cope with.

"Track time is limited too, so practising the sport is difficult.

Aki Hints
(r) with
Jenson Button



At higher levels of the sport, pressure can mount

Drivers must find creative ways to improve their driving performance outside of the track, which again can be limited by budget and resource.

"Worldwide travel is also something drivers must cope with. Travel leads to more time away from family and friends, so the lifestyle of a driver can be isolating at times.

"The family can often be heavily involved on the sporting side also. A father or mother is often the first 'sponsor' and/or manager. It can be tricky when mixing personal and professional aspects together, especially at the higher levels."

Having dealt with the pressures of paddock life, a high-speed activity such as motor sport can be an assault on the senses for its participants, leading to complex mental demands when drivers are in action.

"The mental demands of driving are high," says Mumford. "Just driving the car produces an increase in psycho-emotional levels. As humans we were not designed to travel at such speeds and the adrenaline response increases our levels of arousal. Add to this any thoughts of failure and fear of injury, or negative emotions such as frustration or anger, and these arousal levels are further amplified.

"Increases in emotional arousal and muscular tensions can negatively affect peripheral vision, steering inputs and throttle control. The complexity of the cars tends to increase in the higher categories, and therefore so does the mental load on the driver. You only need to look at the steering wheel of an F1 car to see how many operating modes exist, and with tyre degradation and changing fuel loads the car evolves throughout a race.

"An F1 driver once told me that your focus in F1 is weighted more towards car management than driving itself. Again, any unwanted thoughts and emotions have the potential to distract and for mistakes to creep in." In order to better prepare drivers for such challenges, there are various training approaches.

"To help cope, drivers can utilise a variety of mental skills," Mumford says. "The driver must have a clear set of long-term goals, which they can break down into smaller short-term goals/tasks during events and even on a day-to-day basis. The goals must be challenging, yet realistic, and adjusted as the season goes on.

"Drivers need to become self-aware; to understand what elements of their mental approach bring success and what perhaps hinders them.

"The brain controls your physical processes. Whatever you think about can affect feelings/emotions and then behaviours, which in turn has implications for performance.

Emotional control by using positive self-talk and rationalising thoughts is a way to help drivers to maintain a positive emotional state. Breathing techniques can help too.

"Simulators or home racing games provide excellent training grounds for practicing new techniques and allow for pressure training – an example, giving complex mental tasks to drivers while they turn laps on a simulator to replicate them juggling different actions at once.

"Imagery is a mental technique that has particular application in motor sport. Visualising the perfect lap before qualifying or rehearsing a start procedure in the mind can serve as a useful practice tool, especially as track time is so limited.

"Each driver is an individual with different strengths, areas to work on, and demands placed upon them. It is therefore important that the support is tailored accordingly with bespoke plans and interventions."

Mumford has worked with drivers from many sectors of the sport. From junior single-seaters up to grand prix stars. He says the mental demands do



Alonso: a modern mind master

differ from the first step on the ladder to the career summit: "The demands are certainly different if you're a young driver on the European scene having to juggle racing with school.

"Motor sport usually starts as a fun hobby that can turn into a very demanding career. At a young age it tends to be more about fun, but the higher you go the more is on the line and the more stress comes into it."

Drivers in the mid-leagues – such as Formula 3 – have to be very aware of the landscape also. They have to watch multiple series to try and find the right openings for their careers.

They'll likely be watching sportscars, F2 and F1 as well as things like touring cars. Making the right call can make or break a career. It all adds to the stress especially if the dream has always been to reach F1.

"Social media is a big factor now also. Ayrton Senna never had to worry about it as it didn't exist, but Lewis Hamilton certainly does. The higher profile the driver the more in the spotlight they are, and often the more they're judged. It's very easy for any driver to pick up their phone and instantly find out what people think about them and it's a choice over whether they let it affect them or not. It can either be morale-boostingly positive, or crushingly negative."

However, a large part of driver performance comes down to their personal lives. After all, race drivers are human beings first and foremost.

"One of Hints's main principles is better life brings better performance," adds Mumford. "Drivers have thoughts, feelings and demands both in the sport and the wider world. If the components of your life aren't balanced then you'll struggle to get maximum performance on a consistent basis.

"If you go into a race weekend thinking about something away from the track – a relationship for example – it'll always be a distraction."

One driver who has shown mental strength in recent years is McLaren's Fernando Alonso. Having had years at the top of the sport, the Spaniard's recent struggles with uncompetitive machinery highlight the need for a positive mental attitude.

How the pros learn to beat their anxiety

GT ace Martin Plowman is a man who knows pressure. And thanks to his work with Anxiety UK, he's also a man who knows how to control it.

Plowman has achieved a lot in his career – from winning the LMP2 class at Le Mans to racing in IndyCar – and is now handling an UltraTek Nissan 370Z GT4 in the British GT Championship while plying his trade as a race coach.

"My anxiety began about 10 years ago, but oddly it had nothing to do with the actual racing," says Plowman, 30. "In the car I was fine, but I'd clam up or have panic attacks at social situations like sponsorship or even team meetings and public speaking.

"I did a lot of work with the coaches at Anxiety UK to learn to control it, and I now pass a lot of tips on to the guys I coach if they need them.

"The first thing is to recognise the trigger for your anxiety, and just accept it. Trying to push it to the back of your mind means it'll just come back stronger and you won't know how to deal with it. Facing up to what causes it is the best way to overcome it.

"Anxiety is caused when your body produces too much cortisol [the stress hormone]. The way to alleviate it is to get rid of that build-up, so running, jumping on the spot or doing any kind of exercise to stimulate the body helps, as does deep-belly breathing, because people who suffer from anxiety tend to hold their breath more.

"There's also some very scientific methods too, including one called 'The Power Pose'. You stand upright with your legs apart, shoulders back and hands on your hips – like Superman. Then you force a smile. It releases endorphins that make you happy and counteract the cortisol. Mind you, it's best to try that in a private place to avoid the weird looks it can bring."



Plowman is now a British GT star

"Whilst I don't know Fernando personally, he always appears able to motivate himself to bring his A game and extract the most from his car," says Mumford.

"I don't think drivers in general do enough mental training. It's crucial to understand what they're doing or how they're achieving something.

"You often see the drivers who were at the top of their game in the junior ranks start to get overtaken by the ones who weren't as successful further down the ladder. Drivers who take the knocks, go away and work on their weaknesses to return stronger often start beating the guys who were in front of them.

"Sports professionals who have reached the top often have traumatic stories. Their ability to cope and be resilient has often been integral to their progress, helping bring about a greater level of consistency, which is key for any championship success." ■

FEATURE

HOW CAN THE BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP...

Entries aren't increasing, so is the BRC sustainable in current times?



Not enough 'national'-spec cars in the BRC



When the British Rally Championship returned in 2016, albeit in a wet, dark, inhospitable corner of Powys for the Mid Wales Stages, rarely had there been so much excitement and optimism.

The event went well and launched the new era, a far cry from the well organised but almost one-make feel of the previous championship dominated by Citroën DS3s.

Fast forward two years and the BRC is mid-stumble. There's many doom mongers out there waiting for it to fall. But it's not ready to drop yet, and there's still plenty of time for recovery. The BRC's now at a crucial juncture.

This year, the top R5 class has suffered. Seven fewer R5s have registered, and most of the absentees can be accounted for. Tom Cave is gathering budget, as is Osian Pryce for WRC2. Fredrik Ahlin has moved to the European Championship, while Desi Henry is staying in Ireland and James Slaughter is moving back to his Ford Escort Mk2.

The main reason for the drop in R5 entries could be cost. A new car is going to set a competitor back £200,000, and if they want it run properly an entrant is looking at £20,000 per round with a decent team. But, if anything, the price of R5s is falling now: a driver can pick up a second-hand Ford Fiesta for £140,000,

so it's become more cost effective than it was two years ago. So the cars can't be the only problem.

So is it the calendar? That could be a sore subject. The addition of Wales Rally GB has added a World Rally Championship event to a calendar that already has Ypres, Ulster and Rally Isle of Man, which is a big ask for most crews. To add in Rally GB, the Scottish Rally and the Nicky Grist Stages were both canned.

"I think the championship is just too expensive," says Spencer Sport boss Charlie Jukes, who ran Cave in 2016 and Pryce in 2017. "When the Scottish and the Nicky Grist were dropped, they probably shouldn't have put another event in. It could have brought the price down.

"I still think the events are good, I can't really explain why more people don't do it. Everybody is the same [short of money]. Would they get more entries by making it cheaper? I don't know."

A five-event calendar is something that should be considered, according to many. The issue that is very quickly apparent is that a calendar is a compromise.

A second Irish event is top of the agenda according to many crews. If the BRC joins the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship for two rounds rather than the current one (Ulster), it would give the Irish crews motivation to do the rest of the BRC if they've done well on their home events.

But there's one key issue.

"At the moment there's not the opportunity to do another round [in Ireland]," says BRC championship manager Iain Campbell. "And that's a crying shame.

"We're having dialogue with the Irish guys all the time. Regulations-wise, we're only allowed one event outside the UK per year [meaning a trip to the Republic of Ireland is unlikely]. We've used our one [abroad event] to go to Ypres, which I think is the correct call but we need to look at it."

It's a tricky dilemma. If Ypres was dropped from the calendar, it would lose one of the best events in the world and also rob some of the mainland-based crews of a short journey for a renowned event. If an event in Ireland was added, it might get some of the ITRC crews to sign up and boost the BRC entry. On the other hand, the series might lose a number of potential entries because of the disappearance of Ypres.

A biennial visit to each could help. But is that an option? Would the organisers of Ypres buy into that? That is the difficult question.

The problem with the cost of the events on the calendar is that Ypres, Ulster, Isle of Man and Rally GB are all events where some crews are going to have to travel. Yes, dropping the Nicky Grist Stages and the Scottish has taken away the cost of two events, with GB added in, but in terms of *actual* cost, the calendar is loaded with expensive

events towards the end of the season, all in a row. When you put it like that, Jukes might be on to something with that idea of dropping another round. A five-round championship would still benefit crews, and the ones with enough money will go off and do other events in Europe and the world anyway, so it's a win-win situation.

There's 11 R5 machines in the BRC this year. While the numbers aren't there, competition is high and the proof of what the BRC can do is plain for all to see. Matt Edwards and David Bogie have been dominating BTRDA and Scottish Rally Championship events and they are right at the forefront of the pace men in the BRC this term.

That could also be a reason for the lack of entries. There are drivers who are happier to do BTRDA rather than

challenge themselves to meet the demand of the pace in the BRC.

So is that entry level a problem? It's consistent with the Scottish Championship and BTRDA in terms of its number of top cars.

"Numbers aren't the only gauge to success in rallying," says CA1 Sport team boss Martin Wilkinson. "People say Rally Australia and Rally Mexico are fantastic events. The entries aren't great there. I think that's a little bit similar to the BRC. I don't see the problem with the number of R5 cars."

That last statement is telling from a man whose business depends on running R5 cars in the BRC...

The difference between the BRC and BTRDA/SRC is the national cars. The BRC, since its rebirth, has either not done enough, or simply isn't capable



Strong work is being done with the Juniors on preparation and set-up

CHAMPIONSHIP BOUNCE BACK?

Jack Benyon investigates



BRC's return in 2016 was well backed



Spencer Sport boss Jukes says costs are high

of offering a home for non-homologated cars. Campbell is slightly baffled: "We haven't attracted non-homologated cars to the British Rally Championship which are more than welcome. Quite often you see on the forums 'if they allowed my two-litre Ford Escort Mk2 in I'd be there'. They can enter them. It's there. I don't know what we've not done right there."

If a driver is running a national-spec car, they are probably watching costs. Therefore a one-day 45-mile gravel event is perfect; no time off work and a day's sport against good competition in most classes.

At the 1400cc end of the spectrum, crews' cars are likely only worth under £10,000 and a year of entry fees is going to cost upwards of £7,000. The costs don't quite add up for them. Looking at Group

N-class entries, they also have the costs associated with increased mileage.

The BTRDA NR4 class – for Group Ns – is one of the most competitive in the country. It would be a big step for one of those to switch to the BRC without any incentive.

The additional issue is if one of those crews did save up to do an event like Ypres, that may be the only BRC event they could afford that year. So entrants are doing one-offs, a driver would not be getting the feeling of competition they would from doing BTRDA.

So, it's too costly, the calendar is wrong and it's not right for the national-spec cars. But all motorsport is expensive and this is supposed to be a premier British championship, so is that an issue that can be remedied?

The calendar is always going to be

wrong depending on who you speak to. When you're discussing a top-level championship, big events versus lower-cost ones is always going to split opinion. It is about finding a balance that perhaps hasn't quite been correct this year. The fact that the series isn't right for national-spec cars is a world rallying problem, not just limited to the British Rally Championship. The move to homologated cars has driven costs up and alienated home-built and low-cost rally cars at the grassroots level.

So what about the positives then? The pace is good and the BRC is still a proving ground to hone skills, and is still excellent at it.

Last year's runner-up Ahlin can prove the benefits it has to offer for foreign drivers for example.

Wilkinson, who runs Ahlin in the

ERC now, explains: "The BRC was great for him to come here, he got a lot of exposure [back home] in Sweden."

"He managed to keep his sponsorship because of what he'd done in the BRC. People around the world do take an interest in it."

Add to that the work being done with the Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Championship – where MSA coaches are on-hand to give workshops on pacenotes, car set-up, pre-event preparation and more – there's a reason why the BRC has contributed to drivers heading for the World and European Championships.

So, the million dollar question. Is it sustainable with its current numbers?

Campbell says: "The remit I have been given by International Motor Sport [BRC promoter] is that I have to achieve a break-even figure to the bottom line for IMS. We achieved that last year and we're on track to achieve that in 2018. That's achievable from that perspective."

"The British Rally Championship, in any guise, is a 30-45 car championship. We get criticised for the number of cars registered. We're very open about who has registered, it's on our website. If you take the BTRDA, the Scottish or the Irish, their competitors do the full event. For example, in the Irish Tarmac or Scottish, not every driver in that rally will have registered for that championship. But as a spectator or marshal you see 112 cars. If you did the Border Counties Rally, there would have

been a field of 94 cars on Saturday and 36 on the Sunday. All of a sudden, that makes it stand out that our number looks lower because we have sometimes stages that are only for us."

Many of the key players aren't worried about the numbers in the British Rally Championship. After the euphoria of it returning it was always likely to pare down as time wore on.

The BRC is at a crossroads. Will the rally community unite around and support it, or watch it trip and stumble towards another hiatus? Will the organisers challenge competitors and stakeholders in the championship to investigate the calendar's shortcomings? Or the money involved with the events and machinery in order to make it more cost effective?

But it must not be forgotten that rallying is not fantastically healthy in the UK and Ireland, and the premier championship in Britain can only be a reflection of the rallying climate in the country.

Until the series has stronger events, better promotion of the events and the discipline as a whole and lower costs of entry, rallying will struggle.

The numbers might look drastic but all is not as bad as it seems.

With a few minor adjustments, in tandem with a more healthy rallying scene in the UK, the BRC still has its place. ■

"The BRC, in any guise, is a 30-45 car contest"



IAIN CAMPBELL



Could series benefit from Irish rounds?



Wilkinson (r) says R5 entry level is OK

INSIGHT

There are arguments for and against, but the revamped GB route has hit the right notes. By David Evans



The stars will be in front of the fans again

WHY RALLY GB NEEDS TO

Kris Meeke picked up my voice recorder, held it close and said: "David Evans agrees with me and he'll be writing about that in his next column."

And I do. I agree with Elfyn Evans as well.

If you've turned the pages of this week's *MN* sequentially, you'll have read Meeke and Evans' thoughts on the route for this year's Rally GB.

It's hard to disagree. If you've come directly to these pages, I'll summarise their thoughts: Meeke wants to spend more time in the woods entertaining the fans in the most time-honoured fashion. Evans wants the same, but he wants to be doing it on the best roads available in Wales.

How can you disagree with that? You can't.

Elfyn and Kris are drivers. Their job is to drive and the fact that they want to do their job in the best and most suitable place possible comes as no surprise. If they played rugby, they'd want to play at Twickenham (more likely the Principality or Aviva stadiums...)

ahead of the hardcore rather than flying to New York or Dubai in an effort to take the game to the people.

They're traditionalists. Me too. What got them – and a good deal of their colleagues – really wound up about the Rally GB route was the use of the Great Orme for the powerstage. I'll be honest, I really liked the idea. I liked the idea because I like the Marine Drive, it's a challenging bit of road with plenty of history. Yes, I get that it's not typical of the rest of the route (not nearly enough trees around and quite different under foot), but it's entertaining, ballsy and tricky. I like that.

I guess the difference between Meeke and I is that I write about it and he does it. Him and his mates are the ultimate rally competitors, they want everything to be optimised and when him and his Citroen are in Rally GB shape, that means knobbles, plenty of suspension travel and muddy window sliders. Extending the rugby analogy, it would be like AstroTurfing the pitch. And I mean proper, old school, burn-your-legs AstroTurf, not the new hybrid sort.

I digress. It won't be the first time. As well as the Orme road, I really liked the prospect of the cars coming

off that road and into Llandudno where they would be cheered home through the streets by 30-odd thousand folk, most of whom would likely be seeing our sport for the first time.

Extolling these virtues to one driver in Argentina, I thought I'd won him over. He appeared impressed by the argument, content with his change of heart.

"If you want to watch cars race around the streets, go watch Formula E. This is rallying," he said.

Oh. OK. Cue a persuasive counter-argument about the need for us not to sell our soul, the need for us and our sport to retain our integrity.

Yes, I like that: keep your streets, we're staying between the trees. And if you want us, you know where you can find us.

Because you will come and find us won't you? Hello?

Precisely. Physical attendance at niche sports like ours has been on a downward trajectory for a long time. The pull on people's time is radically different to what it was two or three decades ago. Think of sporting events which can really rely on capacity crowds week-in-week-out and Premier League football comes to mind.

One reason for the sustained popularity of football is the very formation of the Premier League 26 years ago. When English First Division teams signed up for a share of Rupert Murdoch's millions, they turned their backs on more than 100 years of history and tradition. Sport has to evolve. Or it will die.

Standing back and considering the Formula E argument, it sat slightly awkwardly. The FIA's all-electric race series isn't yet four years old, but it's already developed a significant following – with a healthy number of sought-after Gen Zs. And here's the point which hits the argument for staying between the trees for six: Audi, DS, Jaguar and Renault are already

involved in FE and more are coming. And they're all driven by professionals. Professionals like paid-professionals.

Sure, the electric aspect appeals hugely to carmakers, but the series' accessibility in cities around the world is another key driver. So, turning the WRC a little bit Formula E every now and then isn't a bad thing.

Last month I went and stood at the junction of Avenue San Martin and Alberdi in downtown Villa Carlos Paz on a Thursday night. It wasn't any old Thursday night, it was the one right before Rally Argentina. I deliberately avoided the media points and joined the queue to watch from way behind the barriers. Arriving half-an-hour before the first car, I couldn't get near the front. It was five or six deep and we were a whole street away from the action. You couldn't actually see much, but the noise, the lights and the atmosphere was simply sensational.

The people around me weren't the usual Rally Argentina fans, this was the local city population. For years, these people had seen World Rally Cars ambling along the road sections from the service park out to the glorious gravel which awaited in the hills. But now they saw the cars and crews in anger for the first time. And the impact was incredible. They were silenced (briefly). Stopped in their tracks. Just like they will be in Llandudno in October.

Years ago, I remember Colin McRae telling me how the sport he loved had changed. "We are," he said at the time, "in show business now."

And he didn't say it with regret, angst or anger. He said it as somebody who saw the sport and the opportunity it would bring. McRae was a hero to us all, the biggest the sport had ever or will ever know. But he only went truly global because of people playing his computer game: *Colin McRae Rally*. The Scot grasped the commercialisation of the sport wholeheartedly.

Crikey, how did we get here? We're supposed to be talking about the route for Wales. Let's get back to it.

Regular readers of *MN* will know only too well that I'm a strong advocate for yesterday. Yesterday and its five-day, four-night London-Scotland-London RACs. But they're gone (apart from on the Roger Albert Clark, but that's not a round of the world championship). History.

Putting a rally together these days is a more complex process than it's ever been. That was brought home to me when I took the drivers' gripes to the organising team.

We're all aware of the need for the route to come back to Deeside at least one lunchtime; the teams invest stacks of cash in shiny tables and chairs on which they like to sit corporate guests for a plate of something nice at lunchtime. On top of that, it's an opportunity to show off the sport and its stars in a more family friendly environment, one where you can buy a toffee apple, a Toyota t-shirt and have a go on the dodgems before watching M-Sport change Sebastien Ogier's gearbox.

To do that, to bring the cars back to service meant a radical re-think. Since the move up to Deeside in 2013, the route has included two days in mid-Wales, using classics such as Hafren and Dyfi. Because the service park is so far away from those stages, it's impossible to get back at lunchtime. The service park couldn't move (we tried Builth Wells a few years ago – the teams hated it) and the stages can't move because. Prior to this year, it was all-but impossible to build a full day of competition serviceable out of Deeside.

While we're here we might as well dive into the complication of running stages. The ideal route for an organiser would be three 15-or-so-mile stages split by minimal road section, close to service, and repeated in the afternoon. Unless



The Great Orme stage will be included and will draw a sizeable crowd



Essentials such as Myherin will remain



The event will still travel deep into the middle of Wales to visit Sweet Lamb

REMAIN LOYAL TO ITS ROOTS

you live in Leon, that's highly unlikely. If you live in Wales, it's impossible.

North Wales has some great roads in places like Penmachno, Gwydir and parts of Clocaenog. What it doesn't have is woods in the same density as mid-Wales. And in the north, those forests are criss-crossed by public roads, dissecting the stages just before they would be long enough for WRC inclusion.

And yes, you're right, there's no FIA regulation on the minimum stage length. But there are practical considerations. Having six 7.5-mile stages in the morning and the same in the afternoon might not sound too onerous, but remember the WRC Promoter wants every factory driver through one stage before the next one can start to make sure they're fulfilling the 'All' part of All Live. And then there's manning the stages. By no means do double the stages mean double the marshals, but you do need twice as many stage commanders and marshals at each and every control.

Since the move north of Cardiff, a primary consideration has been to find places for people to park. Fans have flocked back to Britain's premier rally (contrary to that whole people not coming to live events thing I mentioned earlier), but they'll be gone as quickly as they came if the parking space they have paid for has already been taken. That's what happened last year: the ability to buy tickets on the day made it impossible to predict and then cater for fans at every stage. So, even though people had, for example, a World Rally Pass which allowed them into every stage, they were turned away.

Saturday last year was especially problematic, with Dyfi and Gartheiniog full, fans were sent in the direction of Dyfnant and Aberhiraant – which were already choked. Not that the crews notice any of this, they sail serenely past on a series of brilliantly worked

liaison sections which carry them in and out of the stages well away from the horn-blowing and building anger and resentment which sits just a couple of fields away.

The saviour for north Wales came with the ability to close public roads. At the stroke of a pen, longer stages demanding comparatively less infrastructure while offering easier access to spectators have become available. Building a full and meaningful day around Betws-y-Coed is possible. And the icing on the organisers' cake? It's a cinch to deliver lunch in Deeside from there.

Being able to offer more variety in the north – including the interesting new Slate Mountain crowd-pleaser near Pfestiniog – is great news for fans. Being overly reliant on the Clocaenog/Alwen/Brenig complex left fans having to park in Cerrigydrudion and rely on Shanks' pony for the 10-mile round trip up the B4501 last year. That's unacceptable.

The accusation that the organisers have been a bit fixated on using road closures in the north is understandable – four of the stages in the area come with public road action in October. But, the bigger picture shows less liaison, more competitive mileage and cars in service on Friday lunchtime. All of which has been made possible by the Welsh Government.

And here's a bit more colour for the picture... working with just one council (Conwy) on road closures was far more straightforward in year one and it offers part of the reason why Dyfi and Gartheiniog weren't joined to make a 30-mile blockbuster (they sit well outside Conwy). Another issue was legislation being passed in Wales with very, very little time to spare. As they had in 2017, the organisers had multiple versions of the route just in case road-closing legislation was delayed in the way it was to the compromise of the '17 route.

When the rubber stamp came in Wales, there was only a matter of weeks to get the route passed by government, council, the Motor Sports Association, the emergency services and, of course, the FIA.

And, when all that's done, you get fans up in arms that it's all in Wales. What happened to Chester on Friday night? Or another Saturday afternoon on the Marquess of Cholmondeley's front lawn? Cholmondeley and Chester were both great, but sacrificing half a day's sport for a stately home is not on – and families will have it better than ever all-day Sunday October 7, when they can come straight from the local pitch-and-putt to the World Rally Championship. As for Chester, it's busy with its marathon on the first weekend in October.

The departure from Wales to Cheshire raises the question of funding for the event. Love it or loathe it, our round of the World Rally Championship is facilitated and funded by the Welsh. While it might seem sensible to take Wales out of Wales to promote Wales, the ball currently belongs to Wales and Wales dictates where it's going to be kicked.

Look where we are on the page already and I haven't even talked about the restrictions which come with running an event on private roads (or roads that sort of belong to us, via Natural Resource Wales – the government department known as the Forestry Commission in old money). Or the implications of wind farms being built slap, bang in the middle of those roads. Or the cost of building stage infrastructure to keep fans safe every time you venture into a new forest. Or how fragile the relationship can be with local residents, with one wrong move having a huge impact.

So, yes Kris, I do agree with you. But let's just say I can see the other side of the argument too... ■



The Penmachno stage will be extended by the use of a new link road



Forests are an integral part of the fabric of Wales Rally GB

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RACING REPORTS

DONINGTON PARK: HISTORIC FESTIVAL BY PAUL LAWRENCE
MAY 4-6

Photos: Mick Walker



Lockie/Thomas (l) were victorious

BEN IS LEFT JUST SHORT IN THE BIG CAT BATTLE WITH LOCKIE AND THOMAS

Despite two penalties and some serious opposition, Julian Thomas and Calum Lockie battled to victory in Saturday's curtain closer, the hour-long Jaguar Classic Challenge.

Off like a scalded Big Cat went the E-type of Ben Short, as Thomas gave chase in the company of Gary Pearson. Short, a relative newcomer to this end of the sport, set a searing pace to build up a handy lead as the pitstop window approached. However, the lead margin had come at a price and Short's lap times started to fade mid-race. "I physically ran out of steam," he later admitted, after struggling to stand on the brake pedal with sufficient force.

Meanwhile, Thomas handed his car over to former British GT champion Lockie. Already carrying a 10-second penalty for a false start, it got worse for the duo when they were deemed to have been too rapid in the hand over. Lockie had rejoined in the lead and, such was his pace, he was still ahead after a drivethrough penalty. Lockie is a massively safe pair of hands in a situation like this and, once again, he delivered. "I thought we'd lost it but then I realised it was still possible," said Thomas.

Short battled on but had John Pearson, in for his brother Gary, in hot pursuit over the final laps, with only eight-tenths of a second deciding the runner-up slot. "It was very warm in there," said John P. "Ben's really quick and really fair."

It was a very good day for dads and lads on Saturday, with commanding wins for Nick and Harry Whale and Mike and Andrew Jordan, both in cars

run by the Jordan squad. The Whales dominated the **Historic Touring Car Challenge** in their BMW M3 to win by over half-a-minute while the Jordans stormed their Austin A40 to victory in the **Touring Greats** thrash, despite a determined and sustained chase by Neil Brown's Austin A35. "The attention to detail from the team is fantastic," said Whale senior of his M3.

The second HRDC contest for the **Coys Trophy Pre '66 touring cars** was a lively affair, made even more so by an oil slick at the chicane, prompting a lengthy safety car while the marshals cleaned up. Once running again, Julian Thomas looked set to win in his Ford Falcon, but when that smoked into retirement Graham Pattle gratefully accepted the top step in his Lotus Cortina.

Another **Woodcote Trophy** victory fell to the Cooper T38 of the Anglo-American pairing, Patrick Blakeney-Edwards and Fred Wakeman. The duo overcame some serious opposition including Martin Stretton's Maserati 250S, shared with Richard Wilson, and Gary Pearson in two Jaguar D-types, shared with brother John and Carlos Monteverde.

While several contenders wilted in the heat, Simon Hadfield and Wolfgang Friedrichs came through to take a perfectly judged **Pre '63 GT** success in their Aston Martin DB4GT. For a dozen laps Lukas Halusa was the dominant force in the glorious Ferrari Breadvan, but some smoke in the cockpit heralded an electrical short and his race was over at the Old Hairpin. Michael Grant-Peterkin raced Martin Hunt's AC Cobra for the first time alongside team boss



Friedrichs/Hadfield won in Pre '63 GT

Blakeney-Edwards, bagging second from the oversteering E-type of James Cottingham and Harvey Stanley.

Four **Formula Junior** races delivered a double win for Cameron Jackson and single victories for Chris Drake and Ray Mallock. Jackson topped a quality rear-engined field on Saturday in his Brabham BT2, now resplendent in period livery, and did exactly the same 24 hours later.

In the opening front-engined contest, Drake had wriggled his Terrier ahead of Mallock's U2 when an early chequered flag for a stricken car denied Mallock the chance to retaliate. With brake balance reworked to his liking, Mallock had better pace on Sunday and was able to edge clear as Drake found the Terrier misfiring over the latter stages of the race.

A destructive **U2TC** opener ended with a red flag just as Steve Soper was building up to attack race leader Andy Wolfe, with the Banks brothers' Alfa Romeo keeping a watching brief. The

WINNERS

Derek Bell Trophy
Race 1: Michael Lyons (Lola T400)
Race 2: Michael Lyons (Lola T400)

Formula Junior front-engined
Race 1: Chris Drake (Terrier Mk4)
Race 2: Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2)

Formula Junior rear-engined
Race 1: Cameron Jackson (Brabham BT2)
Race 2: Cameron Jackson (Brabham BT2)

GT and Sports Car Cup
John Pearson/Gary Pearson (Jaguar E-type)

Historic Touring Car Challenge
Nick Whale/Harry Whale (BMW M3)

HRDC Coys Trophy
Graham Pattle (Ford Lotus Cortina)

HRDC Touring Greats
Mike Jordan/Andrew Jordan (Austin A40)

Jaguar Classic Challenge
Julian Thomas/Calum Lockie (Jaguar E-type)

Mad Jack Pre-War Sports
Rudiger Friedrichs (Alvis Firefly)

Pre '63 GT
Simon Hadfield/Wolfgang Friedrichs (Aston Martin DB4GT)

Stirling Moss Trophy
Chris Ward (Lister Jaguar)

Super Touring
Race 1: James Dodd (Honda Accord)
Race 2: James Dodd (Honda Accord)

U2TC
Race 1: Andy Wolfe (Ford Lotus Cortina)
Race 2: Steve Soper (Ford Lotus Cortina)

Woodcote Trophy
Fred Wakeman/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Cooper T38)

race was halted when Michael Steele's Cortina ploughed into the wall on the straight after Coppice following contact, fortunately without major harm to the driver. The car did not fare so well.

On Sunday, Soper didn't hang around and quickly wriggled free of his rivals to make certain of victory, as Andrew and Max Banks took the Alfa ahead of Wolfe to claim second.

James Dodd took a **Super Touring** double despite a dogged pursuit by John Cleland in the opener. The Dodd Honda Accord was not 100 per cent right, but it was good enough to cap a slim field in both races.

Michael Lyons was, predictably, the class of the **Derek Bell Trophy** in the family Lola T400 and won twice. However, to his great credit, Jamie Brashaw never stopped chasing in his March 73A and kept Lyons on his toes. After an electrical gremlin in the opener, Greg Thornton forged the ex-Sam Posey Surtees TS11 to

the final place on Sunday's podium.

Similarly, Olly Bryant was the class of the **Stirling Moss Trophy**, which was his only race of the weekend as the family's AC Cobra was not ready for the GT and Sports Car Cup. Instead, Bryant guided their Lotus 15 to within two laps of the flag, only for a suspension failure to put him out. Victory was inherited by Chris Ward in a freshly rebuilt Lister Jaguar, which has spent the last 15 years in storage at JD Classics.

In a hugely busy weekend, brothers John and Gary Pearson won the two-hour **GT and Sports Car Cup** contest in their Jaguar E-type. Gary's weekend schedule took in nine races while John tackled five, and the GTSCC was their big win. Phil Keen took over John Clark's E-type for the final stint and chased hard, but John P had enough margin. Fresh from taking second place to Rudiger Friedrichs in the Mad Jack race, Blakeney-Edwards and Wakeman jumped into the unique Lister Jaguar Coupe to complete the GTSCC podium.



Jackson took a double victory in Formula Junior rear-engined contests



BMWs were on top in the Historic Touring Car Challenge with car shared by the Whales (centre) winning

RACING REPORTS

BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BLANCPAIN GT SERIES BY DAVID ADDISON

MAY 5/6

Photos: Gary Hawkins

Two British winners pleased the home crowd at Brands Hatch as the Blancpain GT Series Sprint Cup made its annual visit to Kentish soil.

Both Will Stevens and Stuart Leonard, who took a win apiece in their WRT-run Audi R8 LMSs, were deserving victors with similar pressure-soaking drives helped by their co-drivers.

Stevens won the first – taking over from co-driver Dries Vanthoor, who had led the opener up to the pit window – withstanding pressure from a fast-closing Kelvin van der Linde (Audi R8 LMS), the Zolder winner in turn being caught by Christopher Mies (Audi R8 LMS) and Raffaele Marciello's Mercedes-AMG GT3.

Only when van der Linde had a tyre deflate two laps from home did Mies find an opportunity, before a bold Marciello dived past at the start of the final tour at Paddock Hill.

Leonard's win was set up by co-driver Frederic Vervisch, who converted his maiden Blancpain Sprint pole into a race lead chased by Mies and van der Linde. Marciello ran wide at Paddock on the opening lap and was compromised instantly.

Mies pitted first to give way to Brands rookie Alex Riberas, who challenged Leonard as the Brit rejoined after his pitstop. Leonard hung on through the Indy circuit section to maintain the advantage and then secured the win with Mies/Riberas behind and the van der Linde/Steijn Schothorst Attempto Racing Audi R8 LMS third.

"The car felt better in race two," said Leonard post-race. "I knew if I made an error, Alex would be past but by Turn 3 everything was up to temperature and I could hang on."

Both races produced a train of cars fighting for the lead, four in the opener and three in the second stanza, but both races highlighted the problems of overtaking around Brand Hatch. Loved by the drivers, the venue looked picture-postcard perfect in the sunshine, but the width of a current GT3 car and the width of the circuit just weren't conducive to passing and many a driver admitted that overtaking was nigh-on impossible, which was a great shame for

BRITIS WIN AT BRANDS IN BLANCPAIN GT SPRINT CUP



Vanthoor/Stevens car leads at start

the spectacular series.

Woeful driving standards in the opening **GT4 European Series** race led to three safety car periods and an early red flag to repair a barrier after Ricardo van der Ende's McLaren 570s was squeezed on to the Hawthorn's

grass by Laura Kraihamer's KTM. Van der Ende finished atop the Armco and the race was dragged to 75 per cent before a red flag halted the drama. Stuart Middleton/Will Tregurtha (Ginetta G55) won but were later given a penalty for being fractionally short on

the regulation pitstop time, handing a win to Nicolai Moller-Madsen and Milan Dontje (Audi R8 LMS GT4).

The second race was calmer and the 45-strong field made a fine sight around Brands Hatch. Tregurtha led but after the pole-winning Ginetta copped an

extra 35 kilos and an increased ride height after qualifying, he was soon usurped. However, Middleton took over at the pitstops and battled past Ward Sluys (Mercedes-AMG GT4) to scoop the victory from Simon Knap/Max Koebolt (BMW M4).

WINNERS

Blancpain GT Series Sprint Cup
Race 1: Dries Vanthoor/Will Stevens (Audi R8 LMS)
Race 2: Frederic Vervisch/Stuart Leonard (Audi R8 LMS)

Caterham 7 Series
Race 1: Phil Jenkins (Caterham 420R)
Race 2: Phil Jenkins (Caterham 420R)

GT4 European Series
Race 1: Nicolai Moller-Madsen/Milan Dontje (Audi R8 LMS GT4)
Race 2: Will Tregurtha/Stuart Middleton (Ginetta G55)

Porsche Club GB Championship
Race 1: Mark Sumpter (Porsche 996)
Race 2: Mark Sumpter (Porsche 996)



Tregurtha and Middleton won

SILVERSTONE: 750MC BY IAN SOWMAN

MAY 5

FLETCHER AND POLLEY MAKE IT A THREE-WAY CLIO 182 FIGHT

Patrick Fletcher and Ryan Polley both took a Clio 182 victory apiece at Silverstone, but with Oulton Park winner Jack Kingsbury twice on the podium the championship is developing into a three-way fight.

Reigning double champion Fletcher struck first on the National circuit, capitalising on a good start and the battles emerging in his wake. Polley left himself with a lot to do, dropping from the front row to sixth on lap one and later admitting: "I need to learn to stop the wheels spinning".

He recovered well from the setback and, at the second attempt, passed Kingsbury for third at Becketts. This soon became second when Andrew Tibbs retired with power steering failure in the closing stages.

Having improved his getaway in race

two, Polley looked comfortable out front until a patch of fluid spilled by Simon Harrison forced him wide, allowing Fletcher through. However, he drew back alongside exiting Luffield on the penultimate lap, ultimately taking the lead and victory.

Kingsbury recovered to third, ahead of Tibbs and Simon Donoghue. Don de Graaff was sixth for a second time, having come from the back of the grid in race one after crank sensor failure ruled him out of qualifying.

Points for the **Armed Forces Race Challenge** may be awarded on performance index, but there were still furious scraps at the front of the field. Regular winner Darren Berris has moved on – having further modified his V8 Westfield – leaving the competition wide open.

Farard Darver (BMW M3) led a five-car lead group initially, with Chris Camp picking his way through them in his Nissan Skyline, eventually outbraking Darver for the lead at Brooklands. Will Ashmore soon followed Camp through at Copse, taking the lead at Brooklands with just over a lap to go.

"That was completely unexpected, I



Fletcher leads Polley in Clio race

didn't think the car had the legs for this circuit," said the Honda Civic driver after his win. Camp, whose car had developed fuel surge issues, also lost out to Ian Fletcher's Hornet, with Darver just off the podium.

In race two, Darver again led for the first half of the race, but a gravelly excursion at Luffield at the mid-point allowed Ashmore through. The Civic held off the rasping Suzuki V-Twin-engined Hornet until the exit of Copse on the penultimate lap, with Fletcher

"relying on other people's mistakes" to take the win. Darver was third, ahead of Mark Inman's supercharged Vauxhall VX220.

The **BMWCC Racing Series** entry boasted 32 cars, including Luke Sedzikowski's invitation class E92 M3. Sedzikowski twice won on the road, with the first victory coming after a very slow start. Mike Cutt also scored an outright podium double in his E36, but registered driver Gary Hufford (E46) split them in the earlier race to claim the spoils.

Michael Vitulli, who spun to the back of the first race after second corner contact, later wrestled his E46 through from row five to claim the series win, passing Richard Marsh at Copse on lap 10.

The **M3 Cup** produced two new winners in David Whitmore and Nick Williamson. Both led from lights-to-flag, but Williamson faced stiffer competition, having to fend off three cars to triumph in race two. Matt Maxted did the double in the concurrent **330 Challenge**.

WINNERS

Clio 182 Championship
Race 1: Patrick Fletcher
Race 2: Ryan Polley

Armed Forces Race Challenge
Race 1: Will Ashmore (Honda Civic VTi)
Race 2: Ian Fletcher (Fletcher Hornet Mk4)

BMW Car Club Racing Series
Race 1: Luke Sedzikowski (E92 M3)
Race 2: Luke Sedzikowski (E92 M3)

M3 Cup/330 Challenge
Race 1: David Whitmore (E46 M3)
Race 2: Nick Williamson (E46 M3)

Bernie's V8/SRGT Challenge/Crossle Racing Driver Club
Race 1: Steve Ough (Crossle 9S)
Race 2: Steve Ough (Crossle 9S)

Photos: Steve Jones



Sedzikowski won in BMW E92 M3

SILVERSTONE: CSCC BY PETER SCHERER

MAY 5/6

Photos: Steve Jones

REUBENS WIN THE FAMILY FIGHT FOR SWINGING SIXTIES GLORY



Plants (l) battled the Reubens for the win

WINNERS

Classic K

Peter Thompson (TVR Griffith)

Future Classics

Aston Blake/Tony Blake (Porsche 911 RSR)

Magnificent Sevens

Christian Pittard (Caterham CSR)

Modern Classics

Dave Griffin (BMW M3 E36)

New Millennium

Graham Charman (Ginetta G55)

Open Series

Tim Davis (Caterham C400)

Special Saloons & Modsports

Race 1: Andy Southcott (MG Modsport)

Race 2: Andy Southcott (MG Modsport)

Swinging Sixties

Group 1: Richard Belcher (Lotus Cortina)

Group 2: Oliver Reuben/Nigel Reuben (TVR Griffith)

Tin Tops

Lee Williams (Honda Civic Type R)

Turbo Tin Tops & Smart 4Two Cup

Keith Issatt/Joshua Fulbrook (Mini Cooper)



Griffin in Modern Classics

Nigel and Oliver Reuben, in their TVR Griffith, came out on top of a family duel with the Morgan +8 of Richard and William Plant in the Swinging Sixties Group 2 race.

Reuben Jr stayed fairly close to William Plant in the early laps, until a ninth lap spin at Becketts. He was still second at the handover as both young drivers made way for their fathers. Plant senior retained the lead, but had the elder Reuben rapidly closing in. "I was running out of fuel, so I couldn't defend as it was cutting out," said Plant.

Reuben surged past into Village three laps from home and was eight seconds clear at the flag. James Keevill was a distant third in his Lotus Elan following an earlier duel with Nick/Eddie Powell's similar car.

Andy Southcott's MG Modsport was a double winner in **Special Saloons and Modsports**. Southcott led race one from the start, but he was forced to give best to Ian Hall's Darrrian from lap five. Hall ran

out of brakes on the last lap though, allowing Southcott to snatch the win with Danny Morris a race-long third in his Peugeot 309 GTI.

Although Hall had the advantage from the opening lap of race two, Southcott made up for a poor start to regain second by lap four. Hall kept his rival at bay for another six laps, until brakes and backmarkers combined at Stowe giving Southcott his second victory, despite his own clutch and brake problems.

The **Future Classics** race had to be restarted after a shunt at the first corner wiped out four cars, including the TVR Tuscan of poleman Bill Lancashire. Aston and Tony Blake left the rest in their wake in their Porsche 911RS, with fellow Porsche drivers James Neal/Neil Harvey securing second in the closing laps when Tom Brenton ran wide at Stowe. Despite a further spin at Village, Brenton retained third in his Ford Sierra XR8 ahead of Perry Waddams in another Tuscan.

In the **Swinging Sixties – Group 1** race, Ian Everett (BMW 1502) shadowed the Lotus Cortina of Richard Belcher until the stops, when Everett had to serve his win penalty from the previous round. Having recovered to second, Everett was forced to retire with gearbox problems leaving Belcher well clear. Tom Parsons/Richard Mitchell in their Alfa Romeo GTV and Gordon Elwell (Frogeye Sprite) completed the podium.

With Nathan/Peter Dod's TVR Griffith retiring from the lead after only six laps of the **Classic K** race, Peter Thompson's similar car led for the remainder of the hour-long race. Alasdair Coates was a solitary second in his AC Cobra for the most part, with Allen Tice/Chris Conley (Marcos 1800GT) retaining third from the closing Lotus Elan of Nick Randall/Fabio Randaccio.

Caterham team-mates Tim Davis and Christian Pittard had a terrific duel in

the **Open series** until Pittard dropped back, stuck in fifth gear. Davis' car started cutting out as he pursued the Ginetta G55 of Lee Frost in the second half, but he still managed to oust the GT4 Supercup racer to take a comfortable win. Pittard finally came home fourth, losing out to Lucky Khara/Declan Jones in another Ginetta G55.

Davis and Pittard were able to continue their duel in the **Magnificent Sevens**, with Pittard clinching victory after several close exchanges. "I got a bit wild near the end though," Davis admitted, settling in second, well clear of Nic Grindrod.

Graham Charman (Ginetta G55) grabbed a late win in the **New Millennium** race, diving past the SEAT Leon of Jamie Sturges on the inside of Stowe with a lap to go. Lee Frost had been in contention too until his G55 expired at Club with Declan Jones at the wheel. This left Gary Hufford/Ali Bray third in their BMW M3, only a whisker

away from challenging Sturges.

It was BMWs to the fore in the **Modern Classics**, with the M3 of Dave Griffin converting a first lap lead into a 51-second victory. Initial leader Kirk Armitage went off at Vale on lap six, leaving Griffin well ahead of Gavin Dunn and Douglas Simmen/Roland Jones. Jon Attard won the Puma Cup class ahead of Luke Johnson.

There was little to split William Hardy (Vauxhall Corsa) and Nigel Tongue (Peugeot 306) in the initial stages of the **Tin Tops** race. But soon after the stops, Hardy was back in the pitlane retiring with a misfire, putting Tongue clear until his engine let go after 19 laps. Lee Williams could only look on in his Honda Civic Type R, as Tom Mensley's Renault Clio cut out, leaving him out on his own to take the victory. Colin and Steven Simpson (Peugeot 206) settled in second, while Ryan Colvey's Clio ousted the Honda Integra of Russell Hird for third with three laps to go.



From Bahrain to Silverstone, the Holden VXR8 of Simon Harrison has made the transition from racing in a Middle Eastern one-make series to the CSCC's New Millennium. Harrison has owned the car for a couple of months, but only managed a few laps on its Snetterton debut due to overheating. The problem was solved by short-circuiting the original temperature sensor on the JJ Performance-built car. It had taken part in one of the support races at the Bahrain Grand Prix: now though, it brings extra variety to the CSCC grid. He finished fifth in class after a spin at the Vale.



For this season Gary Goodyear opted to change from his familiar sportscars to a BMW Z3M in the CSCC's Modern Classics. Goodyear, a former Kit Car champion, had owned the car a couple of years before converting it into a race car over the winter. He debuted it at Snetterton last month, finishing eighth, but had problems with the valve timing and opted to change the ECU for his second outing. His engine "ran like a dream" but brake vibration hampered his progress as the car is still in the development stage. He managed to take sixth in class.

A Renault Twingo RS is a rarity on the CSCC Tin Tops grid, and that was part of the attraction for novice racer Allan Walker. He worked on the car himself, having polished the cams, lightened it where possible and had the 'cage fitted. He sees his racing debut as a mid-life crisis, with only a few trackdays to count on for experience. But why did he choose a Twingo? His wife's first ever car was a Twingo, no-one else has one and having now prepared the French pocket rocket, he can see why. After a gear linkage ended his day first time out at Snetterton, he was relieved to take the flag sixth in class.



RACING REPORTS

KNOCKHILL: SMRC BY STEPHEN BRUNSDON
MAY 6

Photos: Jim Moir

Ross Martin continued his domination of the Scottish Formula Ford 1600 season thanks to another victory. The teenager was made to work hard by an array of BRSCC National interlopers though, at Knockhill's first reverse layout meeting of the year.

Martin shared the overall wins with Team Dolan's Matt Round-Garrido as the pair proved the class of the field all weekend. Martin extended his points lead over full-season challenger Jordan Gronkowski to 55 points as National guest drivers were ineligible for points in both races.

Separated by just 0.002s after qualifying, Martin (Ray) and Round-Garrido (Medina Sport) battled doggedly during the opening stages of race one. But the Kevin Mills Racing Spectrums of Hugo Bentley-Ellis and Michael Eastwell soon joined them to create an epic four-way lead battle.

Bentley-Ellis took second from Round-Garrido with an audacious lunge under braking for the Hairpin and harried Martin all the way to the line, eventually losing out by half a second.

Round-Garrido got revenge in the second race, after slipstreaming past Martin on the third lap and racing clear to claim victory. Bentley-Ellis used all his karting skills to dummy his way past Martin into the Hairpin but lost second place on countback after Gary Sykes' stricken GBR Ray caused a final-lap red flag.

Cliff Dempsey Racing's Jamie Thorburn and Nico Gruber opted to keep out of trouble via pitlane starts. Jack Wolfenden cracked a sump over a kerb in qualifying, ruling him out of all three races.

John Duncan catapulted himself to the top of the **Scottish Mini Cooper Cup** standings after a near-perfect weekend. Running fourth for most of the opening encounter, Duncan made the most of a safety car intervention for the stricken cars of Jake Hutchison and Craig Dillon. On the restart Duncan made assertive moves on Dominic Wheatley and Michael Weddell into Clarks to take second behind race winner David Sleigh.

MARTIN TAKES FF1600 WIN AGAINST NATIONALS



Martin beat National FF1600 regulars in R1

The positions were reversed in race two after Sleigh got bogged down off pole. Duncan started the reversed-grid final race fifth but wasted little time in making it to the front. He beat Ian Munro and Sleigh to the line, with Craig Blake backing up his race two podium by taking fourth.

Scottish Legends veteran Ivor Greenwood scored his first victory of

the season by beating Jordan Hodgson in a frantic final. He seized the lead from early leader Steven McGill exiting the Hairpin, opening a healthy margin despite Duncan Vincent's scary brake failure-induced crash bringing out the safety car. Race one winner Dave Hunter's hopes were dashed when contact with Colin McNeil and race two victor John Paterson sent all

three of them into retirement.

A serious crash for Ron Cumming (Nemesis Kit Car) and a further incident involving Mark Dawson (Seat Leon Supercopa) and Colin Simpson (Marcos Mantis) limited the available running in the opening **Scottish Sports & Saloons** race. Dawson and Simpson emerged from their cars unscathed while Cumming was taken to the



Greenwood won Legends final

WINNERS

Celtic Speed Mini Cooper Cup
Race 1: David Sleigh
Race 2: John Duncan
Race 3: John Duncan

Scottish Classic Sports & Saloons
Race 1: John Kinmond (Rover 3500)
Race 2: Andrew Graham (Triumph TR8)

Scottish Formula Ford 1600
Race 1: Ross Martin (Ray GR17)
Race 2: Matt Round-Garrido (Medina Sport JL17)

Scottish Legends
Heat 1: Dave Hunter
Heat 2: John Paterson
Final: Ivor Greenwood

Scottish Sports & Saloons
Race 1: Robert Drummond (Ford Escort Cosworth)
Race 2: Andrew Morrison (SEAT Cupra TCR)

SMTA Fiesta, Hot Hatch/Scottish BMW
Race 1: Wayne MacCaulay (Fiesta ST)
Race 2: Wayne MacCaulay (Fiesta ST)

medical centre for further treatment.

Robert Drummond and Andrew Morrison took subdued victories, while Oliver Mortimer remained unbeaten in the R53 Class.

Gearbox trouble prevented John Kinmond from taking an easy **Scottish Classic Sports & Saloons** double, with Andrew Graham picking up the pieces in his Triumph TR8 in race two.

CASTLE COMBE: CCRC BY IAN SOWMAN
MAY 7

PREBBLE'S SEAT BACK ON TOP IN COMBE SALOONS

Gary Prebble overcame the fast-starting James Winter to take his first outright victory of the season in the **Castle Combe Saloon Car Championship**.

Winter led for the first two laps in his Renault Megane, before Prebble sliced through on the inside at Camp in his SEAT Leon Cupra. Easter Monday winner Simon Thornton-Norris followed him but made a couple of mistakes over the remainder of the race and could

not get the better of Combe's most winning driver, but did take Class B.

Prebble's younger brother Adam briefly made it to third on his first outing in a Vauxhall Astra before the temperature gauge rocketed, leaving a misfiring Winter to fend off Charles Hyde-Andrews-Bird (out for the first time in his father's Nissan 200SX) for the final podium position until the problem became too much and he dropped back. Alex Kite had made it a three-way fight until his Audi TT suffered a clutch master cylinder failure.

Craig Dolby dominated the **Combe GT** race, taking Nigel Mustill's ex-Dutch Supercar Volvo S60 to victory by 15s. Oliver Bull was best of the regulars, finishing second in his Vauxhall Tigra although Andy Southcott got so close in his MG Midget that he didn't see the chequered flag. With Southcott defeating Tony Bennett's Caterham in their class, Ilsa Cox took the lead of the championship by winning hers.

Luke Cooper was allowed to escape in the **Combe FF1600** race to record his third successive victory in his



Prebble defeated Thornton-Norris

Swift SC16, with Josh Fisher (Van Diemen JL14) being passed by David Vivian's Spectrum on the opening lap to hit his hopes. Fisher took second place back at the Esses on lap four, a corner that was the scene on the final circuit of Fisher's younger sibling Felix spinning his Ray as he mounted a last-lap attack on his brother, Vivian's car having expired. The 2006 champion, Matt Rivett (Ray GR10), was promoted to his first Combe podium in nine years.

Driving their Ginetta GT4 for the first time, Simon and Lucky Khera took the **Dave Allan Trophy** mini-enduro, run in memory of the Synchro Motorsport co-founder. Fittingly, the Synchro

Honda Civic of Dan Wheeler took second, the younger sister car having led earlier but suffered suspension issues. Alyn James eventually finishing a lap down. The unrelated Martin James retired his Civic with oil temperature concerns, after inheriting the lead from Endaf Owens who crashed his SEAT Leon at Quarry when wrong-footed by traffic.

Polesitter Greg Jenkins bogged down at the start of the **Super Mighty Minis** opener, but retrieved the lead from Connor O'Brien before the first lap was out. He held on until the charging Alex Comis grabbed the initiative at Quarry on lap 10, before reasserting his authority

WINNERS

Castle Combe FF1600
Luke Cooper (Swift SC16)

Castle Combe GT
Craig Dolby (Volvo S60)

Castle Combe Hot Hatch
Chris Southcott (Peugeot 205 GTi)

Castle Combe Saloon
Gary Prebble (SEAT Leon Cupra)

Dave Allan Trophy
Simon Singh Khera/Lucky Khera (Ginetta GT4)

Jaguar Saloon & GT Championship
James Ramm (XJS)

Mighty Minis Championship
Race 1: Greg Jenkins (Super Mighty Mini)
Race 2: Alex Comis (Super Mighty Mini)

Track Attack Racing Club
Race 1: Will di Claudio (Peugeot 106 GTi)
Race 2: Will di Claudio (Peugeot 106 GTi)



Dolby won in Dutch Supercar Volvo

on proceedings. Comis finished second, with O'Brien snatching third from new championship leader Jo Polley on the final lap.

Comis went one better in the second race, taking the lead for the second time at Quarry on the final lap. Jenkins lost out, having climbed from eighth on the reversed grid, while Polley claimed the final podium spot.

James Ramm's **Jaguar Saloon and GT** qualifying session was truncated by a fuel blockage, but he climbed through the field to win by more than half a minute in his XJS, aided when erstwhile leader Alasdair MacGregor lost control of his X300 at Tower and connected with the barriers.

SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Hal Ridge, William Neill

HIGGINS IN FOR SILVERSTONE WRX

Former rally ace lines up an attack on British showpiece event at the end of May

By Hal Ridge

British Rallycross Championship leader Mark Higgins will make his World RX debut at Silverstone later this month.

The three-time British Rally champion will campaign Albatec Racing's Peugeot 208 Supercar at the event, as used by team owner Andy Scott in the third round of British RX at Croft last weekend. The Manxman will join touring car star Andrew Jordan and World RX driver Oliver Bennett competing in their home event. "It's very difficult to know how we'll perform at Silverstone,

but I'm under no illusions of the task ahead," said Higgins. "We've got all the big factory teams there, and we'll be one of the few independent teams, but if we can get a good run and with a bit of luck on our side, who knows where we can be? All we can do is do our best."

The opening round of British RX in March was the first rallycross event to be held at Silverstone, the venue having taken over the British round of World RX from Lydden Hill from 2018. Having already experienced the Silverstone layout, the British round of World RX will mark the first time that Higgins has returned to a circuit

in his rallycross campaign. "I didn't have too bad a showing in the opening British round and that was in the older car," he said. "It will be the first time I've gone back to a track for a second time, and just knowing how it all works, the track layout, the start and everything will help."

Team owner Scott is hopeful that Higgins can challenge for a place in the semi-finals. "Hopefully he can showcase what he can do, and we can then gain some momentum to do further World RX rounds," said Scott. "We'd like to see him reach the semis. If we do that, it's been a good result."



Higgins is leading BRX

Bryntesson wins Nordic 2018 opener

RallyX Nordic champion Thomas Bryntesson won the 2018 season-opener at World RX venue Holjes in Sweden last weekend.

Oliver Solberg, a title challenger in 2017, was fourth despite failing to finish the final after contact with Lukas Walfridson.

Bryntesson fended off a strong challenge early in the race from Peter Hedstrom to claim victory ahead of Walfridson and Mats Ohman. "The team has worked really hard to get the car sorted," said Euro RX frontrunner Bryntesson. "That makes it even more special to win here. I'm looking forward to Euro RX in Belgium next weekend."

The Supercar Lites category was won by Guillaume De Ridder while Finn Jimi Kalliomaki won the opening round of the RX Academy.

Godfrey walks away from Croft smash

Five-time British Rallycross champion Julian Godfrey was unharmed after this dramatic crash at Croft last weekend.

The Spencer Sport Mitsubishi Mirage driver hit Steve Hill's ailing Mitsubishi Lancer during the second lap of the final, which launched him into a series of rolls and the car caught fire.

The race was stopped, and Godfrey emerged from the wreck without serious injury.



Godfrey's car caught fire



Former champ was unharmed

Photos: Trevor Coulson

BRITISH HILLCLIMB



Dave Uren stretched his legs at the end of the first run-off for a victory

Uren and Williams share the spotlight in Belfast

British Hillclimb

By William Neill

Organiser: Ulster Automobile Club Where: Craigantlet, Belfast When: May 5 Starters: 90

Both David Uren and Trevor Willis scored victories in Belfast – the latter jumping up to jointly lead the British Hillclimb Championship with Prescott's opening winner, Wallace Menzies.

On the first of the run-offs, Uren's Gould GR55B had work to do on the faster public roads in the middle and the top sectors, the Redditch man put his foot down to take victory over Will Hall by a mere 0.02s.

Menzies was quickest off the line and, although not on Uren's times at the top sector, performed better than Hall's Force WH-Xtec before being denied second by 0.03s. Last of the drivers in the 40s bracket was Trevor Willis.

It was the OMS 28 driver Willis who

went on to be the only entry to break the 40s barrier on the day with 39.36s on the second run off and win the fourth championship counter.

Menzies improved his place with second but not his time, 0.03s slower than the earlier run. Mourant took 0.74s from his earlier run to take third and leave Uren with fourth.

Will Hall had a major slide on the exit of the chicane with a rear wheel touching a roadside kerb. It dented his run across the crossroads and onto the following straight, resulting in fifth.

Results

Round 3: 1 David Uren (Gould GR55B) 40.17s; 2 Will Hall (Force WH-Xtec) 40.19s; 3 Wallace Menzies (Gould GR59) 40.22s; 4 Trevor Willis (OMS 28) 40.31s; 5 Jason Mourant (Gould GR55) 41.17s; 6 Nicola Menzies (Gould GR55B) 45.37s; 7 Ray Rowan (Pilbeam MP43) 45.39s; 8 Simon Fidoe (Empire Wraith) 45.84s; 9 Darren Gumbley (Force TA) 45.87s; 10 Lee Griffiths (OMS 25) 47.52s. **Round 4:** 1 Willis 39.36s; 2 Wallace Menzies 40.25s; 3 Mourant 40.43s; 4 Uren 40.56s; 5 Hall 40.64s; 6 Rowan 44.37s; 7 Nicola Menzies 44.74s; 8 Gumbley 45.15s; 9 Fidoe 45.27s; 10 Keith Weeks (Image FF5) 50.84s.

BRITISH RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

O'Donovan limps to a win in the final – just

British Rallycross Championship: Croft

By Hal Ridge

Organiser: British Automobile Racing Club/Lydden Hill Motor Club When: May 6 Where: Croft Starters: 68

Former British Rallycross champion Ollie O'Donovan claimed a dramatic victory in the third round of the series at Croft, crossing the finish line on three wheels to beat Mark Higgins by less than 0.1s.

Starting from the middle of the front row in the final, O'Donovan led for the opening two laps until third-placed Steve Hill was forced to slow with an engine problem. Julian Godfrey made contact with Hill's Mitsubishi Evo, sending Godfrey's car into a violent crash (see above).

At the restart, polesitter Andy Scott jumped the lights and was subsequently demoted to the back of the grid. That left O'Donovan as the sole remaining front-row starter.

O'Donovan maintained his advantage into the first corner. The Irishman then led the final throughout, fending off the attentions of Higgins. In the final corners, contact between the pair resulted in O'Donovan being forced wide.

Further side-by-side contact broke the left-rear wheel off O'Donovan's Ford Focus, and he and Higgins crossed the finish line as O'Donovan spun onto the infield. Albatec team owner Scott completed the podium.

With Godfrey only being classified in sixth, Higgins' second place moves him into the points lead, while O'Donovan climbed to third overall.



O'Donovan held off Higgins in a dash to the line following last-lap contact

Mad Mark Watson finished in fourth in the final, albeit some way behind the leading trio. Steve Mundy was unable to take the start due to an issue with his Ford Fiesta in pre-grid for the final.

Tristan Ovenden won the **Supernational** final, leading home local drivers Guy Corner and Paige Bellerby, while Tom Constantine beat younger brother Luke to secure victory in the Junior category. In only his third event, Ben Sayer was top of a battle for third.

Former European Championship event-winner Kevin Procter made a guest appearance in the **RX150** buggy category and finished second behind championship leader Chrissy Palmer.

Two-time British Rally champion Jonny Milner, who started his career in rallycross also made a guest appearance in the category and finished third, despite visiting the Turn 1 gravel trap after first corner contact. Morgan Bailey claimed his second **Swift Sport** victory in a row,

while David Bell took the **BMW Mini** win. Barry Stewart won the **Retro** final in his Porsche.

Results

British Rallycross (6 laps): 1 Ollie O'Donovan (Ford Focus); 2 Mark Higgins (Peugeot 208) +0.061s; 3 Andy Scott (Peugeot 208); 4 Mad Mark Watson (Citroen Xsara); 5 Steve Hill (Mitsubishi Evo); 6 Julian Godfrey (Mitsubishi Mirage).

Supernational (6 laps): 1 Tristan Ovenden (Renault Clio); 2 Guy Corner (Peugeot 206) +2.142s; 3 Paige Bellerby (Vauxhall VX220); 4 Craig Lomax (Citroen C2); 5 Gary Simpson (BMW E30); 6 Darren Scott (Citroen C2).

MSA Junior (5 laps) (All Suzuki Swift): 1 Tom Constantine; 2 Luke Constantine +2.150s; 3 Ben Sayer; 4 Morgan Wroot; 5 Patrick O'Donovan; 6 Matilda Procter.

Suzuki Swift (6 laps): 1 Morgan Bailey; 2 Tom Llewellyn +4.083s; 3 Dominic Flitney; 4 Rob Maynard; 5 Christopher Scott; 6 Rob Shield.

RX150 (6 laps): 1 Chrissy Palmer; 2 Kevin Procter +15.229s; 3 Jonny Milner; 4 Dave Bellerby; no other finishers.

BMW Mini (6 laps): 1 David Bell; 2 Martin Hawkes +1.412s; 3 Bradley Durdin; 4 Drew Bellerby; 5 Leigh-Anne Sedgwick; 6 Rob Methold.

Retro (4 laps): 1 Barry Stewart (Porsche 911); 2 Ray Morgan (Ford Escort) +0.941s; 3 James Harrold (Volkswagen Beetle); 4 Mark Finch (Ford Fiesta); 5 Ian Biagi (Mini Clubman); 6 Gary Dixon (Vauxhall Astra).

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Seeding can protect the future of rallies

A rethink from the Motor Sports Association shows that competitors are heard

It was quite late last Friday afternoon when the news came in that the national governing body, the Motor Sports Association, had decided to relax its position on the seeding of rallies from July 1 onwards. On the face of it, it was a simple tweak to the rulebook. In reality, this is a massive shot in the arm for the discipline.

National rallying has been under the cosh since the running order was changed a couple of years ago, but that was a necessity brought about amid searching inquiries into fatal accidents that had been instigated after two incidents. Rallying was under pressure to alter its ways, otherwise the future might have looked much, much darker.

The seeding order change had the effect of many people leaving their rally cars in garages, rather than face unsustainable damage to their machines. There had to be a solution to the legislation which was strangling the sport. Now, at last, it is here. This is a very positive step from the Motor Sports Association.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



YOUR PICS



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



Perth classic car run, by Alex Ireland



James Ciddings took this autograss shot



Will Jones's shot of Tom Chilton's spill



Stuart Taunton's Clacton photograph



Paul Grime went on the Pirelli Rally



Rich Cranston braved the bad weather



Chris Collier caught Mike Epps' drama



Co-driver David Richards on the Flying Scotsman Rally, by Anthony Underwood



Gary Hill caught this Brands Hatch spill



Another from Gary Hill from Brands



Brian Gower hoped there wasn't previously a passenger in there...



John Henderson's Donington BTCC shot



Ian Cutting captured this moment of drama from Rockingham's British GT meeting

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TV GUIDE



Lundqvist: British F3 favourite

Tune in for highlights of the **MG Trophy Championship** as drivers and teams raced on the Silverstone National layout for round two of the series (Thursday, 1600-1630hrs). Last year's **BMW Compact Cup** champion, Steven Dailly, and title rival Owen Hunter were once again the class of the field at the opening round of 2018 at Brands Hatch (Friday, 0800-0830hrs). Take a trip down memory lane with Duke Video, as they bring you behind the scenes footage of the FIA Historic Formula One Championship from 2010 in

Grand Prix: The Past Comes Alive (Friday 1900-2000hrs). The second round of the **BRDC British Formula 3 Championship** took place at Rockingham, as Swede Linus Lundqvist and Norwegian Nicolai Kjaergaard battle for supremacy at the top of the table (Saturday, 1230-1330hrs). And finally head Down Under for highlights from the fifth round of the **Australian Supercars Championship** (Saturday, 2100-2300hrs) as Scott McLaughlin looks to extend his lead in the standings in Perth.

LIVE TV

- WTCR: Nurburgring**
Race 1: Friday, 1730-1830hrs, Eurosport 2
Race 2: Saturday, 1100-1200hrs, Eurosport 1
Race 3: Saturday, 1200-1300hrs, Eurosport 1
- Formule 2: Barcelona**
Race 1: Saturday, 1540-1650hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race 2: Sunday, 1025-1125hrs, Sky Sports F1
- GP3: Barcelona**
Race 1: Saturday, 0910-1005hrs, Sky Sports F1
- Race 2:** Sunday, 0920-1005hrs, Sky Sports F1
- IndyCar: Indianapolis**
Race: Saturday, 2030-2300hrs, BT Sports ESPN
- European F3: Pau**
Race 1: Saturday, 1000-1100hrs, BT Sport 1
Race 2: Sunday, 1000-1100hrs, BT Sport 1
- NASCAR: Kansas**
Race: Sunday, 0030-0500hrs, Premier Sports



European Le Mans Series: Monza
Race: Sunday, 1705-2130hrs (delayed)



European Le Mans at Monza

LIVE F1



Hamilton leads Formula 1 standings after winning in Azerbaijan

- Spanish Grand Prix Sky Sports F1 HD coverage**
Drivers' press conference: Thursday, 1400-1430hrs
FP1: Friday, 0930-1155hrs
FP2: Friday, 1345-1550hrs
FP3: Saturday, 1030-1215hrs
Qualifying: Saturday, 1300-1540hrs
Race: Sunday, 1230-1710hrs
Highlights: Sunday, 2030-2130hrs
- Channel 4 HD highlights**
Qualifying: Saturday, 1700-1830hrs
Race: Sunday, 1800-2000hrs

NEXT WEEK

SPANISH GP REPORT

MERCEDES, FERRARI AND RED BULL BATTLE FOR BARCELONA VICTORY



WHAT ATTRACTS CREWS TO THE AZORES RALLY? PLUS: ALL THE USUAL NEWS, VIEWS AND REPORTS

LISTINGS

RACING FRIDAY-SUNDAY
Rockingham, Northants
Citroen C1 24 Hours: Pickups
Starts Friday, qualifying from 1900hrs Saturday, racing from 1135hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, 24 hour race continues **Admission** £12 **Web** rockingham.co.uk **Contact** 0870 1660438



Hugh Hunter won the Manx

SATURDAY
Oulton Park, Cheshire
MSVR meeting: Welsh Sports/ Saloons, Jaguar XK, Pre '66 Jaguars, Equipe GTS, Equipe Pre '63, AMOC GT, AMOC Intermarque, 50s Sports and XK **Starts** racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

under 12 free **Web** knockhill.co.uk **Contact** 01383 723337
Bishops court, N Ireland
BARC meeting: Formula Vee, Formula Sheane, Formula Libre, Stryker Sportscar, SEAT, Historic Racing Cars, Future Classics, Fiesta Zetec, Fiesta ST, Supercars **Starts** Saturday, racing from TBC (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs **Admission** adult TBC **Web** bishopscourt.org **Contact** 028 4484 2202

SATURDAY/SUNDAY
Snetterton, Norfolk
Mini Festival: Mini Challenge, Mini Se7en, Mini Miglia, Monoposto, Radical SR1, Trackday Championship, Trackday Trophy **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1250hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0940hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £20, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

RALLY FRIDAY/SATURDAY
Douglas, Isle of Man
Bet on Aces Manx National Rally **Starts** 1730hrs **Admission** free **Web** manxautosport.org

SATURDAY
Welshpool, Powys
Plains Rally **Starts** 0801hrs **Admission** free **Web** plainsrally.co.uk
Cookstown, County Tyrone
"Go" Tour of Sperrins Rally **Starts** 1031hrs **Admission** free **Web** magherafeltmotorclub.co.uk

SUNDAY
Three Sisters Circuit, Wigan
The Cetus Rally Stages **Starts** 1000hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** wiganmotorclub.org.uk

SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY
Skegness, Scotland
BriSCA F1 **Starts** 1800hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** brisca.com

SATURDAY/SUNDAY
Pembrey, Wales
BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross **Starts** TBC **Admission** adult £12, under 14 free **Web** btrda.com
Harewood, WYorks
British Hillclimb **Starts** 0900hrs both days **Admission** adult £10, under 14 free **Web** britishhillclimb.co.uk

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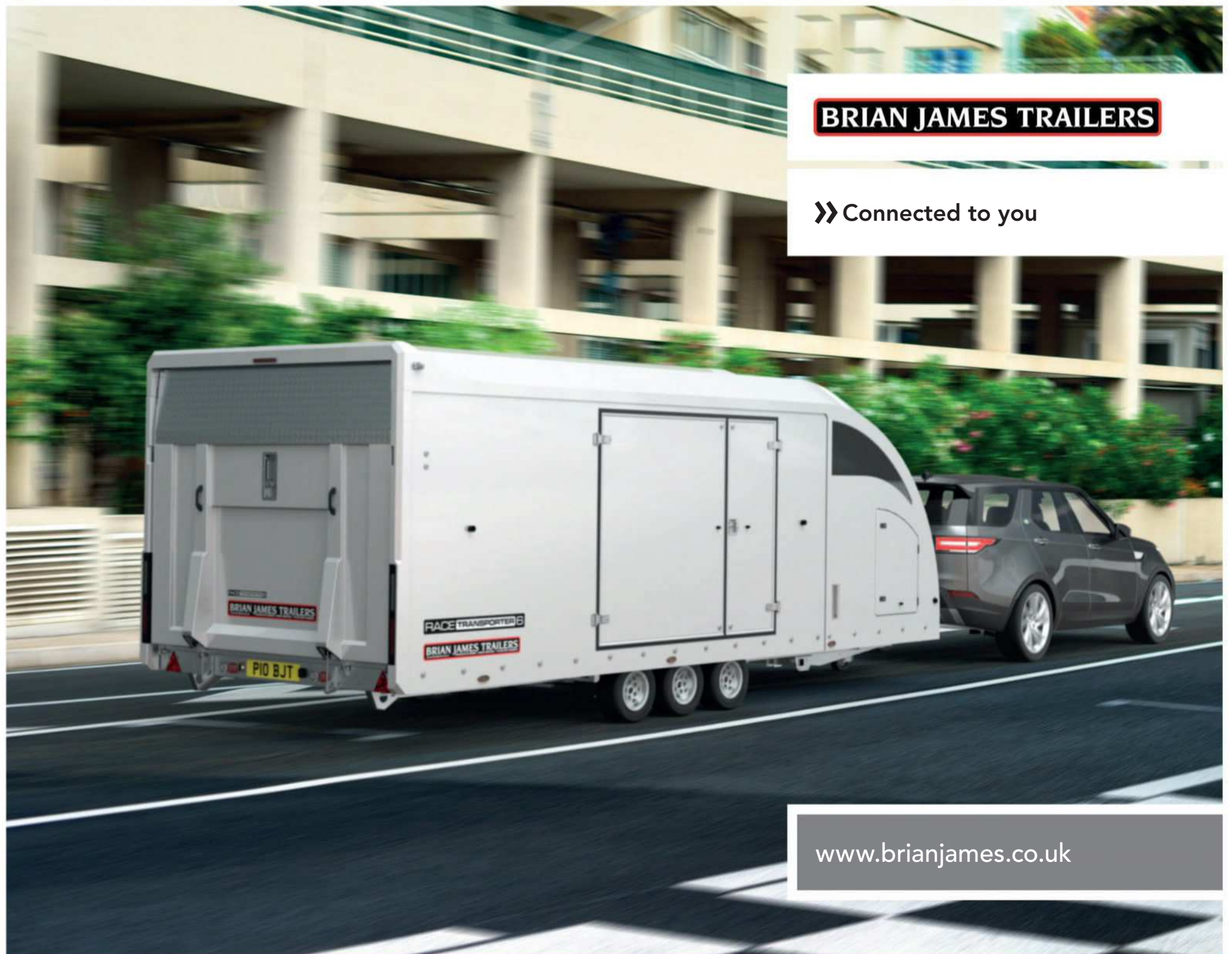
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