

MOTORSPORT NEWS

THE BATTLE TO RULE

LEMANS!

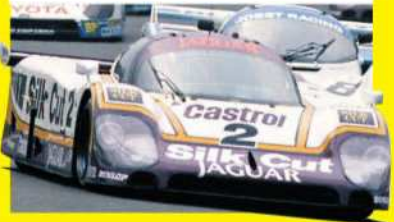
**8-PAGE PREVIEW
TO THE
BIG RACE**



IS TOYOTA REALLY THE FAVOURITE?



HOW JAGUAR ALMOST IMPLoded 30 YEARS AGO



IT'S BUTTON V ALONSO IN LMP1



ONE WEEK TO GO UNTIL THEY BLAST OFF AT LA SARTHE...

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT
MOTORSPORT NEWS

BREEN SPEAKS OUT
CITROEN'S IRISH STAR READY TO STEP UP P12



THRUXTON STRIKES GOLD
FULL REPORT FROM 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT P25



MOTORSPORT NEWS ISSUE MJ3132 JUNE 6 2018

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Alonso and Button impress on their first

GRAND PRIX

By Robert Ladbrook

Former McLaren Formula 1 team-mates Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button both got their first taste of the Le Mans circuit at the official test day last week ahead of their respective LMP1 debuts this year.

Two-time world champion Alonso impressed by setting the fastest time of the day yesterday [Sunday] aboard the Toyota TS050 HYBRID he shares with Kazuki Nakajima and Sebastien Buemi.

Alonso set the pace in the morning also, with a 3m21.468s benchmark, before lowering that with a 3m19.066s in the afternoon to finish almost a second clear of the sister Toyota handled by Kamui Kobayashi.

Alonso completed 40 laps of the La Sarthe circuit – around 339 miles of running – across the day. The Spaniard said he had worked hard on his preparation for his Le Mans debut, and confessed to watching as much as 16 hours of onboard footage from last year's race as well as running many sessions in the simulator.

When asked if he'd watched the available footage [16 hours' worth] from the car of Buemi/Nakajima and test driver Anthony Davidson during last year's race, Alonso said: "Yes, I watched all of that and some races from the past also, videos, the lap from Kamui in qualifying on the internet – I think I am as prepared as I can be."

"Obviously the real track and the real conditions are always different because you don't have the uphill and downhill on the simulator. The adjustment to the speed difference between cars and to the traffic is something that you develop only in the real car and with a good number of laps."

"I got some longer runs than [the other drivers], but the programme was quite even. I did about 10 per cent more than the others. But it was a lot of fun out there – the track is beautiful and fits perfectly with the LMP1s. It was enjoyable and we got the info we needed from the test."

"It was a very good day for the team. We obviously prepared for this test in the best way possible before the big race. The car felt good from the first lap and everyone was happy straight away. Then it was just getting familiar with the circuit."

Despite topping both the morning and afternoon sessions, the sole remaining LMP1 manufacturer team did not enjoy a sizable pace advantage over its privateer rivals.

The #3 Rebellion Racing R-13-Gibson driven by Mathias Beche

Berthon topped the LMP2 order



twice managed to split the factory cars, finishing 0.360s and 0.614s behind Alonso respectively.

The sister #1 Rebellion of ex-Porsche drivers Neel Jani and Andre Lotterer with Bruno Senna was fourth fastest in both sessions, two seconds back.

The Russian SMP Racing team annexed fifth and sixth in both sessions with its BRE Engineering BRE-AER BR1s, with the car crewed by Button, Vitaly Petrov and Mikhail Aleshin finishing as the fastest of the two.

Button, who is also making his Le Mans debut this year around his commitments racing with Honda in Japanese Super GT, said he found the track a baptism.

"I was reasonably happy [with his running], but in the morning I just found it another world – driving around here in a car I don't really know. I found it quite disconcerting," said Button, who completed 20 laps across the day, setting a best time of 3m24.002s – comparable to the car's best of 3m21.603s set by Petrov.

"But we made some good changes over lunch, and I was much happier with the car in the afternoon. I had a lot more confidence. High speed, good confidence, and the braking was much better too. A lot of the corners here are very tight and they come up on you very quickly, which is very different from what I'm used to. I definitely got to grips with it in the afternoon, much happier. But you always want more running, and new tyres."

"We lost some time in the morning with a sensor issue, which was a shame. Then we had another little issue after lunch, so our track time was quite limited. I only ran one set of tyres, not a new set. I did 20 laps, but learnt a lot. This place is all about building confidence and gaining time. You can go out and be as quick as you can, but there's a big chance you'll go off. You've really got to respect this circuit. It's tough!"

"I feel very confident now at the end of the day, but I'd rather have had another 50 laps."

The new Ginetta LMP1 machines struggled, finishing the test almost nine seconds off the ultimate pace. The quickest car of Oliver Rowland/Alex Brundle/Oliver Turvey was still behind the two fastest LMP2 machines.

The outings come as the car's

first real group test, after they were withdrawn from the Six Hours of Spa due to funding issues for the TRSM [Manor] team.

The cars ran with their high-downforce aero kit still fitted, with a new low-drag variant due to be ready for testing during race week.

Ginetta's Lawrence Tomlinson told *DailySportsCar.com*: "We're here to compete, and to show that we are serious about LMP1. This is a five- to 10-year commitment from Ginetta and the commercial issues for TRSM have meant that our testing programme has been massively delayed, that shouldn't be confused with our intention to take this programme forward."

Best of the rest

The DragonSpeed team topped the LMP2 times with Nathanael Berthon putting its ORECA-Gibson 07 ninth in the overall order. His effort left the car he shares with Pastor Maldonado and Roberto Gonzalez just 0.024s ahead of the IDEC Sport ORECA of Paul-Loup Chatin.

FIA Formula E points leader Jean-Eric Vergne put his G-Drive ORECA in third place. The leading Ligier entry was United Autosports in sixth.

Porsche jumped ahead of Ford in the battle to top GTE Pro, with Patrick Pilet fastest in the #93 CORE Autosport-run 911 RSR, beating the sister car of Gianmaria Bruni by a 10th.

Andy Priaulx was third in the lead Ford GT, just 0.361s behind.

Aston Martin had a difficult first LM24 test with its new Vantage AMR challenger. Marco Sorensen was involved in a heavy accident on the run to Indianapolis corner. While the Dane escaped injury, the team has confirmed that it will have to build up a fresh chassis for the race due to the damage.

The sister car of Alex Lynn/Maxime Martin/Jonny Adam brought up the rear of the class, just shy of five seconds down on the leading Porsche.

The Dempsey-Proton Porsche squad moved to the top of the GTE Am times at the end of the afternoon session, which was brought to a premature finish by a fourth red flag of the day.

Julien Andlauer set a 3m55.970s in the #77 911 RSR to knock Giancarlo Fisichella's #54 Spirit of Race Ferrari 488 GTE off the top of the times.



Sorensen escaped accident

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

outings at La Sarthe

GREATS TACKLE LE MANS



Alonso topped the times during both testing sessions



Spaniard says he now feels very prepared



Button was a bit daunted by Le Mans track



Briton handled the SMP Racing ORECA



Ginetta is playing catch up, but still has high hopes for LMP1

LEADING TEST TIMES

LMP1

POS	NO	DRIVERS	TEAM/CAR	TIME	GAP
1	8	Sebastien Buemi/Kazuki Nakajima/ Fernando Alonso	Toyota Gazoo Racing TS050 HYBRID	3m19.066s	
2	3	Thomas Laurent/ Mathias Beche /Gustavo Menezes	Rebellion-Gibson R13	3m19.680s	+0.614s
3	7	Mike Conway/ Kamui Kobayashi /Jose Maria Lopez	Toyota Gazoo Racing TS050 HYBRID	3m20.008s	+0.942s

LMP2

1	31	Pastor Maldonado/ Nathanael Berthon /Roberto Gonzalez	DragonSpeed ORECA-Gibson 07	3m27.228s	-
2	48	Paul-Loup Chatin /Memo Rojas/Paul Lafargue	IDEC Sport ORECA-Gibson 07	3m27.252s	+0.024s
3	26	Jean-Eric Vergne /Roman Rusinov/Andrea Pizzitola	G-Drive Racing (TDS) ORECA-Gibson 07	3m28.394s	+1.166s

GTE Pro

1	93	Nick Tandy/ Patrick Pilet /Earl Bamber	Porsche GT Team (CORE) Porsche 911 RSR	3m52.551s	-
2	91	Gianmaria Bruni /Richard Lietz/Frederic Makowiecki	Porsche GT Team (Manthey) Porsche 911 RSR	3m52.647s	+0.096s
3	67	Andy Priaulx /Harry Tincknell	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK Ford GT	3m53.008s	+0.457s

GTE Am

1	77	Matt Campbell /Julien Andlauer/Christian Ried	Dempsey-Proton Racing Porsche 911 RSR	3m55.970s	-
2	54	Giancarlo Fisichella /Francesco Castellacci/Thomas Flohr	Spirit of Race (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE	3m56.269s	+0.299s
3	61	Matt Griffin /Keita Sawa/Mok Weng Sun	Clearwater Racing Ferrari 488 GTE	3m56.672s	+0.702s

Bold denotes driver who set fastest time

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Tuned Leclerc

Charles Leclerc says he will try not to listen too much to the "amazing" praise he has been receiving from F1's biggest names. Both Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton said before the Monaco GP that the hype around Leclerc as one of the future stars of the sport was justified. "To have these drivers speak about me this way is crazy," said Leclerc.

Renault's axe

Renault scrapped its own version of the halo-mounted mirror after the FIA outlawed Ferrari's original design at the Spanish GP. Ferrari's concept featured an upper 'wing' that the FIA deemed wasn't essential for the mounting of the part. Renault's design had one winglet sprouting from the halo with the mirror attached underneath.

Mallya steps

Vijay Mallya has resigned as a director of the Force India team and is expected to hand the board role to his son, Siddharth, but he will remain as the team principal. Mallya said he made the decision to focus on his own legal issues as he doesn't want them impacting upon the team.

Big wheels

A switch from 13- to 18-inch wheels in Formula 1 is part of the proposed rules package for 2021. Pirelli has pushed for the move before, but was met with opposition from the teams which suggested it could mean increased development costs for suspension parts. A lower-profile tyre would fit closer to road car technology.

Great tracks

New tracks will have to prove they can provide 'great' racing if they are to claim a place on the F1 calendar, according to chairman Chase Carey. New tracks in Miami in America and Vietnam are being discussed, but Carey said: "First, we want to make sure that it is great for a race. While we build all the things around it, it starts with having a track that provides a great race."

LEWIS LOVING THE PRESSURE

Lewis fired up by Red Bull and Ferrari



Hamilton (r) is enjoying his 2018 rivalries

The top three have slugged it out so far

By Robert Ladbrook

Lewis Hamilton says what is shaping up to be a three-way battle for the world championship this year ranks as the biggest challenge he's had since he joined Mercedes.

The four-time world champion currently sits atop the championship, having scored two victories so far this year. However, Hamilton's lead is a slender one, with Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel just 14 points back, and Monaco GP winner Daniel Ricciardo 38 behind.

Both Vettel and Ricciardo have also equalled Hamilton's victory tally this year. With each driver winning twice across the first six races of the season so far.

Ahead of this weekend's seventh round in Montreal, Canada, Hamilton said he was enjoying the renewed

competition. "It definitely is a three-way fight for it this year," said Hamilton. "Ferrari, I think, are still the strongest. Their car was quick in Monaco, their car was working quite well through the whole season so far and they have dropped the ball a few times and we've capitalised on that so we are further ahead than we would be if everyone had done the same job."

"But I still feel they're the strongest and Sebastian has been doing the strongest job. But it is a three-way battle. I think Red Bull potentially have an upgrade coming engine-wise, so it will be interesting to see their performance and they will continue to get stronger through the year."

"I'm telling you, we're doing all we can to win these races - and then Red Bull wins, then Ferrari wins, and then we win. It's great to have that and personally I love it. It's the biggest

challenge that I've had with my boys [Mercedes], but I'm loving that challenge. I'm loving having to dip super deep into my technical knowledge and learning more and how I can communicate, how I can pick the right set-up - all the different things."

Red Bull's title chances likely hinge on the progress of Renault's update package, which is due to arrive in time for the race in Canada. However, Red Bull may not run it this weekend due to only six units being ready across the six Renault-powered cars.

Ricciardo believes a third win before the summer break will be essential if he is to be a dark horse for the title.

"Lewis still has a good buffer on me, but it's not impossible," he said. "We've probably got to prove on at least one other circuit before the break that we can win again, and then maybe we've got a nice little outside chance."

Hamilton: Ricciardo's options

Daniel Ricciardo's options for his future are more limited than they appear, according to Lewis Hamilton.

Despite repeated speculation that he's being courted by Ferrari and Mercedes, possibly to replace Valtteri Bottas at the latter when his deal ends this year.

"I can't imagine how he's mentally positioned himself," said Hamilton. "[Red Bull] is still a strong team, they've got good potential moving forwards. I would

imagine his future is there, but he's one of the top drivers so I'm sure he has options."

Hamilton believes Ricciardo is the number one driver at Red Bull, and that he should feel valued by the team he drives for.

"Daniel's the lead driver at Red Bull. But he's got a team-mate that is, from what I hear, making a lot more money and yet he's [Ricciardo] more consistent, keeping the car together a lot more. It's important that you feel valued."

Ferrari star Raikkonen goes legal over extortion claims by female based in Montreal

A complaint has been made to police in Canada on behalf of Ferrari driver Kimi Raikkonen alleging he is the victim of extortion by a woman in Montreal.

The complaint, filed by a Montreal legal firm working for Raikkonen, claims he has been threatened with public accusations of sexual misconduct unless he provided financial compensation.

In 2016 the woman alleged online that she was involved in an incident with an unnamed F1 driver and his friend while she was working at a bar after that year's Canadian GP.

She claimed the intoxicated driver touched her breast while she was working as a waitress and that an anonymous friend put his hand down the front of her underwear.

Earlier this year she published a

follow-up stating that she had protected the driver too long and would now act.

A representative of Raikkonen's legal team in Montreal told *MN*'s sister title *Autosport* that the woman informed them of the initial accusations.

They then received a letter last week, on May 23, stating she would go public with the accusations

without recompense, which the representative told *Autosport* was a "huge" amount of money.

He said Raikkonen denies the allegations completely and the only course of action to "protect the driver's reputation" was to file an extortion complaint. A resolution is not expected for several months, especially if it involves court action.



Raikkonen employed lawyers

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ANGELOR. DRIVE

THIS WEEKEND WE'VE GOT ALL THE ACTION - BRITISH GT, F3, MINI CHALLENGE AT SILVERSTONE, NOT TO MENTION RADICALS AT SPA...

YES MEGA - THE SUNOCO WHELEN CHALLENGE MIGHT LOOK A WHOLE LOT DIFFERENT AT THE END OF IT...

POOR BODKE NOT SELLING ANY...

MMMM... I HAVE AN IDEA THAT MIGHT HELP.

LATER ON...

COME ON PHIL KEEN AND STUART MOSELEY

I LOVE LUNDQVIST SWEDISH FLAG PLEASE

LEADERBOARD

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2. Phil Keen
3. Nicolai Kjeldgaard
4. Stuart Moseley
5. Yelmer Buurman

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'Full list of the runners and riders'
Le Mans preview, p23



Photos: Porsche

PORSCHE RUNS RETRO LIVERIES



Porsche has unveiled retro liveries that two of its GTE Pro class factory entries will run in this month's Le Mans 24 Hours to celebrate the manufacturer's 70 years in sportscars. One of Porsche's regular World Endurance Championship entries will use the same colours as the Rothmans Porsche 956 and 962C Group C cars that competed in the 24 Hours in 1982-'87. The other Manthey-run WEC car will race at Le Mans on June 16/17 with the 'Pink Pig' colour scheme first run on the widebody Porsche 917/20 that took part in the French enduro in 1971. The inside of the garages from which the Manthey factory squad will run the cars has also been given a retro look for Le Mans (see right). The cladding has a brick effect to mimic the old pits that were in place between 1956 and 1990.



Photos: LAT



Seefried, Klien and Costa victorious

Lexus takes first win after Blancpain thriller

A Lexus won a Blancpain GT Series race for the first time after taking the lead on the last lap of a truly incredible Endurance Cup race at Paul Ricard last weekend.

The Bentley Continental crew of Jordan Pepper, Steven Kane and Jules Gounon – which qualified 18th – claimed the lead with 40 minutes of the six-hour contest remaining when the SMP Racing Ferrari 488 of Miguel Molina lost a wheel.

But after a late full course yellow for a damaged kerb, the Emil Frey Lexus RC F of Marco Seefried, Christian Klien and Albert Costa closed right in and Costa pounced with three corners to go.

For the first five hours, the race was controlled by the Garage 59 McLaren 650S of Ben Barnicoat, Andrew Watson and Come Ledogar. They had built a 20-second advantage until two consecutive safety cars bunched the pack up and erased their lead.

The Ferrari crew then used their shorter joker pitstop to grab first place after the final round of stops – with more woe following for the Garage 59 McLaren squad as they received a drivethrough penalty for having two mechanics in the working area of the pitlane when the car departed. Despite this, Barnicoat, Watson and Ledogar still took third behind the Bentley.

Further back, there was some success for McLaren still as Alexander West, Chris Harris and Chris Goodwin won the Am class.

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

The start of the second IndyCar race from Detroit was delayed by nearly 40 minutes after the safety car crashed while leading the field on the formation lap. Ryan Hunter-Reay won the race after passing Andretti Autosport team-mate Alexander Rossi late on to record his first victory since 2015. Scott Dixon won the first race in Detroit, holding off a late charge from Hunter-Reay...

Reigning NASCAR Cup series champion Martin Truex Jr held on through a spate of late cautions to take his second victory of the season at Pocono.

The Furniture Row Racing driver ran consistently in the top five throughout, and kept ahead of the pack during two caution periods in the last 20 laps to win by 2.4 seconds... **The World Touring Car Cup's Argentina round has been dropped for 2018 and will be replaced with an event in Slovakia. The Termas de Rio Hondo circuit was a permanent fixture on the World Touring Car Championship calendar from 2013 until the category's final season last year but has been replaced by the Slovakia Ring due to economic difficulties...** Australian

Supercars is investigating hybrid technology as a possible option for its Gen3 regulations, series boss Sean Seamer has confirmed. Seamer explained that the hybrid talks are still in their infancy, but he hopes to have it locked down by the end of this year to give competitors time to get organised with the Supercars commission currently investigating how it could be incorporated... **After a number of clutch and engine management problems, an update is expected for the new Formula 2 car for Paul Ricard later this month, which is expected to fix both issues...**



Hunter-Reay won after safety car driver's crash caused long delay



Paffett was furious after crash that injured three marshals

Paffett slams officials after 'embarrassing' handling of pit crashes

DTM driver Gary Paffett has hit out at officials after Lucas Auer, Edoardo Mortara and Bruno Spengler were disqualified from the second Hungaroring race following pitlane incidents.

Three pitlane marshals were airlifted to hospital with leg injuries after Auer, who had qualified on pole, was unable to stop entering his pitbox and slithered into them.

One lap later, fellow Mercedes driver Mortara knocked over his pit gantry, while BMW man Spengler collided with one of his mechanics, albeit without causing injury.

The race was duly red-flagged, although all three continued and finished in the top 10.

But they were later disqualified after stewards ruled the accidents

had been an infringement of article 30.9 of the sporting regulations, which states: "The driver must reduce speed as soon as he joins the deceleration zone so that he can stop his car at the pits without endangering other participants or the marshals."

Paffett, the 2005 champion, criticised the stewards, tweeting: "With the pitlane in the condition it was today it was nearly impossible not to crash."

Paffett had earlier lambasted the decision to only red flag the race after all three incidents happened, saying Mortara's crash "could have killed people".

"The whole race was disastrous, it was the most embarrassing DTM race I've been in over the last 15 years," he said.

"Honestly don't know how you

can let a race carry on with a guy with a broken leg in the pitlane.

"How can you have an ambulance parked in the pitlane and let people do pitstops on a surface that you already see is like ice? I don't understand it.

"As soon as you see one accident like that, you red flag the race immediately. You know people are gonna make pitstops because it is raining. Edo hit the pit gantry and it could have killed people."

Auer spoke of his regret after the incident, saying his "heart wasn't in the race anymore" and called on the DTM to ensure that the incident is not repeated.

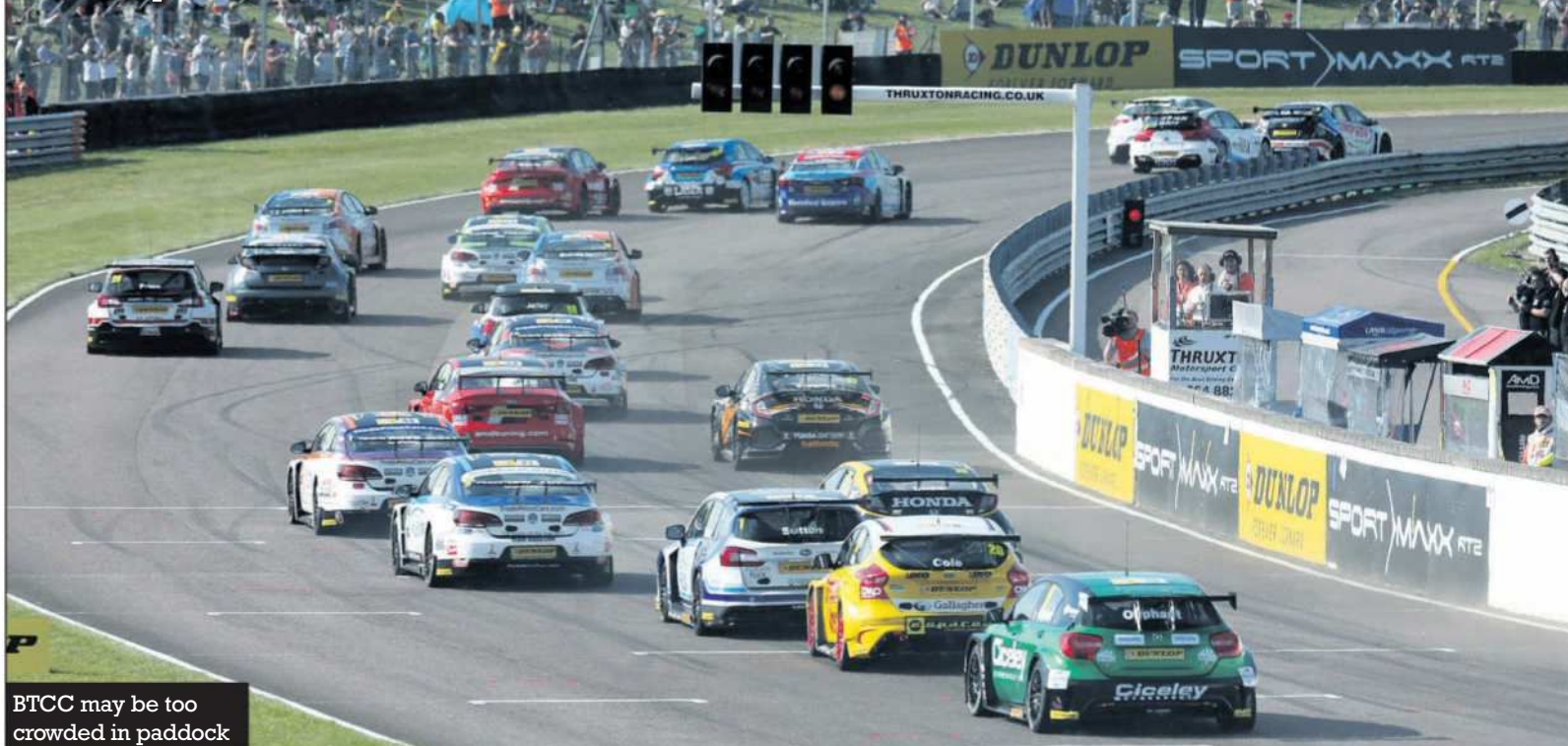
BMW driver Marco Wittmann won the restarted race after Mercedes' Paul di Resta had triumphed in the opening contest.

RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins

BTCC WANTS TO REDUCE NUMBER OF ENTRIES

Tin-top series bosses want to trim amount of cars



BTCC may be too crowded in paddock



Gow: fewer entries

By Matt James

British Touring Car Championship series director Alan Gow says it is his desire to see a maximum of 26 cars on the grid in the future.

Thirty-two cars participate in the series presently, and each entry has a TOCA BTCC Licence [TBL], which secures their place in the line-up. This

system was implemented for the 2014 season onwards.

TBLs can be sold or leased between teams with the approval of TOCA. But, if a team defaults on the conditions of the TBL, which include appearance at every round and stipulations over the number of driver swaps during the year, then the TBL is forfeited.

Gow said that the current 32-car line-up meant the BTCC

was at its very limit, and he had a desire to slash that number by six.

"I would prefer for there to be less and, in fact, I've been telling the teams over the last couple of years that I want to reduce the grid size. I'm not going to just take a team's TBL from them, so have been hoping it will be achieved through natural attrition," said Gow. "Each year, the teams bring more and

more kit with them and you only have to look at the paddock – at some smaller venues, we are simply bursting at the seams. High numbers can also create problems on-track: for example on the tight Indy track at Brands or at Knockhill, with the cars so close there are just too many cars fighting for the same piece of track.

"A more consolidated entry would be better for everyone."

DPE withdraws from Brands Hatch meeting with engine issues

DPE Motorsport was forced to withdraw its two Alfa Romeo Giuliettas from the TCR UK races at Brands Hatch – leaving just 12 cars on the grid – after both suffered unrelated engine problems in qualifying.

Debutant Robert Gilmour – who was replacing Aiden Moffat at the team after the BTCC driver quit the series – was able to set the eighth fastest time before his car blew a valve, while the sister

car of Derek Palmer Jr had a head gasket fail. The engines have now been sent back to Italy for further analysis.

"These cars are new – it just takes a minute to get them sorted," said team boss Derek Palmer Sr. "We're doing our testing in the public."

The team has been struck by poor reliability at all three TCR UK meetings, but Palmer confirmed it will be present at the next round at Castle Combe next month, with

further testing planned.

"We've had two major breakdowns but we'll just overcome it," added Palmer. "We'll do whatever it takes. The cars will be right. Alfa Romeo is very keen that the cars are right, we're keen that the cars are right."

Even with the addition of Alex Morgan's Renault Megane, with the Alfas out, the series still had fewer cars than the 13 it had for its first race at Silverstone.



Alfas were a rare sight at Brands Hatch as both had issues

Warren Scott set to join TCR UK, forming a two-car BMR entry

Team BMR is set to field two cars in TCR UK from the next round of the championship at Castle Combe after plans for team boss Warren Scott to join the series at Brands Hatch fell through.

The squad has run British Touring Car Championship driver Josh Price in a first-generation Honda Civic since round two at Knockhill, with

Scott now intending to join him for the rest of the season.

After missing out on one of the similar FK2-shape Civics, another option was for Scott to use the car vacated by championship frontrunner Ollie Taylor, who has upgraded to a newer FK7 model. However, it could not be prepared in time.

"The first car never materialised, and then I was

going to borrow a car from Mark [Hunt] at Pyro and unfortunately he couldn't get it ready in time," said Scott.

"I think I should go well [at Castle Combe]. From my days on motorcycles, I've done a lot of laps round Castle Combe.

"We should be running with Josh and myself for the rest of the year and then looking at a proper challenge next year."

IN BRIEF

Kent's move

Ford Fiesta Championship regular Bradley Kent switched to the Mazda MX-5 Supercup for last weekend's round at Brands Hatch, making his rear-wheel-drive debut. Kent, younger brother of TCR UK driver Lewis, qualified 19th and took a best finish of 13th over the three races in a car prepared by MX-5 specialist Paul Sheard.

Kendrick's woe

Simon Kendrick was twice denied a shot at victory in the MG Owners' Club Championship races at Donington Park last weekend when his car expired in a cloud of steam. The double series champion led the opening five laps of the first race from pole before his MG F overheated. In race two he was second to Martin Willis before developing a misfire that preceded further engine overheating.

Simmons tops test

British Formula 4 points leader Ayrton Simmons topped the times in the series' official test day at Croft on Monday. The JHR Developments driver's time was just six thousandths of a second faster than Arden racer Jack Doohan. Double R's Kiern Jewiss, who is second in the points, was fourth. The next rounds of the championship take place at Oulton Park this weekend.

Stratton to hold test day

Stratton Motorsport will hold a test day over the coming months in an attempt to find a driver for its BRDC British Formula 3 team. Stratton attempted to enter the 2018 season but has missed all three rounds so far as no suitable driver was found. Race manager David Kershaw said: "We were asked if we wanted to break the cars down for spares but we weren't prepared to do that, we still want to run them. That's our ambition."



BTCC ace won't have time for TCR

Tordoff out of time to make Brands TCR debut

British Touring Car Championship racer Sam Tordoff says he was disappointed to miss out on making his TCR UK debut at Brands Hatch last weekend as it represented his final chance to tackle the series this year.

The former BTCC runner-up said he was initially looking at the series in conjunction with his touring car boss, Motorbase Performance's David Bartrum, at the start of the season.

Motorbase shelved its TCR plans earlier this year, but Tordoff still wanted to tackle the round but ran out of time to organise a fresh deal.

"I had forgotten that [the Brands Hatch rounds] were coming up so quickly," said Tordoff. "I rushed around and tried to get something organised with a new team, but we just couldn't make it happen. I wanted to sample TCR just to see what they are like – I have never driven one but they look like good fun.

"The only problem is that with my work, BTCC and historic racing commitments, I won't have the time to do any of the remaining rounds."



BMR boss Scott (left) will join TCR

Win on China GT debut for Fagg

British GT4 frontrunner Charlie Fagg made a winning debut in the China GT Championship at the Zhejiang Circuit last weekend.

Fagg, who is part of the McLaren GT young driver programme, swapped his Tolman Motorsport-run McLaren 570S GT4 for a similar car run by Winning Team. He shared the car with fellow Briton David McIntyre.

Having taken pole and led race one, Fagg/McIntyre finished fourth after losing time behind a safety car cost them positions. The pair then made no mistakes in race two to win.

"What a feeling," said Fagg. "The team and David were sublime. Hopefully I will return soon to try and keep McLaren where it should be, on the top step."

● The British GT3 grid will swell to 14 cars for this weekend's Silverstone 500 showpiece with the addition of an Aston Martin Vantage run by Ultimate Speed. Mike Brown and Matt Manderson will share the car. The pair's most recent British GT appearance came at Brands Hatch last year.



Photos: Gary Hawkins, LAT, Oliver Read

Some drivers weren't eligible for points

MAZDA MX-5 AIR FILTER CONFUSION

An eligibility row led to three cars in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup running in an invitation class at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Nick Boon, Geoff Gouriet and Tom Parker were forced to race for no points after being unable to fit the requisite air filter system to their cars, although Parker managed to source one

overnight for races two and three.

Confusion emerged over differing interpretation of regulation 5.7.5, which states: "It is permitted to replace the standard induction system cold air pipe and filter with an aftermarket induction kit, i.e. Pipercross universal VM7100." Some drivers had taken this wording to mean that other aftermarket brand kits

could also be used on their cars.

A clarification was then issued to state that "the Pipercross Venom universal VM7100 is the part that *must* be used".

A number of drivers changed to the correct part between qualifying and the first race and were allowed to compete as normal.

The British Racing and Sports Car

Club's competitions director Dominic Ostrowski commented: "It's unfortunate for [the affected drivers] but we had to draw the line and say that is the regulation. It had been brought to our attention that some of them weren't running to the regulations so that was the best option to allow them to still race this weekend."

Ahmed 'not thinking about the championship' after taking F3 series lead

Formula 3 European Championship leader Enaam Ahmed believes that he is far from being the title favourite, despite his two wins in last weekend's Hungaroring round propelling him into the series lead.

The 18-year-old vaulted fellow Briton Dan Ticktum for the championship advantage with his first win on Sunday, and his second victory later that day put him 18 points in front of Ferrari protege Guan Yu Zhou and 20 clear of Red Bull Junior Ticktum.

Reigning BRDC British F3 champion Ahmed's victories came on the heels of his first podium finish, a second place in the Pau Grand Prix at the opening round on the French street circuit.

"The start of this season has surpassed my expectations, for my first race I would have been happy to get a top 10," said the Hitech GP driver. "I never thought I would be in a position to fight for the championship. "I'm not thinking about the

championship, I'm just going to try and go for wins and pole positions.

"This championship is such a different league [to anything I've done before] I don't want to look into it too much."

Ticktum, who beat Ahmed to the 2017 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award, took victory in the opening race of the weekend.

● Fortec Motorsports returned to European F3 last weekend with Petru Florescu and recorded a best result of 19th in race three.



Ahmed now leads European F3 standings after taking two wins at the Hungaroring



From Sweden to the UK: Arvidsson raced in Britain for the first time at Donington Park

Swedish Clubmans driver makes UK debut, three more outings planned

Reigning Swedish Clubmans champion Monika Arvidsson made her UK racing debut at Donington Park last weekend in the equivalent British Automobile Racing Club-run series.

The 17-year-old began her career in karting aged seven, progressing to Clubmans in 2016 and finishing runner-up in her first season before

winning the title the following year.

Arvidsson said: "This is my third season [of car racing] and my first time in England. There's more good drivers in good cars here so there's more competition.

"The circuit is so much fun. The elevation changes are wonderful. It's the best circuit and everything is just better here in my opinion."

Although Arvidsson is driving the same Mallock Mk29 as she did in Sweden, adapting from rolling starts to the BARC's standing starts cost her positions off the line but she recovered to claim two second places across the three races.

Arvidsson will enter a further three rounds at Snetterton, Anglesey and Silverstone this year.

LMP3 and GT Cup attract low numbers for Spa-Francorchamps

Low grid numbers were evident in the combined LMP3 Cup and GT Cup races at Spa-Francorchamps last weekend as just 16 cars took part.

Only four LMP3 cars competed in both races, matching the same number that initially took part in the previous round at Brands Hatch.

Tony Wells and Colin Noble

took victory in race one for Ecurie Ecosse/Nielsen Racing in their Ligier JS P3, while Mectech Motorsport duo Duncan Williams and Bradley Smith won the second aboard a Norma M30.

Twelve cars competed in the GT Cup across five divisions, with two-time GT Cup champion Paul Bailey taking his first class win since returning to the series.

Alongside Phil Glew, the pair won the second GTC race in a Ferrari 488 Challenge, while Laki Christoforou and Fulvio Mussi won the first, also in a 488 Challenge.

Overall GT Cup honours went to Nigel Hudson and Adam Wilcox (Aston Martin Vantage GT3) and Gareth Downing (Mosler MT900) respectively.



Only four LMP3 cars raced at Spa, while there were 12 cars in GT Cup across five different classes



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RACING NEWS

Photos: Steve Jones, Gary Hawkins, Caroline Welham, Mick Walker



Welham (r) will make the step up

Karters to make the jump to F1000 series

A pair of promising 16-year-old karters will join the F1000 field later this year.

Highly-rated Rob Welham – who was rookie champion in the Super One Junior TKM series last year and is targeting the title this term – will make his debut in the Rockingham races on June 23/24.

Then later in the year successful club karter Reece Lycett will also compete, with both drivers having benefited from the F1000 iZone driver development programme.

“I had an amazing test day with the Jedi Racing Cars factory team,” said Welham, who will be 60 years younger than the oldest competitor on the grid – Peter Lague – at Rockingham. “I had a few prep sessions at iZone on the simulator but nothing prepared me for how I felt after the first run. I’m still buzzing! After a few sighting laps I let it go a bit and was hooked.”

Lycett, who is set to begin competing at Croft in September, added: “From as early as I can remember I’ve dreamt about driving a race car. Getting the chance to drive the Jedi was amazing, the speed and acceleration are truly breathtaking. I’d recommend it to anyone making the step from karting to car racing.”

There are three other karters who are part of F1000’s testing and coaching programme.

Championship manager Frazer Corbyn welcomes the diverse range of drivers on the grid. He said: “Although the Jedi Racing Car is fast it’s also very forgiving, so it’s a perfect choice for youngsters to step up from karting into single seaters.”

BUMPER ENTRIES FOR FIRST CMMC MEETING

Mallory Park event will be first for new club since MSA recognition



Full grids will be at Mallory

By Stefan Mackley

The Classic and Modern Motorsport Club's first official meeting will take place this weekend with bumper grids for the majority of races.

The Classic and Modern Motorsport Festival will take place on Sunday at Mallory Park, with a number of races being held by the CMMC.

The Motorsports School Sports

Saloon Challenge will feature 18 cars including four Ariel Atoms, Mazda MX-5s, two Citroen C1s and a Triumph Spitfire amongst others.

Eighteen cars will also compete in the British Thoroughbred Sports/Saloon/GT and the Classic Car Challenge – including a Jaguar XJ12 and XJS, Morgan +8, five MGBs and a Triumph GT6 from Australia.

The meeting will also feature motorcycle racing and a host of guest

championships from established clubs like the Historic Sport Car Club.

Richard Culverhouse, founder of the CMMC and formerly of the Classic Sports Car Club said: “People don’t want to see the same make of cars go around: there are plenty of one-make series.

“It’s a real clubby meeting and it’s grown from last year [which was organised by the 360 Motor Racing Club]. We couldn’t get the bikes on

board [last year] but we’ve got a full grid of 30 and 500cc F3 cars instead of the Formula Fords.”

A full grid is expected for the HSCC’s 70s Road Sports and almost 20 cars for the Historic Road Sports series.

The CMMC also plans to hold a meeting at Snetterton in September, which will include a one-off race for powerful production-based cars, with the aim of creating a new series in 2019 if there’s enough interest.



Write off: Ballard suffered this spectacular crash at Brands Hatch

Ballard bounces back from Brands MG crash to win in new car at Silverstone National

Taylor Ballard took a double MG Trophy Class C win at Silverstone’s MG Live last weekend in a new car after writing off his previous ZR in a spectacular Brands Hatch crash.

Ballard won the opening Class C race of the season at Silverstone’s National circuit in April but then in the first race of the following meeting

at Brands later in the month he barrel rolled at Paddock Hill Bend and came to rest on top of a barrier.

“The previous car was a write off,” Ballard said. “We had to build a new car ready for MG Live so we built it in four weeks. It was a complete rebuild, so rollcages, engines, axles, painting, welding, the lot. It was a bit manic,

but we got there in the end.

“To be back in the car felt quite weird, but I enjoyed it and soon felt back at home. I couldn’t wait to get back out after the accident, I was gutted to miss race two [at Brands]. I’m young enough, I have no fear!”

Sam Kirkpatrick also returned to the MG Trophy in a new ZR 170 after he missed

the Brands meeting altogether after writing his car off at Silverstone in the opening race of the year. At the MG Live meeting he returned to take Class B pole and finish the opening race second in class. In the second race he stopped with a transmission problem shortly after taking the class lead.

South African drivers impressed after Silverstone MG Live outings

Two South African drivers joined the MG Trophy competitors at Silverstone for MG Live last weekend.

Danie Van Niekerk and Cliff Bacon took part in MG ZR170s in the Class B category, although for Van Niekerk it was not the first time he’d raced in the event.

“Paul [Luti – last year’s MG Trophy overall runner-up] is one of my biggest friends and last year he invited us to come and race here,” said Van Niekerk, who made a successful return.

In the opening race Van

Van Niekerk competed

Niekerk finished sixth in class, rising to second in race two, earning him a driver of the race award.

For Bacon it was his first races outside of South Africa.

“I was going to come along with him [Van Niekerk] just to support

him,” Bacon said, “and then he found out that he had a car for me to borrow so I was glad to have the opportunity.”

Bacon’s opening race lasted only a lap after he had contact on the front-left of his ZR with a car ahead that cut across him, and the resultant hub damage caused a puncture.

In race two he brought the car home 19th.

He added: “The guys here don’t understand what they’ve got. This is just brilliant, it’s just beautiful out here. They’ve got so much – in South Africa we’ve got nothing in comparison to this.”



Photos: Steve Jones



There were two dramatic crashes at the Thruxton 50th anniversary meeting last weekend. Mini Se7en driver Daniel Budd had a spectacular roll on Woodham Hill, while Martin Bloss also flipped over at the chicane in his Van Diemen RF83 after colliding with Andrew Smith in the single-seater race (top). Both drivers escaped injury.



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HISTORICS

'A large crowd turned out'

Historic cars shone, below

Photos: Paul Lawrence



DOWN THE PUB WITH

NICK SAVAGE

Age: 69 Lives: Ruislip
In his final season of racing

He's raced for 28 years

"I started when I got made redundant. I think my wife hoped that I would eke out the redundancy pay to provide for her and our young son, but I went and bought a racing car. It was a 1958 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint and I was recommended to the HSCC because it was suitable for Road Sports."

He started with the HSCC

"The HSCC proved to be the ideal home as it had a novice championship at the time. This was pre-ARDS and in the days of steam-operated racing, I got a suit and turned up with my race licence to Donington, which was my first track. That was 1991 and I've done about 200 races in all."

He now races a 1960s Camaro

"Very sadly the owner of the Chevrolet Camaro I'm driving now, Hugo Dixon, died most unexpectedly. Hugo used to race three or four times a year and had the Camaro prepared. I'd always loved this era of American cars and the sound of a V8. There's just nothing like the sound of a V8. I've had more fun in the last six years racing the Camaro than I probably had in the previous 10 years racing Alfas."

Retirement beckons

"This is definitely my final season. I cherry pick the dates a bit because the Camaro is not the ideal car for Cadwell Park, for example. The Finals Meeting in October will be my final race and then I'll sell the car. I drive it to and from each meeting: well, to and hopefully from! I do about 3000 miles a year in total in the Camaro, including the races."

It is a thirsty road car

"The fuel consumption on the track is four or five mpg and about 12 on the road if I'm lucky. But it sounds great! You get to know the car really well and it is a beautiful old beast. I'm a hopeless driver but I enjoy myself. Historic Road Sports is a friendly crew and there is good behaviour on the track, which can't be said for every series I've raced in."

He enjoys historics

"There is something about the atmosphere that I like and this is club racing. It's not an exercise in spending huge money: it is just going out and having a good time. A life without racing would be a loss, so I'll still come along and watch."



Savage: retirement soon

ANNUAL HISTORIC EVENT AT THRUXTON

Plans for more classic racing after 50th anniversary success



Historic FF1600 was a standout category

By Paul Lawrence

An annual classic and historic racing festival at Thruxton is now likely after the success of the circuit's 50th anniversary meeting last weekend.

After a large crowd watched a mix of races and demonstration sessions, circuit boss Bill Coombs said he hoped to build on the event and create an annual historic festival at the

high-speed Hampshire track. With races from Motor Racing Legends, the Historic Sports Car Club and the Mini Seven Racing Club, the 50th meeting celebrated the heritage of the UK's fastest circuit and some fine racing was capped by two slip-streaming thrillers for the Historic Formula Fords.

"We're very keen to have a flagship historic meeting covering all the ages, to appeal to a wide audience," said

Coombs, an accomplished historic single-seater racer. "I hope the 50th event is not a one-off and I'd like to try and build it into one of the big events of the Thruxton season. This weekend worked very, very well and there is plenty of content out there. The track has a great history."

If Coombs is able to develop the meeting into a regular fixture, it will join the British Touring Car Championship

and British Superbikes as key dates in the Thruxton calendar, which is limited to just 12 noisy days of qualifying and racing each year.

Highlights of the demonstration sessions included former F1 racer Karun Chandhok pushing hard in an ex-Rosberg Williams FW08C: "It is a very special car and I love Thruxton from my days in Formula 3. It's got a lot of character!"



Lauda's F2 car was a star

Engine issues thwart Aussie as he tries to emulate Lauda's F2 finish

The UK racing return of the ex-Niki Lauda Formula 2 March 722 was one of the highlights of the Thruxton 50th anniversary meeting, although owner Stephen Weller was thwarted in his bid to match Lauda's 1972 podium finish.

Ex-pat Australian Weller also owns the ex-Hiroshi Kazato March 722 but ran the Lauda car at Thruxton in the pair of single-seater races. The car ran strongly and was as high as second in Sunday's race before engine

issues prompted a late retirement.

"I've been amazed at the interest shown in the car," said Weller, who is on a summer UK racing tour.

"I would have loved to have finished third, to match Lauda's 1972 finish," he added.

Brown joined by granddaughters on Epynt

Welsh rallying veteran Terry Brown will be joined in competition this month by his two granddaughters Angharad and Cathy.

All three of them will compete in the annual Epynt hillclimb, which uses the section of the famous ranges on the climb up from Four Ways Bridge. Terry will drive his modified 2500cc rally-prepared

Escort Mk2 while the ladies will share his familiar historic specification Mk2.

"They wanted to have a go and the car needs a new bodyshell, so it doesn't matter if they bend it," said the septuagenarian, who has raced and rallied extensively over a 50-year career. The two-day Brecon Motor Club hillclimb runs over the weekend of June 16/17.

Epic new event planned for New Zealand

The Endurance Rally Association has unveiled a new 21-day event in New Zealand, running from February 15 to March 8 2020.

Rally New Zealand 2020 will take a field of classic and historic cars on a route around both North and South Island, taking in special tests and regularity sections along the way.

Highlights should include the spectacular 30-mile Motu Road Gorge as used in the World Rally Championship and the Bruce McLaren Motorsport Park at Taupo.

The event will start in Auckland and finish in Christchurch and the ERA will organise shipping of cars from Europe.

Carlisle Stages shows the way for a more relaxed running order for historic rallying

Paul Mankin's Lotus Cortina will run first on the road on Friday night's leg of the ATL Carlisle Stages as the MSA's relaxation of running order rules starts to take effect.

For the first time since the

Mankin: first on the road

move to one field of cars was implemented early in 2015, historic cars will lead the field



on the joint BHRC and BTRDA championship event.

The Friday night leg of stages in the Newcastle region of Kielder forest will feature a field of 50 historic and 2WD cars, with the first 14 Category 1 and 1600cc historic running first in reverse order. After a

short gap, the balance of the field will be headed by the Escort Mk2s of Paul Barrett and Matthew Robinson.

Saturday's stages will feature a revised order with modern 1400s joining the older cars at the front before the historic section finishes at main service.

IN BRIEF

F5000 at Brands

Formula 5000s from the Derek Bell Trophy will race as part of this weekend's American SpeedFest at Brands Hatch. Michael Lyons will head the field in one of the cars from the family stable while the ex-Peter Gethin title-winning McLaren M10B makes a rare race outing in the hands of Matthew Wurr.

Carlisle Stages is go

Paul Barrett and Dai Roberts will head the field into round three of the MSA British Historic Rally Championship, this weekend's ATL Carlisle Stages in Kielder. The Northern Ireland/Welsh pair have a 21-point lead after two rounds but will face another stern challenge from Matthew Robinson when the action starts on Friday evening.

Chevron returns

The Formula Atlantic Chevron B45 raced by Jim Crawford is being offered for sale via Alan Cornock. One of only four B45s built in 1978, the car was raced when new by Eje Elgh and Keke Rosberg in the US before coming back to the UK for Crawford. Chassis 4 is ideal for Derek Bell Trophy and Historic F2 races.

Bloss: roll repairs

Ian Pearson worked wonders to get his FF2000 Van Diemen rebuilt overnight at Thruxton after Martin Bloss rolled it twice on Saturday following a clash of wheels at the chicane. Pearson got it fixed ready for Bloss to finish fifth overall in the second single-seater race on Sunday.

Red Kite full up

More than 100 two-wheel-drive entries, including over 60 historics, are already entered for the Red Kite Stages on June 24, which will run to the Rally 2WD format. The total entry for the event is now at 120 cars with more due before the closing date as the rally moves to the seldom-used forests of South Wales for the first time.

Haugland in Ulster

Former Skoda works rally driver John Haugland will return to driving a rally prepared Skoda 130 on the Titanic Deja Vu Ulster celebration event on September 1. The Norwegian ace, a three-time class winner on the Ulster Rally, will use the car owned by rallying Skoda dealer John Mulholland, revisiting stages he tackled in the 1970s and 1980s.

Lamplough in F2

Half a century after he raced in the inaugural European Formula 2 race at Thruxton, Robs Lamplough returned to the Hampshire track to mark its 50th anniversary by racing his Winkelmann WDF2 in the weekend's Historic Formula Ford races. Now 75, Lamplough finished 12th in 1968 in a McLaren M4A.



Lamplough back at Thruxton

RALLY NEWS

VW'S ELECTRIC PIKES PEAK DEBUT



Volkswagen Motorsport's Pikes Peak challenger made its way up the 12.42-mile Colorado course for the first time last week. Romain Dumas was full of praise for the all-electric I.D.R, saying it was the best car he's ever driven up the mountain – and he's won the event three times before.

BREEN: CITROEN WILL PRESS ON

Irishman ready to lead the line on Rally Italy

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

By David Evans

Craig Breen says he won't let the upheaval at Citroen Racing – and Kris Meeke's departure – detract from his efforts at this week's Rally Italy.

This week's Alghero-based event is the first since Citroen rocked rallying with the sacking of the five-time event winner following his crash on Rally Portugal. Breen worked closely with his fellow Emerald Islander since the partnership came together at the start of 2016.

Breen will work with Mads Ostberg in Sardinia this week, while a long-term replacement for Meeke is considered. Citroen team principal Pierre Budar has already told *MN* the Breen-Ostberg alliance could be one solution for the remainder of the season.

Breen admitted the decision to drop Meeke took him by surprise.

"It's sad that it's happened," Breen said, "but the simple fact is that it's happened and we have to work with it. Nothing has or will detract from my determination to succeed. What's happened has

happened in the team, it sounds harsh, but it's not my decision. I'll do what I've always done, keep my head down, work hard and stay focused on the task in hand. And this week that task is to score the best possible result for the team in Italy."

Budar told *MN* last week that the loss of Meeke could have implications for the immediate development and pre-event set-up work for the team. Breen agreed with his boss, adding: "Kris had so much experience of the car and these events and the conditions. Of course it's going to be more difficult coming to these rallies without that experience – he was a constant reference. Like I said, this is the time for the team to stand up and do the job. For me it has to be business as usual, no distractions."

Breen knows he's landed a tricky event to start as team leader for the first time, he's only competed on Sardinia twice

Breen will miss Meeke input

before and retired from the opening leg with an oil leak aboard his C3 WRC 12 months ago.

"I've got to be completely honest and say this isn't one of my favourite rallies of the year," said Breen. "That said, the car has come such a long way since we were here last season – it was fantastic in Portugal and that feeling was there in the test as well. The good thing for me is that I start Friday eighth on the road and that's something I can look to use to my advantage. And, the route for the event hasn't changed significantly since last season, so the pacenotes Scott [Martin, co-driver] and I made last year will be a great base this week."

Citroen carried out its pre-event test in Spain rather than Sardinia last week, but Breen was on the Italian island early for some development running in Citroen's C3 R5.

"I hadn't driven the R5 car since October last year," said Breen, "and the team was keen to get my feedback on how the car

had progressed since then. I have to say, it felt fantastic. We were on a typically naddery, tight and twisty road and it was so nice to drive.

"I was really pleased to be out in the R5 car again, but it was also a bit of a bonus for me to get the chance to drive in 'stage' mode in Sardinia so close to the event. The test was fine, but these roads here are quite specific in terms of speed and surface and I'm really glad of the opportunity to be driving just days before we start the rally."

Sardinia might not be one of Breen's favourites, but his team-mate Ostberg is a big fan of Europe's hottest and hardest WRC round.

"I've always been quick here," said the Norwegian, who has started the event 10 times previously – finishing second in 2014. "I worked hard on the set-up for the car at the last rally in Portugal and during the test. I like this rally and I want to make the most of this chance. For whatever reason, there is a seat going for the rest of the year and I will do everything I can to prove to the team that I am ready for that."



Breen says he will be focusing on his own performances

SOLBERG JR SCOOPS NORDIC RALLYCROSS GLORY

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*'Magalhaes won
at his own pace'*
Acropolis Rally report, p17



Changes can boost
Hyundai's man

MIKKELSEN READY TO KICK-START HIS SEASON



Mikkelsen has "feeling"

Andreas Mikkelsen is ready to turn his "nightmare" season around and chase his first WRC victory with Hyundai at this week's Rally Italy.

A Rally Sweden podium aside, the Norwegian has endured a troublesome start to his first full year in an i20 WRC. Mikkelsen is, however, confident the work he did to the car during last month's Rally of Portugal will be enough for him to fight at the front in Sardinia this week.

Mikkelsen looked to have turned a corner in Portugal, posting second fastest on the

first day's Ponte de Lima test only for his charge to be halted by power steering failure two stages later. His rally was finished by a burst oil seal and engine fire at the opening day's final gravel test. He arrives on the Italian island sixth in the championship and 65 points adrift of his series leading team-mate Thierry Neuville.

"It's been a bit of a nightmare," Mikkelsen told MN. "Finally when I feel I can drive the car then I had the problems [in Portugal], it's a bit frustrating. Of course I was pissed off with

Portugal and I would like to have had a result, but I'm also a bit relieved because now I have a car that I like."

Mikkelsen explained the set-up changes he did with the car ahead of Portugal, which he's confident will work just as well in Sardinia.

"We worked a lot and made some changes with the set-up in the differentials," he said. "Before, I struggled to get the front turned in under braking and when I was going to the throttle then I would lose the rear. Now I can get the front

turned and the rear is more stable; we went softer with the rear and more open on the front [differential]. I still think there is some small room for improvement, but we're going in the right direction.

"Me and Anders [Jaeger, co-driver], we have been frustrated. We think that people think we have lost it, but we just didn't really have the feeling with the car and, at this level, you need to be at one with the car. I have been fighting in every corner so far this year, but this will work in Sardinia."



Evans feels ready for fight

Evans geared up for Sardinian challenge after upturn in form

Elfyn Evans will look to continue his upturn in form at this week's Rally Italy – one of his favoured rounds of the World Rally Championship.

M-Sport Ford's Welshman arrives in Sardinia on the back of a strong second place in Portugal and he says he's determined to use that

result to kick-on in the championship table.

"We've got to keep that momentum going," Evans said. "I have really good memories of Sardinia – it's the place I first drove a factory World Rally Car [finishing sixth in 2013] and it's an event I like. It's tough, it's a real

challenge and that's why I enjoy it. You've constantly got to have in mind how rough and abrasive the roads are and how you need to keep a margin for the tyres. Portugal was a good result for me and now I'm going to Sardinia to look for another strong result this week."

Gill, Kajetanowicz ready to step up

FIA regional rally champions Gaurav Gill and Kajetanowicz will step up to their World Rally Championship programmes at this week's Rally Italy.

Triple Asia Pacific champion Gill switches from a Skoda Fabia R5 to a Ford Fiesta R5 for four rounds of this year's WRC. He is expected to return for a full WRC2 campaign next season, when Indian firm MRF will become a nominated tyre supplier to the series.

Gill said: "To achieve what no Indian tyre manufacturer has ever done before and compete in what's considered to be the most difficult motorsport championship in the world is a huge achievement. It's a huge honour for me."

Triple ERC winner Kajetanowicz brings his Fiesta R5 for the start of his WRC2 effort – the Polish driver was last seen in the WRC when he tackled his home round of the series in 2016 and finished fourth in WRC2.



Toyota insists that the Yaris WRC is sturdy enough, despite the damage sustained in Portugal

Toyota not rushing into suspension fixes for its Yaris "tank"

Toyota Gazoo Racing technical director Tom Fowler has defended the reliability record of the Yaris WRC and insists he won't be hurried into any unplanned suspension developments.

Rock damage ruled both Jari-Matti Latvala and Ott Tänak out of contention from the last World Rally Championship round in Portugal, but Fowler said the team remains calm in its approach to what could be

the season's roughest roads in Sardinia this week.

"Our failure rate on suspension components is well below the normal expected value," Fowler told MN. "And the talk of our drivers and around the service park is that the Toyota's a tank."

"In the last couple of rallies people have started to ask questions about this area of the car, but nothing has changed [in the specification] and we have

nothing in the pipeline in this area. The only difference now is that the performance of the car has gone up and our drivers are in big fights for rally victories and when that happens everybody is pushing harder and the car takes more stress. Part of our work moving forward is analysing the data and deciding if we need to give this area more attention now we're frontrunners at some of the rougher rallies."

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Is this the end for Sebastien Ogier? Probably not..."



Is Sebastien Ogier in crisis? He hasn't been on the podium since early April; this is the first time he's been off the podium on consecutive rallies since mid-2016 and he hasn't been this far behind in the chase for the championship since 2012, when he was driving a Skoda Fabia S2000.

What's going on? Is this the end for the Frenchman? Do we dare think of the championship being won by somebody not called Sebastien for the first time since a chap called Petter won it 15 years ago?

Possibly. But probably not.

Argentina first: Ogier's not a fan of that rally. More precisely, he's not a fan of the rutted conditions which can prevail down those fast South American stages. If the five-time champion has a weak spot, that's it.

Portugal? A very simple mistake from Ogier. He cut a corner he'd told himself not to cut a few days earlier on the recce, broke the steering, failed to make the next left-hander and slipped off on the outside. It really wasn't anything more dramatic than that. Some made much out of his apparent lack of speed and scorching stage times over the weekend. He might not have managed scratch after scratch, but he was still quickest across the spread of Saturday afternoon.

And then we come to the powerstage, the place where Ogier was supposed to knock everybody out and pull the high five out of the bag. Instead, he came away with nothing. And left Portugal 19 points behind Hyundai's Thierry Neuville.

That powerstage performance was the one which got people really scratching their heads. How could that have happened? If you look a little closer, you'll see that Seb sent the world a message on the first run through Fafe. Running ninth on the road, he was fastest. A few hours later, with the order tinkered with for live television, he found himself second down the same stretch of road. Time-wise, he was two seconds faster in the afternoon than he had been in the morning. Compare that with powerstage winner Esapekka Lappi, who whipped 11s out of his first attempt.

Running on a dirty road, Ogier was powerless to do more in the powerstage. Superficially, it looked bad.

Superficially.

I remember a similar story a few years ago with the other Seb. It was 2009 and Loeb arrived in Poland on the back of one of his biggest ever crashes in the WRC, on the Acropolis. He clipped a tree root or something similar in Mikolajki and finished seventh. The first five rallies had netted him five wins and a 20-point lead in the championship (and, don't forget, this is in old money when a win was worth 10 not 25 points), but after round eight Loeb was a point behind Mikko Hirvonen.

Incredible. Game on. Cue predictions aplenty about France's then five-time champion losing it. What happened? Well, to give Hirvonen his due, he extended his lead at home in Finland and moved further ahead after Loeb's Citroen was penalised by a minute after the C4 WRC's anti-roll bars failed to conform with homologation papers.

What happened on the final two rounds? Loeb won both and took a sixth title by the smallest of margins. And that grip remained firm for a further three years.

Discount a French Seb at your peril. The fightback starts this week.



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

RALLY NEWS

IN BRIEF

Carnival spirit

Sunday's Abingdon Car-nival Stages takes place at the Dalton Barracks in Oxfordshire. The event offers more than 70 miles of stages and a mandatory charity donation is necessary as part of the entry fee.

Cronin is top man

Keith Cronin has been seeded car number one for the Rally van Wervik, which a number of British Rally Championship competitors are using as preparation for the Ypres Rally two weekends later. The event is the next round of the MSA Asphalt Rally Championship. Ford Fiesta S2000 driver and points leader Jason Pritchard is seeded sixth. The event takes place on Friday and Saturday this week.

Champs already

Jade Paveley has become one of the first rally champions of 2018, securing the Welsh Tarmacadam Junior title with four rounds to spare. Subaru Impreza driver Paveley is third in the overall championship after five rallies. Her next target is to seal the hotly contested C7 class for four-wheel-drive turbo-powered cars. She missed most of 2016 and '17 while rebuilding the Impreza.

Weeton returns

The Weeton Barracks will host its first of two rallies this year on Sunday for the Keith Frecker Memorial Stages. The Lancashire venue plays host to the fourth round of the Junior Formula 1000 Championship, and will be led away by Ford Escort Mk2 driver Mark Jasper. Around 50 miles will be on offer to the competitors.

BTRDA is back

This weekend's Carlisle Stages will be headed by the winner of the last two BTRDA rounds, Matt Edwards. The British Rally Championship M-Sport driver is using the BTRDA events as extra seat time this season, although Carlisle comes as many of his rivals competitors head to the Rally van Wervik. Luke Francis, Paul Bird, Stephen Petch and Mick O'Brien complete the top five entries.



Petch: car four in Carlisle

RALLY GB NATIONAL MILEAGE UPPED

Event changes to Friday to Saturday format for 2018

ITINERARY

Friday, October 5

STAGE	NAME/MILES
Start	Deeside Rally Village
SS1	Clocaenog (4.77 miles)
SS2	Brenig (18.1 miles)
SS3	Penmachno (10.53 miles)
SS4	Slate Mountain 1 (1.05 miles)
SS5	Slate Mountain 2 (1.05 miles)

Saturday, October 6

SS6	Myherin (12.60 miles)
SS7	Sweet Lamb/Hafren (12.39 miles)
SS8	Dyfi (12.10 miles)
SS9	Gartheiniog (7.00 miles)
SS10	Dyfnant (5.16 miles)
Finish	Deeside Rally Village

GB National has an eclectic field

Down Rally fills quickly, stuns organisers

Organisers of next month's Down Rally have said the interest shown towards the closed-road event by competitors based on either side of the Irish Sea has "surpassed their expectations".

Within just 20 minutes of entries officially opening for the fourth round of the MSA Asphalt Rally Championship, more than half the available spaces for the competition were taken.

Some of the leading names to appear on the unseeded entry list include Desi Henry and David Bogie in a brace of Skoda Fabia R5s, Northern Ireland Rally champion Kenny McKinstry, and rising talent Amy Cox.

As expected, Jason Pritchard, Melvyn Evans and Damian Cole – the top three Asphalt Rally Championship title contenders – are making the trip from the Mainland.

"We obviously hoped for a top quality entry, but it really has surprised us; we didn't ever

expect this. It has surpassed our expectations," said deputy clerk of the course, Brian Crawford.

"We have local crews from here in Northern Ireland and Ireland doing the rally. We also have crews travelling from England, Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man. There's even competitors making the trip from Jersey and France. Think about that: that isn't just jumping on one ferry with a van and trailer. That takes a fair amount of effort and preparation. We did our best to try and come up with a format that would please competitors, so it is quite satisfying as we watch the entries coming in."

Taking place on Saturday, July 21, the new-for-2018 event will feature four special stages with these run three times. The total competitive mileage also incorporates a spectator friendly special stage within the confines of the Eikon Exhibition Centre where rally HQ and the service park is to be based.



Event always brings drama

By Jack Benyon

The Wales Rally GB National Rally route has been revealed with increased stage mileage, and a switch to a Friday and Saturday format for 2018.

The event ran on Saturday and Sunday last year, but the organisers have listened to competitors. Many entrants in 2017 didn't finish the Sunday leg until the evening which didn't give them enough time to rest before returning to work, which was a concern.

In 2017, the overnight stop on Saturday was followed by just 15.07 competitive miles on Sunday, which competitors said was not worth the extra day and late finish.

With the majority of the mileage for this year's event on Saturday now anyway, the route change was made easier for the organisers.

Last year competitors drove 59.86 stage miles, with that expected to rise to over 85 this year when the event returns on October 4-7.

"The popularity of the WRGB National Rally is a really important success story for this event," said Wales Rally GB managing director Ben Taylor. "There are not many sports where amateurs can compete alongside their heroes and this is a brilliant opportunity for crews from all levels of the sport to tackle the stages of this amazing World Championship event."

"We have listened to the feedback from last year and moved the event to Friday-Saturday, as competitors didn't appreciate the overnight for little mileage on the Sunday."

"What we have delivered is some of the most iconic rally stages in Wales over two days of great fun and camaraderie, with its own high profile finish on Saturday evening in the Rally Village."

Entries for the event open on August 15, with the entry fee priced at £900 plus VAT. An entry for the full three-day international will cost £2200 plus VAT, with mileage expected to be just under 200.



Maurice Selden will photograph his 450th round of the World Rally Championship in Germany this summer. To mark the occasion there's an exhibition of the Welshman's pictures – including this stunner of Juha Kankkunen flying a Lancia Delta – at Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon from June 28-August 20. There will be a question and answer session with Maurice, Phil Mills and Sara Williams on the opening night. Details are available on the theatre's website.

CRONIN GIVES NEW CAR A DEBUT WIN TO BEAT BROTHER, DANIEL

PAGE 17

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'Another closed-road boost for the UK'
Coventry MotoFest, p28



Proton driver is relishing chance

Smith gets R2 prize drive for Carlisle

BTRDA two-wheel-drive frontrunner Mat Smith is the latest driver to be given a prize outing in a Ford Fiesta R2.

Pete Smith and his Swift Caravan concern have given multiple drivers struggling for a budget the chance to show what they can do in a newer car. Smith is the latest and will start the Carlisle Stages this weekend in the car.

"I got a message on Facebook asking if I wanted to drive the R2, of course I said yes!" said Smith, who sporadically competes in a 1400S-spec Proton Satria.

"I'm a bit old for this compared to some of the other drivers he's had in! I'm competitive and I want to win, but I have to be realistic and concentrate on bringing the car home safely."

Smith, whose Proton has a cracked block and will be out of action until later in the year, is hopeful he can match the pace of the class frontrunners like George Lepley, who leads the R2 Rallye Cup. "I'll be disappointed if I'm not on the pace by the end, but I'm not expecting to keep up from the start," added the 2014 1400S BTRDA champion.

"There are an awful lot of people with money out there doing their own rallying, but it's great what Pete is doing to give back to the sport and it's a fantastic opportunity."

Smith's Proton has a sequential gearbox and his previous car, a Ford Ka, was left-hand drive, so elements of the Fiesta will not be completely new.

R5 BRC COMPETITORS CAN'T COMPETE IN WRC2 ON RALLY GB

British Rally Championship R5 competitors will not be able to compete in the WRC2 section on Wales Rally GB this year.

The event is a round of the BRC this year, for the first time since 2008.

WRC2 competitors use a different control fuel than the BRC, meaning mixing competitors would not be possible.

Also, some BRC competitors who use tyres that aren't WRC-registered would be ruled out of competing as well.

"The drivers can't have priority seeding and run in WRC2," explained BRC championship co-ordinator and Rally GB clerk of the course Iain Campbell.

"There's a few reasons really: one is to keep them in a similar place on the road, but the other reason is we have Vital fuels as our control fuel, and if you run WRC2 you have to run Panta [company] fuel."

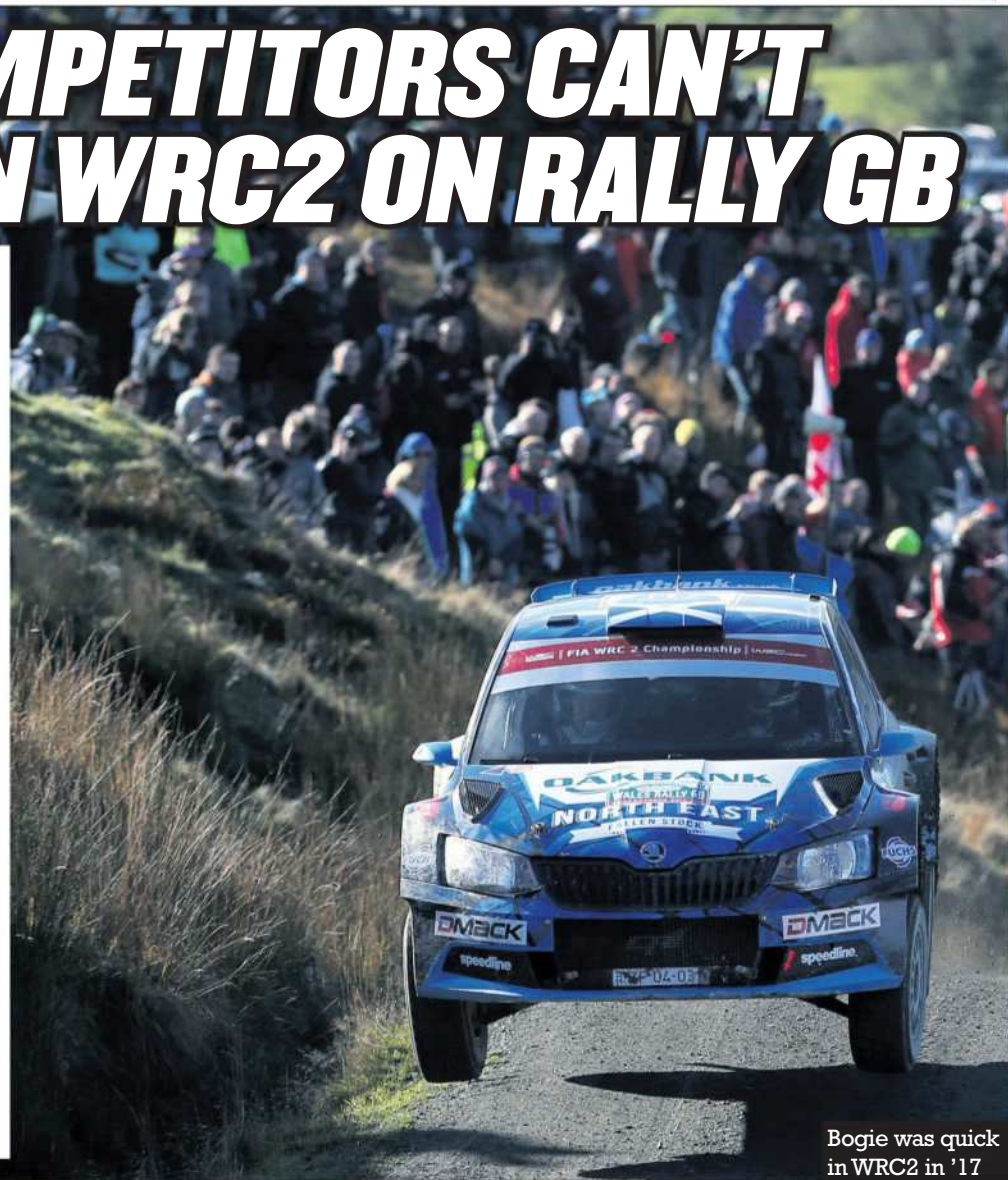
"The other reason is someone like Marty McCormack wouldn't be able to buy a WRC2 entry as

he runs on Kumho tyres, and they aren't currently registered for WRC2 competition. We do [have to compromise]. The fuel and the tyres are the obvious ones and the two championship regulations don't align."

CA1 Sport team boss Martin Wilkinson and his driver David Bogie both wanted to register for WRC2 for the event. "The attraction of Wales Rally GB being included in the British Championship is that you can go and compete against the best in the world," said Wilkinson.

"But if the rules and regulations mean that you can't, there's no point going to compete on Rally GB." Bogie added: "It's a bit disappointing. Every driver wants to pit themselves against the best. I realised it could have been an issue but I was hoping the organisers could find a way around that, and to incorporate it as one big battle."

All BRC competitors will have to do the international event.



Bogie was quick in WRC2 in '17

Mourne will go ahead, even with financial loss

This weekend's Mourne Rally will go ahead as planned even if it means running it at a financial loss, organisers have confirmed.

Entries have been slow to come in for the fourth round of the Northern Ireland Rally Championship. At the time of going to press, Derek McGarrity was the sole high-profile starter at the wheel of a Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

Clerk of the course Des O'Loan said it was important to hold the Mourne Rally to protect its long-term future. He said: "We have a poor entry which is disappointing. However, the club will run the rally even if it means a financial loss as it secures our future place in the MSA Northern Ireland Championship."

"A small team has put a massive effort into getting the rally to this point, so it's going run," added O'Loan.

Based in Newry, the Mourne Rally will comprise eight Tarmac stages to give a total competitive distance of 34 miles, in Slieve Gullion and Camlough mountains.

"The Forestry Service has harvested the trees over the last few years so the look of the stage has changed quite a lot," added O'Loan. "Parts have also been re-tarred, so it's smooth and it will be pothole free."

Photos: Nicholas Bhajan, Himal Reece



Two British crews took a podium finish on Rally Barbados last weekend, but neither could usurp now four-time winners Jeffrey Pantan/Michael Fennell Jr (top left). Rob Swann/Darren Garrod (top right) took second ahead of Paul Bird/Jack Morton after the latter punctured and lost almost a minute. Seven Brits featured in the event's top 12. L-r: Morton, Fennell, Pantan, Garrod and Swann.

Green confident of fighting for ST Trophy wins



ST Trophy battle is wide open between Green, Giddings and Hughes

Welshman Kalvin Green is confident of challenging for more Fiesta ST Trophy wins after taking his first victory last time out on the Plains Rally.

Green and co-driver Osian Owen are in their first year in the Ford Fiesta, but have adapted to the car quickly and head to this weekend's Carlisle Stages full of confidence.

Green, second in the points, said: "Times have come down massively from the Cambrian and there's seconds in it now so, now we know we can be contenders, we can have a good push on the remaining rounds."

"There's definitely more to come, I've

done three rallies in the car now so I'm getting used to it. I don't think we're at the peak yet. I think it will come as I get more confident in the car and in the notes. I can push on a bit more then."

Fellow Welshman James Giddings leads the series in his debut season in the BTRDA-supporting championship, but had an engine mount break while leading the class on the Plains, ruling him out of the running.

Zak Hughes, who impressed in the one-make Suzuki Shining Stars series last year, won the class on the Cambrian in February, but has had reliability issues since then. All three will do battle in Cumbria this weekend.

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RALLY REPORTS

Photos: ERC Media

MASTERFUL MAGALHAES

Victory narrows title deficit to Lukyanuk. By **Graham Lister**



Portuguese pair drove safely to win



Bruno (x) and Hugo

RESULTS

European Rally Championship, June 1-3, round 3/8, Athens

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Bruno Magalhaes/Hugo Magalhaes	Skoda Fabia R5	3h02m09.4s
2	Norbert Herczig/Ramón Ferencz	Skoda Fabia R5	+29.1s
3	Hubert Ptaszek/Maciej Szczepaniak	Skoda Fabia R5	+1m37.2s
4	Eyvind Brynildsen/Veronica Engan	Ford Fiesta R5	+2m35.2s
5	Simos Galatariotis/Antonios Ioannou	Skoda Fabia R5	+3m23.0s
6	Grzegorz Grzyb/Jakub Wrobel	Skoda Fabia R5	+5m20.6s
7	Jourdan Serderidis/Frederic Miclotte	Skoda Fabia R5	+5m55.5s
8	Orhan Avcioglu/Burcin Korkmaz	Skoda Fabia R5	+6m39.3s
9	Paulo Nobre/Gabriel Morales	Skoda Fabia R5	+6m55.3s
10	Tibor Erdi Jr/Gyorgy Papp	Mitsubishi Lancer E10	+9m07.8s

ERC2: Erdi/Papp; ERC3: Amritrajit Ghosh/Ashwin Naik (Ford Fiesta R2); ERC Ladies' Trophy: Emma Falcon (Citroen DS 3 R3T).

Bruno Magalhaes claimed his first win of the ERC season – and his first on the Acropolis – as championship leader Alexey Lukyanuk went from zero to hero and back to zero again.

Lukyanuk arrived in Greece on the back of winning the opening two rounds and very much a reformed character – his crash-happy reputation seemingly a thing of the past based on his dominant performances in the Azores and Gran Canaria.

But he undid all that good work with an innocuous driving blip on Saturday's second stage that would have major consequences for him. It was also an unlikely title lifeline for Magalhaes, the Portuguese closing to within 14 points of the Russian having been 41 adrift at the ceremonial start in Athens.

"We were really on a careful pace, saving tyres and driving really carefully," Lukyanuk said in his defence. "Somewhere inside a corner there was a stone and I didn't see. We had a hit to the front left, the suspension arm was broken and the wheel opened. We had to stop. Bad luck again."

From being 40.5s down at the completion of 19 miles of Thiva on Friday evening – where Lukyanuk fought back from P20 to P1 following a puncture on the opening superspecial in Markopoulo – Magalhaes was now leading by 40.1s at the completion of the punishing Drossohori stage.

As well as wrecking Lukyanuk's hopes, Drossohori also delayed several other frontrunners including Eyvind Brynildsen and



Alexey Lukyanuk's perfect 2018 victory run ended

Skoda protege Juuso Nordgren due to punctures.

Magalhaes, meanwhile, was driving with strategy very much in mind as ambient temperatures approaching 32 degrees centigrade hit.

"In some corners I was completely out [of the road] to avoid the rocks and the stones," he said. "I avoid everything and I'm leading. It was the strategy."

Leading by just over a minute at the end of Saturday, the strategy was certainly paying off for Magalhaes. Despite a hesitant run through Sunday's opener, which allowed second-placed Norbert Herczig to close up by almost 20s, Magalhaes' safety-first driving ensured victory would be his. And, as it transpired afterwards, the budget to contest next week's Cyprus Rally, which was dependent on a strong result in Greece.

Herczig, the four-time Hungarian champion, survived a spin and a stall on Sunday's second stage to finish second ahead of young Pole Hubert Ptaszek, who belied his lack of experience with an accomplished performance.

For fourth-placed Brynildsen,

meanwhile, it was a case of what might have been: his time loss caused by a puncture and broken intercom about the same as a tyre change. A rear differential failure caused further delay.

Lukyanuk's return on Sunday netted three stage wins and the maximum haul of seven bonus points for winning the leg, which could prove crucial at the season's end.

Nordgren, on his ERC debut, also restarted on the final day and won the opening test before his lack of hard-compound covers ruled out more progress by the young Finn.

London-based Indian Amritrajit Ghosh won ERC3 (for two-wheel-drive cars) on his debut with some aplomb, despite nursing a bent rear beam on his Fiesta. Tibor Erdi Jr topped the Group N-based ERC2 class for the second event running, while Juan Carlos Alonso rolling on the final stage in his bid for a podium.

Northern Ireland's Allan Harryman had been due to co-drive George Philippides, only for the former Greek champion to withdraw before the start for personal reasons.

Photos: AutoAvia Photographic, Martin Walsh

Epynt expert Willett strikes in his Escort

Welsh Marches Mini Epynt Rally

By Simon Gronow

Organiser: Herefordshire MC When: June 3 Where: Epynt Ranges, Powys Championship: King of Epynt Championship; RAC Historic Asphalt Championship Stages: 10 Starters 67.

Following a problem-free run, Dave Willett/John Davies made it a hat-trick of wins on the Welsh Marches Mini Epynt Stages in their Ford Escort Mk2.

It was no easy victory, as they were forced to push hard all day in order to secure the win. Initially, Huw Reed/Anthony Hackett held a slender lead before retiring their Darran GTR with fuel pump failure.

After taking their maiden fastest stage time on Epynt, Roger Moran/Keaton Williams finished second in their Escort, while

third-placed Damian Cole/Jamie Edwards were left to rue a slow start as Cole reacclimatised to Escort Mk2 driving, having used his Fiesta RS WRC on other events this year.

Having retired on the last seven events, Tomas and Eurig Davies were pleased to make the finish in fourth place in their Escort Mk2, a wrong tyre choice midway through the event costing some time.

Just three seconds behind were Ray Horton/Paul Williams, who lost time starting the final stage and they were followed home by fellow Darran GTR crew Tony Rees/Lloyd Morgan.

Nick Elliott/Dave Price were first of the historic crews home as rivals Neil Williams/Peter James retired their Escort with differential problems.



Willett: Epynt dominator

Results

1 Dave Willett/John Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) 31m16s; 2 Roger Moran/Keaton Williams (Escort Mk2) + 11s; 3 Damian Cole/Jamie Edwards (Escort Mk2); 4 Tomas Davies/Eurig Davies (Escort Mk2); 5 Ray Horton/Paul Williams (Darran GTR); 6 Tony Rees/Lloyd Morgan (Darran GTR); 7 Nick Elliott/Dave Price (Escort Mk2); 8 Craig Jones/Jon Hawkins (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 9 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darran T90); 10 Terry Brown/Den Golding (Escort Mk2). Class winners: Kalvin Green/Rhys Stoneman (Nissan Micra); Andrew Owen/Arwel Jenkins (Vauxhall Nova); Merriman/Curzon; Paul Boxall/Allan Brown (Peugeot 205 GTI); Moran/Williams; Will Arowsmith/Wayne Arowsmith (Escort Mk2); Elliott/Price; Jones/Hawkins.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

An event-long battle for the lead of the **Ystwyth Targa Rally** was decided on the final test in favour of top seeds Andy Davies/Cadog Davies in an event held in the confines of one of the UK's most popular rally venues in Sweet Lamb.

The pair had been fastest on the initial test and, taking advantage of the dust-free view of running first on the road, had built up a lead of 50 seconds by the eighth test.

Kevin Davies/Owain Davies and Richard Williams/Alan James were chasing hard, and, when the leaders

picked up a one-minute penalty for booking in early at the start of test nine, Williams hit the front.

The lead ping-ponged between the three crews, with Kevin Davies holding a one-second advantage over Andy Davies at the end of the penultimate test. The final section was a long one, using the newly-built three-mile track to the south-west of the Sweet Lamb Complex. Andy Davies blitzed it and emerged with a lead of 17 seconds, to take his second successive Ystwyth win.

Ian Mills

Results

Ystwyth Targa Rally

Organiser: Aberystwyth & District MC When: June 3 Where: Sweet Lamb, Llanidloes Route: 17 tests, 40 miles Starters: 69. 1 Andy Davies/Cadog Davies (Subaru Impreza) 58m18s; 2 Kevin Davies/Owain Davies (Ford Escort) + 17s; 3 Richard Williams/Alan James (Escort); 4 Mark Lennox/Ian Beamond (Escort); 5 Steve Knibbs/Gerwyn Barry (Proton Satria GTI); 6 Elliott Stafford/Lewis Sim (Mazda MX-5); 7 Daniel Williams/Mark Rodway (BMW 318Ti); 8 Deion Atkinson/Aron Jones (BMW 318Ti); 9 Paul Morgan/Robbie Pugh (Honda Civic); 10 Daniel Owen James/Owain Davies (Peugeot 206 GTI). Class winners: Owen James/Davies; Rhodri Evans/Ross Leach (Ford Escort).

CRONIN GIVES i20 A MAIDEN WIN

Circuit of Munster Rally

By Martin Walsh

Organiser: Limerick MC When: June 3 Where: Rathkeale, County Limerick Championship: West Coast Rally Championship Stages: 9 Starters 81.

Four-time British Rally champion Keith Cronin and his co-driver Mikie Galvin shook down their new Hyundai i20 R5 with an impressive performance that yielded their expected victory on the Circuit of Munster Rally.

Keith's younger brother Daniel and his co-driver JJ Cremin (Ford Fiesta R5) finished a minute and 55 seconds behind in second and 33.5 seconds in front of local driver Ed Synan on his debut in a McKinstry-hired Subaru

Impreza WRC. He was co-driven by Tom Collins.

Cronin gained 17.2s from the opening stage where local ace Ed O'Callaghan (Ford Escort) was next best; second seed Daniel Cronin overshot and was fortunate to avoid contact with a bridge.

By the end of the loop it was a Cronin 1-2 as Keith led younger sibling Daniel by 40.8s. O'Callaghan was in third place but Synan, who stalled on the start line of SS3, was only a fraction of a second adrift.

On the repeat loop, and with a harder compound tyre, Keith sped into the distance and was 1m14.1s in front of Daniel. But they were the only duo to traverse

SS5 as O'Callaghan crashed heavily and was taken to hospital with suspected leg injuries. SS6 fell by the wayside after the emergency services were dispatched to attend to a stage resident.

Cronin completed the rout with the complete set of fastest stage times. Daniel made contact with a chicane on the final stage that ripped part of the front-left wing.

Synan came home third from an untroubled PJ McDermott (Subaru) and top rear-wheel drive exponent Colin Byrne (Escort) survived a massive high-speed moment on the penultimate stage to finish fifth.

Results

1 Keith Cronin/Mikie Galvin (Hyundai i20 R5) 1h00m06.8s; 2 Daniel Cronin/JJ Cremin (Ford Fiesta R5) + 1m55s; 3 Ed Synan/Tom Collins (Subaru Impreza S14 WRC); 4 PJ McDermott/Niall Burns (Impreza S12B WRC); 5 Colin Byrne/Eric Calnan (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Mike Quinn/Tony Healy (Escort); 7 Eamon Daly/Brian Doherty (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 8 Tim Enright/Stephen Buckley (Escort); 9 Vincent O'Shea/Sean Brunton (Escort); 10 John Danaher/Martin Mulcahy (Escort). Class winners: Garry Kelly/Mark Hurley (Honda Civic); Kevin Horgan/Liam Fouty (Skoda Fabia R2); Michael Rodgers/Aiden Connolly (Civic); McDermott/Burns; Pat Ryan/Jack Dalton (Escort); Gordon Dreafter/Derek Bovenizer (Peugeot 205 GTI); Patrick Murphy/Mikey Walsh (Civic); James McCarville/Emmet Sherry (Escort); Maurice Meskell/Steve Meskell (Escort); Sean Moran/Jonathan Keane (Ford Escort); Byrne/Calnan; Anthony Breen/Jill White (Subaru); Daly/Doherty; David Griffin/PJ O'Dowd (Toyota Corolla); Todd Falvey/Iarla McCarthy (Escort); Conor Murphy/Michael Hamilton (Civic).



Cronin's new Hyundai

LE MANS PREVIEW

Gary Watkins looks at the Japanese firm's utter determination to conquer La Sarthe

TOYOTA GETS READY TO DEFEAT THE CHALLENGE OF LE MANS



Toyota has conducted extensive mileage

Last-lap heartbreak in 2016 after technical failure while leading



Newest recruit Fernando Alonso will bring big pressure with him



Damage scuppered 2013 attack

Has a team ever been so well-prepared for the Le Mans 24 Hours? That's a question that has to be asked about Toyota as it bids for an elusive first victory in the French enduro this year.

The Japanese manufacturer hasn't just been pounding around the test tracks of Europe in the opening months of the year with its already-proven TS050 HYBRID; it has also been gearing up for the big race in an altogether different way. It has been preparing for the unexpected.

The task this time around, says Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon, is "to beat Le Mans" in a year when it has no factory opposition and is up against privateers only in LMP1.

And that means reacting correctly to the kind of problems that deprived it of a clear-cut chance of victory in three of the past four editions of the great race.

"We failed through unexpected problems – what I would call Le Mans-specific problems – that we obviously did not handle correctly," explains Vasselon. "My personal feeling, looking at the past two years, is that we beat ourselves."

Vasselon is talking about a run of relatively minor issues – but ones that had major consequences – in 2014, '16 and '17 that pulled the rug from underneath Toyota when it was sitting pretty at the head of the field. The task for this year is to be able to overcome such problems should they occur.

Dealing with the unexpected has been top of Toyota's list as it prepares for Le Mans 2018. It explains a slightly eccentric routine during pre-season testing that has involved sending a car out with a tyreless rim, learning how to change components in the fastest possible time and making sure that each driver is *au fait* with the complicated systems of the twin-hybrid TS050.

The landscape has changed at the front of the World Endurance Championship for the 2018-19 'superseason'. Porsche's withdrawal from the LMP1 ranks at the end of last season, a year on from Audi's disappearance, means that Toyota is the clear favourite as the only manufacturer left standing in P1.

Manufacturers generally have the biggest budgets, the best organisation and strongest driver line-ups.

All those things apply to Toyota this time as it goes up against Rebellion, SMP Racing, DragonSpeed, ByKolles and the Manor Ginetta team. But it also has an in-built advantage under myriad technical agreements that cover the WEC superseason.

The promise of lap time parity made to the independent teams running non-hybrid LMP1 machinery on the announcement of the superseason last September wasn't quite what it seemed. The reality is that Toyota has been given an advantage of half a second per lap over the eight and a half miles of the Circuit de la Sarthe under the Equivalence of Technology rules being used to balance the hybrid and non-hybrid machinery.

The rulemakers – the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FIA – say that this is a necessary buffer to ensure that the rules breaks the privateers have been granted do not result in them going faster than Toyota. The Japanese manufacturer simply suggests that it wasn't going to agree to parity of lap times and had FIA statutes on rules stability on its side.

Toyota has made concessions, most dramatically in the number of laps the TS050s can go between pitstops. Last year, it hit 14 laps on occasion, but this year it's limited to 11. The privateers are allowed to do just 10 green-flag laps on a tank of fuel.

Toyota has a threefold advantage at Le Mans. In addition to the pace and mileage advantages, the TS050s will spend less time in the pits.

The time taken to refuel the two different types of P1 car have been set

up to give Toyota a five-second margin.

All this explains a change of approach for a manufacturer that will again be running two cars at Le Mans this year. The expansion to three entries for Le Mans was never destined to be continued. It was off the agenda even before Porsche's announcement that it wouldn't be returning to LMP1 this year.

"If you want to beat Porsche and Audi you have to outperform them," explains Vasselon. "Then you have to make this performance reliable. Testing before was all about mileage, mileage, mileage. This year performance has not been a priority. In the past we have not given a lot of time to the team to prepare for things that do not go as expected. This year has been the opposite. We have sacrificed mileage to give the team the opportunity to learn how to handle a car that comes back on three wheels, a car where everything blacks out on the driver."

Vasselon has invoked the word 'fake' from the 'fake-news' term of the moment to describe the kind of problems Toyota has been simulating during its three endurance tests leading up to the start of the WEC season at Spa last month. Running the car around with only three Michelin tyres is probably the most extreme example of the kind of fake

problem it has thrown into the mix during its pre-season preparation, but the TMG squad has tried to simulate a whole host of issues.

"We want to train our guys to change parts that normally should not need changing," explains John Litjens, TMG's LMP1 project leader. "We made a long list of things that might need to be changed and we now know the time it takes to change them."

Toyota has twice run a TS050 for a lap with a rim *sans* Michelin tyre. It ran without a front tyre at the Algarve circuit in Portugal and without a rear at Motorland Aragon in Spain. "It was done to simulate a flat tyre," explains Litjens. "We wanted to see what the driver felt and to understand what speed he could come back to the garage without causing major damage. But we also wanted to see how the systems reacted to the wheel-speed sensors giving different information to normal."

Training the drivers has also been part of the routine. "Our engineers have come up with a kind of quiz to help train the drivers," continues Litjens. "They ask, 'If this happens, what do you do, what switch do you hit?' The problem is that when the car is running well you don't need all these solutions; you kind of forget about them. There are always back-ups, but sometimes it takes a long time to react, even for the race engineers."

Toyota hasn't been slowed down for this season and it has no intention, it says, of slowing itself down no matter how far it is in front of the Le Mans field. That's because modern P1 hybrids need to be driven near to their limit to function properly.

"If we ask ourselves whether we should drop our pace if we have a big advantage, the answer would be no," explains Vasselon. "These cars are designed to run at a given pace. If you start to drop the speed, you lose grip in the tyres and you recover more energy and saturate your battery. We have to keep the car within its working window.

It would not be clever to run three seconds off the pace."

There will be strict guidelines in place about what the drivers can do out on the track in traffic, but Vasselon insists that has been the case for the past couple of years. "We have had strong guidelines in place already, but this year they will probably be a bit stronger," he says. "We don't have all the answers, because accidents and contact are a recurring issue at Le Mans. For sure our drivers will have a very clear briefing."

The next obvious question concerns team orders. Toyota could be in a position to use its likely dominance of the race to determine which of the two cars wins. Again, Vasselon says no change. "We have had a set of rules in place for a long time," he explains. "You have seen many times that the fastest car goes in front, and it has been working reasonably well."

Asked if that raises issues of the drivers taking unnecessary risks to try to prove they are the fastest, Vasselon responds: "Don't you think that is their job? Racing is somehow a little bit dangerous and unpredictable. We will never transform it into an activity that is totally safe and predictable. We don't want to and we can't."

Le Mans will never be predictable. The accident that put the third Toyota out of the race last year, when Nicolas Lapierre was hit up the rear by an LMP2 car into the Dunlop Chicane, is testament to that.

Nor should it be forgotten just how complex a modern twin-hybrid LMP1 racer is. There's a lot more to go wrong on a Toyota TS050 HYBRID than a Rebellion or a Ginetta.

"Our cars are so complicated," says Sebastien Buemi, who is teamed with Nakajima and Fernando Alonso in the #8 Toyota. "We have a front motor, a rear motor, a front 'diff, a battery. That means we have so many more chances of having an issue. We should be a little bit quicker than the privateers, but I don't know how many times more complex our cars are." ■

"I think that sometimes we beat ourselves"



Pascal Vasselon

LE MANS PREVIEW

Jaguar took Le Mans victory in 1988 for the first time in over 30 years, but the race was so nearly lost

ONE STEP FROM DISASTER



The formation finish could have been staged for a very important reason



The crew were largely unaware of the problems going on inside the car



One more gear change, and Jaguar's comeback victory would have been derailed at the 1988 Le Mans 24 Hours.

The British manufacturer came that close to losing its first win in the French enduro since 1957 in the final hour. That the winning Tom Walkinshaw Racing Jaguar XJR-9LM lasted the course owed everything to the mechanical sympathies of lead driver Jan Lammers, and perhaps even some kind of sixth sense.

The Dutchman, who shared the victorious Jaguar XJR-9LM with Andy Wallace and Johnny Dumfries, knew he had a gearbox problem as the 24 Hours drew to a close. He'd listened to teammate Raul Boesel tell the tale of the retirement of his Jaguar in the small hours as he'd been tying his bootlaces in readiness for his return to the cockpit in the penultimate hour. And when the symptoms he'd just heard described by the Brazilian appeared to be manifesting themselves right behind him, he took a bold decision that ultimately secured himself a place in sportscar racing's history books.

Lammers left the car in fourth and didn't touch the lever again — he didn't change gear from shortly before the end of his penultimate stint through to the end of the race. Thanks to the massive torque of the seven-litre Jaguar V12, he was able to continue at a decent lick in a gear designed to send the car down the Mulsanne Straight, then unsullied by chicanes, at 200mph.

What's more, he was able to clutchslip his way out of the pits after his final pitstop. It didn't matter if he damaged the clutch, he points out, "because I wasn't going to need it again".

"Raul said that he had been shifting from second to third, and it jumped out of gear," recalls Lammers, who was at Le Mans for the second time with the Silk Cut-sponsored TWR squad. "He then explained that he went to fourth, and it jumped out again, and when he went to fifth, he said: 'All of a sudden I had an empty 'box'. I went from second to third, and it jumped out. I went for fourth, and I expected it to jump out a second time,'" continues Lammers. "It didn't, and I immediately decided that I wasn't going to touch the gear lever anymore.

"I didn't know exactly what was wrong, but I'd had enough experience

of preparing gearboxes when I'd been racing in Formula Ford 1600 to know how sensitive they could be. I just tried to make sure that I didn't put one jitter through the transmission."

Exactly how many laps Lammers did in this hobbled state isn't quite clear. Eddie Hinckley, who engineered the winning Jaguar, reckons the problem struck a couple of laps before his driver was due to pit. His run sheets suggest that Lammers did another seven laps after his final stop. So that's nine laps — or the better part of 40 minutes — in one gear.

Lammers knew that one false move could spell disaster: "I accelerated very slowly and when I lifted off for the corners, I tried to make sure that there was always a constant load going through the gearbox. I thought that if I accelerated or decelerated too quickly, the whole thing was going to fall apart."

Lammers was probably right. The main pinion shaft of the five-speed transmission, which had its roots in a gearbox developed by British constructor March for CART single-seaters in North America using Hewland DG internals, had split in two at a point where an oilway ran through it. Somehow it was held together over

those final laps by the splined hub that took the drive from fourth and fifth gears that straddled the break.

The chief mechanic on the winning #2 Jaguar, Rod Benoist, remembers the stripdown of the gearbox back at TWR HQ in Kidlington after the race. "As we took the gear cluster out, we saw that the main shaft had split in two," he remembers. "It was a case of scratching our heads and thinking, 'Thank goodness for that.'"

Benoist thinks the chances of Lammers being able to select another gear were "about absolutely zero". Alastair Macqueen, the chief engineer on Jaguar's Group C programme, reckons that the Dutchman could have selected fifth, but that it wouldn't have been a lot of use to him. Making it around the tight Mulsanne and Arnage corners, let alone getting going from standstill in the pits, would have been nigh-on impossible in the higher gear. And a downshift would definitely

have spelled disaster. That means Lammers really was one gear change away from bringing Jaguar's victory hopes to a juddering halt.

Lammers' role in securing Jaguar's first Le Mans victory in more than 30 years shouldn't be underestimated, reckons Macqueen. "Jan had brilliant technical sympathy," he says. "His part in that victory has been underplayed."

First, Lammers had to recognise the problem. Then he had to drive around it and keep up a decent pace. The Jaguar's lap times didn't drop away massively over the final laps, according to Hinckley. "Normally, the times would have been in the 3m26s and 27s," he says. "They went into the 3m30s straight away and, right at the end, down into the 40s, but such a drop wasn't unusual in those times for the final stages of Le Mans."

Lammers' ability to keep up a decent pace was crucial at a time when the chasing factory Porsche 962C shared



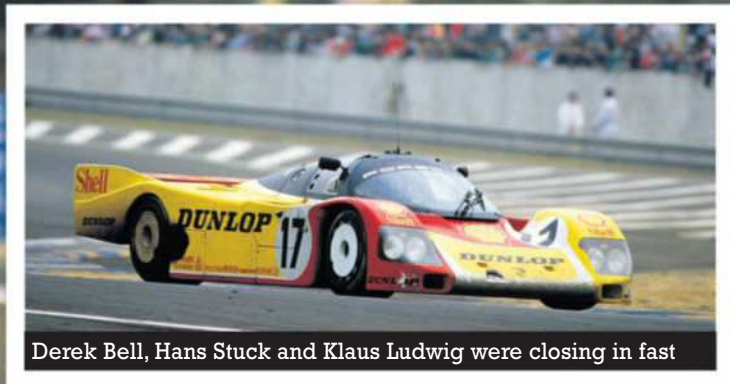
"The main gearbox shaft had split"

Rod Benoist

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...t in the closing stages. By Gary Watkins

DISASTER



Derek Bell, Hans Stuck and Klaus Ludwig were closing in fast



The Jaguar, driven here by Wallace, was lucky to finish

Derek Bell, Hans Stuck and Klaus Ludwig wasn't entirely out of the picture, despite a run of problems that began in the early stages of the race when Ludwig had to trickle back to the pits after running out of fuel in the Porsche Curves. The Jaguar had been a lap to the rear when Dumfries handed over the wheel to his Dutch team-mate, but there was some concern from the pits over the pace in the final laps. Lammers' team members being told "not to slow down too much" over the radio. Lammers' resolution to leave the box in fourth was inspired, so too was his decision not to inform his team mates of his woes over the airwaves. Ludwig, the culprit for running the car out of fuel, would almost certainly have been able to put on a spurt in the works 962C. Group C fuel formula gave each car a set allocation and Porsche was no deeper into the black than its rivals. The Jaguar had just two litres left at the finish, whereas the Porsche had 11 of its 2550 litres remaining after 24 hours of racing. "I didn't want to give too much away to my opponents, so I said, 'I've got a little bit for you'," explains Lammers. "Jan said that they didn't want to

know, and I told them, 'You're right, you don't want to know'." The TWR Jaguar squad understood Lammers' 'little secret' as he left the pits in what patently wasn't first gear. That explains the Plan B concocted on the old Le Mans pit counter. The three XJR-9LMs that finished the race assembled themselves in a formation finish over the final laps at the behest of the team. But it wasn't for the benefit of the TV cameras. It was just in case the leading Jag's gearbox finally gave up the ghost. "If the car had conked out on the last lap, the idea was that one of the others would have stuck its nose into the gearbox of Jan's car and pushed it across the line," explains Macqueen. "I'm not sure how, because it wasn't something we practised." Benoist confirms that there was some kind of plan to this effect in the works, although he also questions how it would have worked. "That was the kind of plan that Tom [Walkinshaw, team head] would have come up with, being the crafty old devil he was, and I think he was ready to implement it," he explains. "That's why we needed two cars there behind Jan, because the radiator in the nose would have been incredibly prone

to the wing-support plates from Jan's car going right through it." Not that Plan B was communicated to the drivers behind Lammers. Derek Daly, who was at the wheel of the Jaguar run by TWR's North American operation that finished in fourth place, is adamant that he was never told that he might be called upon to somehow push his team-mate around, just that he had to stay close behind on the run to the flag. "I don't remember that," says Daly, who was teamed with Larry Perkins and Kevin Cogan. "I don't doubt that it was discussed, but they would only have needed to communicate it to us if it suddenly became necessary." Lammers wasn't impressed by the presence of the other remaining Jags on his tail as he tried to baby his car home. "I remember Jan telling us in rather flowery language to stop the other cars crowding him," says Macqueen. "He needed to do everything very gingerly - he was braking and accelerating so gently - that he didn't want other cars right up behind him." The Jaguar didn't need a helping hand in the end. The help it got was that Lammers chose not to lay a hand on the gear lever in those final laps. ■



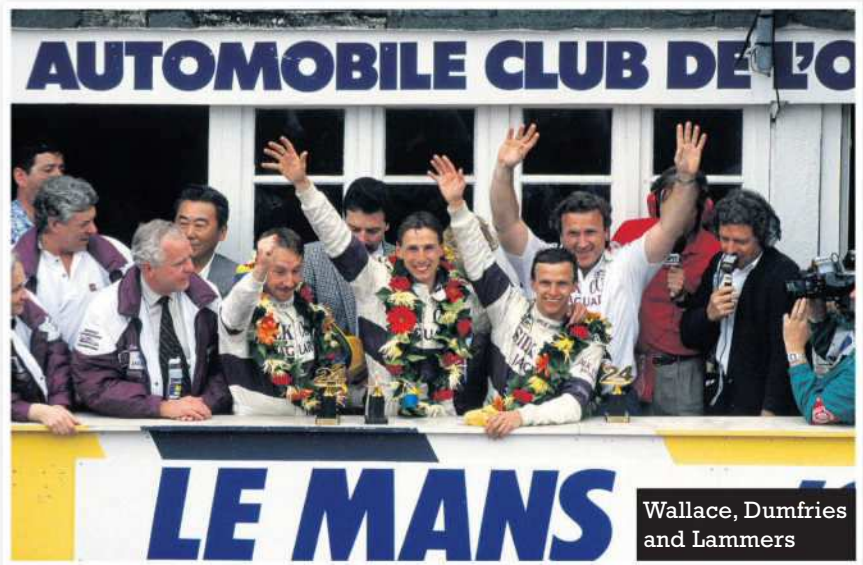
Modifications were made to the Jaguar XJR-9LM to pass scrutineering

Back stories to a famous win

All five TWR entries failed scrutineering in the Place des Jacobins in the shadow of the gothic splendour of Le Mans cathedral because they were somewhere between 25 and 30mm too long. The LM version of the XJR-9 had been running adjustable mounting plates in testing while the rear-wing position was finalised, and the production version had never been put on the car until they arrived in Le Mans city centre. "They didn't fit in the truck with the wings on, so the wings never went on until we got to scrutineering," recalls Macqueen. "It was a fairly simple fix - a 10-minute job on each car - by extending the front of the plate with some suspension-mounting plates that we had with us in the truck."

The winning car went into the race with a significantly different set-up to the other four XJR-9LMs. Lammers and Hinckley had raised the front ride height during qualifying in search of a more benign-handling car, but it also ended up running lower at the rear during the race. Lammers suggests that this was an idea that Hinckley came up with between the warm-up and the race, but the engineer suggests that it actually resulted from a mistake. "When we measured the car after the warm-up we found that the rear was lower than we'd intended," says Hinckley. "Jan said it was a bit hairy in the Porsche Curves, but that it gave him a bit of extra straight-line speed. It wasn't anything clever on my part." A broken windscreen

sustained by the winning car cost it its one-lap lead over the chasing Porsche on Sunday morning, but had the TWR Jaguar been in the same spec as 1987 it would have taken much longer. The XJR had previously sported bonded-in windscreens, but for 1988 they were clamped in place courtesy of the rules for the North American IMSA series, which Jaguar entered for the first time that year. "The screens on the original Jaguars were bonded in and would have needed chiseling out," says TWR Jaguar designer Tony Southgate. "It made sense to have them standard across all the cars." Walkinshaw was in the thick of the action during the change, taking the broken screen off Benoist as he was handed the replacement.



The victorious Jaguar only had fourth gear for the final 40 minutes of the race

LE MANS PREVIEW

James Newbold describes how the French firm has big plans

LIGIER AIMS TO STEP UP A LEVEL IN LMP2



United Autosports took fifth on Le Mans debut

With 18 races in the books since the advent of the control LMP2 formula

in the World Endurance Championship and European Le Mans Series in 2017, the tally reads 15 wins for the ORECA 07, two for the Ligier JSP217 and just one for the Dallara P217.

Even if that figure is swayed by ORECA's monopolisation of the WEC grid last year, that doesn't make happy reading for Ligier constructor Onroak Automotive.

Le Mans 2017 was an apt summary of the story so far. On the biggest stage of them all, Ligier was not in the picture as the DC Racing ORECA threatened to steal outright victory from the unreliable LMP1s. For Onroak's Philippe Dumas, it was a living nightmare; ORECA locked out the top nine in qualifying, while the quickest Ligier from United Autosports was regularly three seconds off the pace in race trim. A clean run from Filipe Albuquerque, Hugo de Sadeleer and Will Owen gave United fifth overall, but there

Albuquerque has ORECA experience



could be no disguising that the result owed much to others' misfortune.

"I've done many 24-hour races and I never had such a clean race, even the ones I won," says Daytona 24 Hours victor Albuquerque. "It's going to be difficult to top what we did last year."

But concern that LMP2 will be another foregone conclusion might be misplaced. Dumas contends that the opening rounds of the ELMS at Paul Ricard and Monza – in which Ligier's best result thus far is seventh – will not be representative of Le Mans, as the FIA and ACO have given Ligier (and Dallara) dispensation to improve their Sprint and Le Mans kits.

Albuquerque drove a Rebellion ORECA at the Nurburgring WEC round last year and quickly saw why it was the benchmark. "It felt like more of an agile car," he says. "I think they have a lighter car, but as well I think a lot of their strength is with the aero package. They were spot on at making the car at the first attempt. How easy the car was to get to those lap times was also pretty nice, but at the same time I could see it was more demanding on the tyres."

Ligier's kindness on its tyres was key in United's ELMS victories at Silverstone and the Red Bull Ring last year, and Albuquerque has been working closely with Dunlop to fine-tune the compounds to best suit the car.

But greater durability over a quadruple stint will mean nothing if it is no closer on pace. With this in mind, Ligier has focused its work on improving the aerodynamic efficiency of the nose section



Ex-Manchester United goalkeeper Barthez's Ligier team is back this

to reduce drag on the Mulsanne Straight and, while Dumas brands the result a "compromise" between what it wanted to change and what was allowed, he is confident of being more competitive this term.

"Last year was a disaster because we did Le Mans with the Sprint package," he says. "It's a difficult question because we can take the dispensation as a present from the FIA, but it's not the complete package. We have to find a compromise with the room we were allowed to modify. We did a test after Paul Ricard ELMS with the Le Mans package for the first time and the numbers look promising. We are reasonably confident to be a lot closer to the ORECA."

United boss Richard Dean, also the UK agent for Ligier, has expanded to two cars, with Juan Pablo Montoya making his Le Mans debut alongside Owen and de Sadeleer, while Albuquerque partners Paul di Resta – who impressed Dean at Sebring – and Phil Hanson. Although he's not getting carried away by the "significant step up" from the Sprint and Le Mans kits in testing, the 2006 GT2 winner is quietly optimistic of turning the tables on ORECA after a "98 per cent perfect operational Le Mans" on the team's debut last year.

"You don't need many detail differences at 150mph-plus or 200mph to effect a big change," Dean says. "We're not looking at it, if it happens,

that it will be so much of a surprise. I can understand why people would think that, based on what we've seen from the first two ELMS races, but you don't put a driver line-up together like we've done and have a debut like we did last year and not go into it thinking anything other than "we've got a good chance."

Albuquerque adds: "I can guarantee that we will not be as far off as we were last year. I don't know how much closer we will be, but if we are within half a second to one second, we are still fine."

Aside from the United cars, Ligier has a couple more bullets in the gun to pose a challenge. There is the Panis-Barthez Competition car run by Tech 1 Racing, which features ex-Manor F1 driver Will Stevens, while DC Racing also has two examples fielded by OAK Racing, in addition to its Jota-run ORECA's. The #33 car entered for team patron David Cheng isn't expected to challenge, but the #34 of reigning IMSA champion Ricky Taylor, Come Ledogar and David Heinemeier Hansson is an outside bet for a podium, bolstered by engineers from crack GT team WRT and the US-based ESM outfit.

"Le Mans this year is an obligation for us to get a good result," says Dumas. "It's extremely important because LMP2 is a top category and it's a showcase – we have to show the highest level of the company. We have a better car, so considering the line-up between United, DC Racing and Panis-Barthez, we have a chance to do well and to change the way of thinking about Ligier." ■

Correct at time of going to press



It's always a thrill to watch at night



This year's race be 86th edition



Toyota seeks top step of podium



Race begins at 1500hrs Saturday

ENTRY LIST

LMP1

NO	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR
1	Andre Lotterer / Neel Jani / Bruno Senna	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R13
3	Thomas Laurent / Mathias Beche / Gustavo Menezes	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R13
4	Oliver Webb / Dominik Kraihamer / Tom Dillmann	ByKolles Racing Team	ENSO CLM-Nissan P1/01
5	Charlie Robertson / Mike Simpson / Leo Roussel	CEFC TRSM Racing (Manor)	Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1
6	Oliver Rowland / Alex Brundle / Oliver Turvey	CEFC TRSM Racing (Manor)	Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1
7	Mike Conway / Kamui Kobayashi / Jose Maria Lopez	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID
8	Sebastien Buemi / Kazuki Nakajima / Fernando Alonso	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID
10	Ben Hanley / Renger van der Zande / Henrik Hedman	DragonSpeed	BRE-Gibson BR1
11	Jenson Button / Mikhail Aleshin / Vitaly Petrov	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AER BR1
17	Stephane Sarrazin / Egor Orudzhev / Matevos Isaakyan	SMP Racing (ART)	BRE-AER BR1

LMP2

22	Paul di Resta / Filipe Albuquerque / Phil Hanson	United Autosports	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
23	Will Stevens / Timothe Buret / Julien Canal	Panis Barthez Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
25	Mark Patterson / Ate de Jong / Tacksung Kim	Algarve Pro Racing	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
26	Jean-Eric Vergne / Roman Rusinov / Andrea Pizzitola	G-Drive Racing (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07
28	Loic Duval / Matthieu Vaxiviere / Francois Perrodo	TDS Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
29	Giedo van der Garde / Jan Lammers / Frits van Eerd	Racing Team Nederland	Dallara-Gibson P217
31	Pastor Maldonado / Nathanael Berthon / Roberto Gonzalez	DragonSpeed	ORECA-Gibson 07
32	Juan Pablo Montoya / Will Owen / Hugo de Sadeleer	United Autosports	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
33	David Cheng / Nick Boule / Pierre Nicolet	Jackie Chan DC Racing (OAK)	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
34	Ricky Taylor / Come Ledogar / David Heinemeier Hansson	Jackie Chan DC Racing (OAK)	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
35	Norman Nato / Viktor Shaytar / Harrison Newey	SMP Racing	Dallara-Gibson P217
36	Nicolas Lapierre / Andre Negrao / Pierre Thiriet	Signatech Alpine Matmut	Alpine-Gibson A470
37	Jazeman Jaafar / Weiron Tan / Nabil Jeffri	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07
38	Ho-Pin Tung / Stephane Richelmi / Gabriel Aubry	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07
39	Tristan Gommendy / Jonathan Hirschi / Vincent Capillaire	Graff-SO24	ORECA-Gibson 07
40	Enzo Guibbert / Jose Gutierrez / James Allen	G-Drive Racing (Graff)	ORECA-Gibson 07
44	Andrea Bertolini / Nic Jonsson / Tracy Krohn	Eurasia Motorsport	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
47	Felipe Nasr / Giorgio Sernagiotto / Roberto Lacorte	Cetilar Villorba Corse	Dallara-Gibson P217
48	Paul-Loup Chatin / Memo Rojas / Paul Lafargue	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
50	Erwin Creed / Romano Ricci / Thomas Dagoneau	Larbre Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217

GTE Pro

51	James Calado / Alessandro Pier Guidi / Daniel Serra	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'
52	Toni Vilander / Antonio Giovinazzi / Pipo Derani	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'
63	Jan Magnussen / Antonio Garcia / Mike Rockenfeller	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R
64	Oliver Gavin / Tommy Milner / Marcel Fassler	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R
66	Olivier Pla / Stefan Mucke / Billy Johnson	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT
67	Andy Priaulx / Harry Tincknell / Tony Kanaan	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT
68	Sebastien Bourdais / Dirk Muller / Joey Hand	Ford Chip Ganassi Team USA	Ford GT
69	Ryan Briscoe / Richard Westbrook / Scott Dixon	Ford Chip Ganassi Team USA	Ford GT
71	Sam Bird / Davide Rigon / Miguel Molina	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE 'evo'
81	Martin Tomczyk / Nicky Catsburg / Philipp Eng	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE
82	Augusto Farfus / Antonio Felix da Costa / Alexander Sims	BMW Team MTEK	BMW M8 GTE
91	Gianmaria Bruni / Richard Lietz / Frederic Makowiecki	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR
92	Michael Christensen / Kevin Estre / Laurens Vanthoor	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR
93	Nick Tandy / Patrick Pilet / Earl Bamber	Porsche GT Team (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR
94	Timo Bernhard / Romain Dumas / Sven Muller	Porsche GT Team (CORE)	Porsche 911 RSR
95	Nicki Thiim / Marco Sorensen / Darren Turner	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
97	Jonny Adam / Alex Lynn / Maxime Martin	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE

GTE Am

54	Giancarlo Fisichella / Francesco Castellacci / Thomas Flohr	Spirit of Race (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE
56	Jorg Bergmeister / Patrick Lindsey / Egidio Perfetti	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR
61	Matt Griffin / Keita Sawa / Mok Weng Sun	Clearwater Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE
70	Olivier Beretta / Eddie Cheever III / Motoaki Ishikawa	MR Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE
77	Matt Campbell / Julien Andlauer / Christian Ried	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
80	Fabio Babini / Christina Nielsen / Erik Maris	Ebimotors	Porsche 911 RSR
84	Jeff Segal / Cooper MacNeil / Liam Griffin	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 488 GTE
85	Jeroen Bleekemolen / Luca Stolz / Ben Keating	Keating Motorsports (Risi)	Ferrari 488 GTE
86	Ben Barker / Alex Davison / Michael Wainwright	Gulf Racing UK	Porsche 911 RSR
88	Matteo Cairoli / Giorgio Roda / Khaled Al Qubaisi	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
90	Euan Hankey / Charlie Eastwood / Salih Yoluc	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
98	Pedro Lamy / Mathias Lauda / Paul Dalla Lana	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
99	Patrick Long / Spencer Pumpelly / Tim Pappas	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR

GTE Pro fight was very close last year



TIMETABLE

Le Mans 2018

TIME	EVENT
Sunday, June 10	
1430-1900hrs	Scrutineering at the Place de la Republique
Monday, June 11	
1000-1800hrs	Scrutineering at the Place de la Republique
Tuesday, June 12	
1700-1830hrs	Autograph session in pitlane
Wednesday, June 13	
1600-2000hrs	Free practice
2200-0000hrs	Qualifying session 1
Thursday, June 14	
1730-1825hrs	Road to Le Mans Race 1
1900-2100hrs	Qualifying session 2
2200-0000hrs	Qualifying session 3
Friday, June 15	
1000-2000hrs	Access to pitlane
1730-1900hrs	Drivers' parade in downtown Le Mans
Saturday, June 16	
0900-0945hrs	Warm-up
1015-1100hrs	Festival Aston Martin race
1130-1225hrs	Road to Le Mans Race 2
1400-1430hrs	Presentation of the teams and drivers
1451	Start of the formation lap
1500	Start of the 86th 24 Hours of Le Mans
Sunday, June 17	
1500	Race finish

*For UK timings, subtract one hour

REVOLUTION

COMPETITION ▲ WHEELS

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17 X 7.5 TO 17 X 8.0 / 18 X 7.5 TO 18 X 8.0



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17 X 7.5 TO 17 X 9.5 / 18 X 8.0 TO 18 X 10.0
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5 SPOKE RALLY

15 X 6.0 TO 15 X 10.0
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THE ORIGINAL SINCE 1967

RACING REPORTS

THRUXTON: BARC 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING BY MARCUS PYE
JUNE 2/3

Photos: Steve Jones



Mitchell claimed a hard-fought brace

HISTORIC FF1600 CONTESTS PROVIDE THRILLING THRUXTON BIRTHDAY PRESENT

On a glorious Sunday when 1992 Formula 1 world champion Nigel Mansell and Murray Walker opened the new Thruxton Centre and Karun Chandhok exercised a Williams-Cosworth FW08C to mark the ultra-fast BARC circuit's 50th Anniversary, Historic Formula Ford and Minis lived up to their reputation, enthraling an enthusiastic audience.

Eight points adrift of Cameron Jackson after Donington and Cadwell Park double-headers, Ben Mitchell pulled off two astonishingly close wins in a Merlyn Mk20 to top the Historic Sports Car Club Formula Ford 1600 table. In repeating his 2015 double (in father Westie's sister chassis), Mitchell emulated the car's first owner Rob Cooper's July 1972 victories at Thruxton.

Having led four times previously, as a writhing seven-car snake embroiled title rivals Jackson, reigning champion Richard Tarling and Callum Grant, plus Max Bartell, brother Sam Mitchell and veteran Tiff Needell (in his original Autosport prize Lotus 69), Mitchell left it to the final corner before rounding Bartell boldly in race one. With Tarling robbing Grant of third on the line, the first four missed the chequered flag, indeed Bartell thought he'd won it a lap later! "The kids should have been disqualified, then I'd have won," smiled Needell.

Ben Mitchell waited patiently in another breathtaking slipstreamer later, drafting through from fourth to edge Jackson by 0.147s, with Bartell, the clutchless Tarling and Ed Thurston, who had raced from the back to seventh in the opener. Grant started in the pitlane, scrutineers having spotted that his roll hoop stay pin was missing, but shot through to sixth.

The Mini championship races were equally frenetic, although Tom Sanderson broke the tow, unusually, to win Saturday's 1000cc Se7en opener by 5.699s. Sunday's sequel was brewing up on lap four when Daniel Budd, in the lead group, had a monumental accident having clipped Max Hunter at around 115mph on Woodham Hill and somersaulted over the guardrail (see racing news). Budd and a marshal escaped serious injury. Darren Thomas was leading Spencer Wanstall, from row five, and Sanderson when red flags flew.

The slick-shod Miglias, pulling 130mph with 1293cc engines screaming towards 9000rpm, hunted in packs as ever. Sunday morning's opener lost Alfie Brown, double champion Rupert Deeth and Charlie Budd in an early incident at the chicane, but points leader Dave Drew, Nick Padmore – eight days after his Historic F1 Williams FW07C win at Brands Hatch – Aaron Smith and 2009 champ Kane Astin (whose 1m29.270s lap was the weekend's best) were blanketed by 0.65s at the finish.

Second time out Smith beat early pacemaker Drew by a second after the six-car lead battle distilled to the pair of them. They finished clear of a train embroiling Astin (almost overcome by petrol fumes with his car's filler cap off), Colin Peacock, Budd, Jason Porter and Deeth, who set fastest lap in his patched-up car. Robert Howard was unable to join them.

Motor Racing Legends' sportscar miscellany, combining RAC Woodcote Trophy Pre-1956 and Stirling Moss Trophy Pre-'61 contenders, was popular and the racing up front was very close as many debutants learned the unforgiving track. Honours were shared between the vastly experienced and versatile Chris Ward in a rorty Lister-Jaguar



Ward and Bryant proved to be the class of the Stirling Moss Trophy field

and Oliver Bryant in a nimble Lotus 15.

Bryant had a rear wheel work loose in the opener but, following overnight hub machining by Clive Robinson, bounced back to win a wonderful Sunday dogfight. The duo, who traded places constantly through the Noble, Village and Goodwood sweepers to Church, were followed onto the podium by Billy Bellingier, in Keith Ahlers' little Lola Mk1 Prototype.

Coopers had finished third and fourth on Saturday, the T49 Monaco of Justin Maers (who survived a hairy wobble at Church) and the intrepid Charlie Martin crossing the line ahead of the Jaguar-powered T38 of Patrick Blakeney-Edwards.

Ric Wood's Ford Capri won both Historic Touring Car races, its crossover-injected Weslake V6 engine sounding magnificent. British Touring Car leader Adam Morgan tamed it on Saturday, when James Hanson led initially in Paul Pochciol's Broadspeed Jaguar XJ12C replica. The Chevrolet Camaros of Tony Dron Trophy Group 1 winner Olly Bryant and Alex Thistlethwayte, and American Fred

Wakeman's Rover V8 displaced the Jag once in Pochciol's hands.

Hanson led Wood until the stops on Sunday. Thereafter Ric was unstoppable and Bryant ousted Pochciol from second. Patrick Watts and John Spiers enjoyed a heady Group 1 Capri tussle when Watts' Levis Frank & Jeans car lost out to Spiers' Hermetite version when it ran out of fuel.

The HSCC Guards Trophy round reminded older onlookers of the BARC's Castrol/Motoring News sportscar races of the early '70s in which obsolete Chevron B6s and B8s featured. They are now at the sharp end, although once Graeme Dodd had relayed son James in their Ginetta G16, intermediate leader James Schryver (B8) was destined for silver. Yorkshiremen John Waggitt – on his Thruxton debut – and Peter Needham made it a three-marque podium with the former's Lenham.

The GT section was pretty intense, John Spiers earning top honours in his thunderous TVR Griffith. In the Lotus Elan class defending champion John Davison (Ian Walker Racing Gold Bug tribute 26R) was pressed extremely hard

WINNERS

Historic Touring Cars
Race 1: Adam Morgan (Ford Capri)
Race 2: Ric Wood (Ford Capri)

Race 2: Aaron Smith

Mini Se7en
Race 1: Tom Sanderson
Race 2: Darren Thomas

HSCC Guards Trophy
Graeme & James Dodd (Ginetta-BMW G16)

RAC Woodcote Trophy/ Stirling Moss Trophy
Race 1: Chris Ward (Lister-Jaguar 'Knobbly')
Race 2: Oliver Bryant (Lotus 15)

Historic Formula Ford
Race 1: Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)
Race 2: Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)

Single-seaters
Race 1: Paul Smith (Ralt RT3)
Race 2: Andy Smith (March 783)

Mini Miglia
Race 1: Dave Drew



Chandhok completed demonstration laps in Williams FW08C from 1983



Sanderson romped clear from the pack to win the opening Mini Se7en race in impressive style by 5.7 seconds

RACING REPORTS

BRANDS HATCH: BRSCC BY MARK PAULSON
JUNE 2/3

Photos: Gary Hawkins



Lloyd (23) is yet to be beaten in TCR UK

LLOYD BATTLES TO MAKE IT SIX WINS FROM SIX RACES IN TCR UK

Renault became the seventh manufacturer to be represented on the TCR UK grid as Alex Morgan's Megane joined the fray at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The Swiss Wolf-Power Racing team is running the new Vukovic Motorsport-developed car in TCR Germany, but teething trouble at the Oschersleben opener led it to skip the next round. Instead, it went back to the test bench, before travelling to the UK in preparation for the third round of TCR Germany this weekend.

"We didn't seem far away at the Balance of Performance test in Valencia, but when we got to Oschersleben we had a few issues with the power delivery and the driveability of the car," says Morgan, who was runner-up in the 2013 Renault UK Clio Cup and drove a SEAT for Wolf-Power in TCR Germany last year.

"It was clear that we were not even in the same ballpark as the other cars. We were down about 11kph. There were some issues which meant the engine would sacrifice power to save itself.

"The development [started] last year but after Valencia, when all the

[homologation] details came through, we had to do a lot of reworking and, for some reason, the system just didn't work as we were expecting."

Developing a car in public is not easy, as DPE Motorsport has also found with its pair of Alfa Romeo Giuliettas (*see racing news*). Performance may not translate from test-bed to track as solving one problem can unmask another.

"We see it on the dyno, we are close to the SEAT now," says Wolf-Power team boss Adrian Wolf. "It's a big, big step forward. The data looks great today in the morning, but after four laps he started to push more, and after that we had a power-steering problem and boost problem.

"Maybe we need too much power for the power steering so the power box says, 'thank you, not with me,' and cuts everything. So you have 200-and-something horse power. Alex did a really good job with the lap time [in qualifying] because half of the lap he has not [even] 300bhp."

Morgan qualified 12th of the 14 cars, then made several pitstops during the races as he struggled to manhandle the car, allowing the team to perform further

systems checks, eventually retiring from both. But he is convinced that it will be worth the effort.

"It's been difficult for us to do actual car set-up work because we've been so down on power," Morgan says. "I'm hoping now we actually start to unlock a bit more of the potential of the car because if you look at the build-quality of it, it's absolutely fantastic – I've not seen anything like it.

"Things that I think will make the car better, Milenko [Vukovic] is more than happy to just get on the case and start developing. We've got to go through this phase now because it's not as tried and tested as the SEAT but it's just a matter of time and persevering."

At the head of the field, Daniel Lloyd continued his dominant form. The West Coast Racing driver took his Volkswagen Golf to another pair of victories, stretching his winning streak to six races. Lloyd didn't have it all his own way, though, as first Ollie Taylor – in his new FK7 model Honda Civic – and then Carl Swift (Cupra) gave him a good run.

In the opener, Taylor moved ahead as

Lloyd bogged down from pole position and was nudged into a half-spin by fourth qualifier Lewis Kent's Hyundai i30N at Druids. But the Yorkshireman hung on and chased the leader down, catching Taylor by surprise with a move at Clearways on lap five of 36. He then managed to build and sustain a two-second lead while struggling with tyre pick-up. Behind them Kent secured a maiden podium from Lloyd's teammate Jessica Backman, who benefited when Josh Price's Honda Civic lost power on the final lap.

In the reversed-grid race two, Lloyd carved through from ninth to challenge polesitter Swift. The Volkswagen dived

WINNERS

Caterham Academy
Green Group: Justin Heap
White Group: Gregory Monks

Caterham Seven 270R
Race 1: Jamie Falvey
Race 2: Jamie Falvey

Caterham Seven 310R
Race 1: Alan Cooper
Race 2: Chris Rankin
Race 3: Christian Szaruta

Caterham Roadsport
Race 1: Daniel French
Race 2: James Murphy

HRDC Allstars
Peter Chambers
(Lotus Ford Cortina Mk1)

HRDC Touring Greats

James Colburn
(Austin A40 Speedwell)

Mazda MX-5 Supercup
Race 1: Luke Herbert
Race 2: Luke Herbert
Race 3: James Blake-Baldwin

National Formula Ford
Race 1: Niall Murray
(Van Diemen RF99)
Race 2: Niall Murray
(Van Diemen RF99)
Race 3: Neil MacLennan
(Ray GR16)

TCR UK
Race 1: Daniel Lloyd
(Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR)
Race 2: Daniel Lloyd
(Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR)



Herbert took Mazda MX-5 brace

inside at Graham Hill Bend, only for Swift to hit back at Surtees. Lloyd finally completed the move with an outside pass at Druids three laps later, but the tenacious Swift had impressed with his pace and racecraft. Sadly, he had no reward as later contact with Andreas Backman (VW Golf GTD) at Druids ended both their races.

That promoted Jessica Backman to second and Howard Fuller (Honda Civic) to third, maiden podiums for both. Taylor's threat had been blunted by early contact knocking his tracking askew, while Kent went backwards with a return of the tyre delamination issues he suffered at Knockhill.



Morgan's Megane had problems

MURRAY PROVES THE MAN TO BEAT IN NATIONAL FF1600



Two wins went the way of Murray (5) to extend his lead in the standings

Niall Murray's crushing pace all weekend meant that the rest of the **National Formula Ford Championship** field was fighting over second in the opening two races.

Murray's Van Diemen RF99 took the first by nearly six seconds from Joey Foster (Ray GR08), who evoked memories of his latest Festival triumph with a pass around the outside of Michael Eastwell (Spectrum 011C) at Paddock Hill Bend. On this occasion though, not only did he brave it around Paddock, he also hung around the outside of Druids before passing.

Foster kept Murray in his sights in race two, but was unable to mount a challenge for victory as the opener's podium was repeated. Points leader Murray rose from eighth to third in the reversed-grid race three, his task made harder by yellow flags. Polesitter Neil MacLennan led from lights to flag in his Cliff Dempsey Racing Ray GR16, having progressed from the back of the grid in race two. He had stuttered to retirement after running second in the opener; running out of fuel after the race was extended due to a safety-car period. Hugo Bentley-Ellis took second for his

maiden National FF1600 podium.

The large **Caterham 310R** entry required a two-from-three race format, with Alan Cooper ducking out of Lee Bristow's slipstream to take the first by 0.04s after a thrilling battle also involving Chris Hutchinson and Gordon Sawyer. Bristow was beaten by Christian Szaruta by an almost identical margin in race three, which was shortened after Nathan Bell's engine blow-up led to a multi-car accident on the run to Graham Hill Bend. Chris Rankin won a typically close race two from Szaruta and Cooper.

The closest finish of the weekend though was in the **Caterham Roadsports**, when James Murphy held off Caterham CEO Graham Macdonald to win the second race by just 0.016s. Early leader Daniel French was third, having dropped to eighth when momentarily stuck in second gear exiting Clearways. French had taken a more comfortable victory in race one, from Dan Halstead and Murphy.

Pete Walters lost the opening **Caterham 270R** race after being slapped with a 10s penalty for excessively blocking Jamie Falvey on

the run to the flag but such was the pair's advantage that Walters retained second. They duked throughout, with Walters moving ahead when Falvey was baulked by a backmarker, and it was a similar story in race two with Falvey prevailing.

Reigning champion Luke Herbert added two more wins to his tally in the **Mazda MX-5 Supercup**, holding off Jack Harding and James Blake-Baldwin in race one. The following pair's order was swapped in race two, where Herbert admitted he was helped by numerous yellow flags allowing him to take better lines for defending the available overtaking spots.

Blake-Baldwin claimed a more frantic race three, spiced up by a top-eight grid reversal. He sealed the win with identical lunges on both Aidan Hills and then Jon Greensmith at Paddock Hill Bend, as Herbert managed fourth.

James Colburn took his Austin A40 to victory in the **HRDC Touring Greats**, passing Ding Boston's 1959 Riley 1.5 OUMF and the 1962 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Ti of Gavin Watson after the pitstops. Neil Brown was closing on Boston in second when he spun his Austin A35, but recovered to third.

SILVERSTONE: MGCC MG LIVE BY GRAHAM KEILLOH

JUNE 2/3

Photos: Mick Walker

MGF ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED WITH SPECIAL MG LIVE CONTEST



Harker led MGF race from the start

WINNERS

Allcomers Dan Surridge (MG ZR 170)	(Rover Metro GT) Race 2: Alan Brooke (Rover Metro GT)
Equipe GTS Race 1: Will Penrose (TVR Grantura) Race 2: Mark Ashworth (TVR Grantura)	MG/TF Anniversary Jonathan Harker (TF LE500)
Equipe Pre '63/Equipe MGB Race 1: Jack Rawles (Austin Healey 3000) Race 2: Jack Rawles (Austin Healey 3000)	MG Midget Sprite Challenge Stephen Collier (MG Midget)
Iconic 50s Steve Watton (Turner Mk1)	MG Trophy Race 1: Graham Ross (ZR 190) Race 2: Graham Ross (ZR 190)
MG BCV8/Cockshoot Cup Race 1: Russ McCarthy (MGB GT V8) Race 2: Rob Spencer (MGB GT V8)	Porsche Club Race 1: Mark McAleer (996 C2) Race 2: Pete Morris (997 C2S)
MG Cup Race 1: Alan Brooke	Sports 2000 Tom Stoten (Gunn TS11)



MGF organiser Coulthard

There is never a shortage of attractions at Silverstone's MG Live, but this time one stood apart, with a special race open to all competition MGFs and TFs to mark the 20th anniversary of the BRDC's MGF Cup and MG Car Club's Abingdon Trophy.

The MGF Cup was a famous big-budget series supporting British Formula 3 and GT; it even supported the British Grand Prix in 1998 and '99.

The Abingdon Trophy ran in parallel for club competitors with road-going vehicles, before the two series were merged into the MG Trophy in the 2000s.

The anniversary race was the work of MG stalwart David Coulthard, who owns one of the remaining Cup cars, which he drove in the anniversary race.

"That's how the ball got going, my Cup car," says Coulthard. "I noticed that it was coming up on the 20th anniversary from 1998 to 2018, so I

thought it would be a good idea to mark the occasion."

However, Coulthard found organising the race a trying task. "Championship coordinators that do this week-in-week-out: I take my cap off to them," he admits. "I've found it hard work to motivate and identify who the drivers are and keep them informed of what's going on.

"There hasn't been an abundance of MGFs racing so it was always a bit of a tall order of trying to locate the cars: [many of] the Cup cars have migrated to Australia and the road-going cars were a little thin on the ground."

Anniversary race winner Jonathan Harker paid tribute to Coulthard.

"He deserves a trophy for doing that," Harker says, "I'm very grateful to him, I think we all are."

The MGF Cup provided a springboard to the careers of a number of notable drivers during its existence. "People like Warren Hughes, who won the MGF Cup

in 1999, he moved on to touring cars and racing the sportscar for MG at Le Mans," Coulthard explains.

"Also people like Dave Loudon who will race anything with a Rover badge on the front of it and Paul O'Neill, who is commentating on touring cars, he was a driver in 1999 and 2000. It's been a springboard for a few people."

Harker led the anniversary race from lights-to-flag after poleman Phil Standish pitted at the end of the formation lap with fuel injection problems. But Harker's race was far from trouble-free.

"[Second-placed Brain Butler] gave me a workout I wasn't really expecting," he says. "I did have a problem three laps from the end, a coolant hose had gone and the inside of the car steamed up. I couldn't see so I had to back off.

"I thought 'I don't want to lose the race on the basis of something that insignificant'.

"I was desperately trying to wipe it [the windscreen] and the car was smelling really badly inside of something burning. I don't think I would have done one more lap with it like that."

Butler beat Adam Key to third – a long-overdue battle for MGF enthusiasts as the pair missed each other in the Cup by a year.

"[We] got a very good reaction from the crowd," Coulthard smiles. "Everybody gave us a good wave at the end."

He admits though it was "slightly disappointing" to have an 11-car grid. "I managed to identify about 45 cars in the UK that could race," he continues, "I was hoping we'd get around 30.

"The MG Owners' Club had a [clashing] meeting at Donington, it was just one of those unavoidable clashes. We were very keen to get the race here at MG Live."

The race was nevertheless considered a success and Coulthard is hopeful that

an MGF series can again be established.

"One of those ideas behind it is if we round up enough cars and see if we can actually get a championship together, along the lines of MG Trophy that run the MG ZR," he explains. "But we'll see what happens."

Standish thinks it's important MGFs have their own category. "We often race against the front-wheel-drive ZRs and they are a lot more forgiving," he says. "MGFs racing together means that we've all got the same problems."

Harker agrees and would be keen to support any future races.

"They're not the easiest car," he admits. "They're quite quick in a straight line but they're a bit interesting in the corners. They're very quirky.

"I would love to think we could have more of these cars out in future and have single marque races. It's a great thing to do."

McCarthy and Spencer share the spoils in eventful BCV8 encounters

Both MG BCV8 races started in similar fashion, with poleman Russ McCarthy losing out at the start and having to fight his way back against Neil Fowler and Rob Spencer.

Fowler led race one until lap three of nine, when Spencer slipped down the inside into Brooklands. With McCarthy following a lap later, Spencer's lead was soon under threat.

It was during traffic, however, that the decisive move was made. With Spencer baulked, McCarthy went around the outside at Becketts to lead onto Hangar Straight.

Despite a last-lap spin at Abbey, Spencer retained second with Fowler completing the podium after spinning within inches of the Wellington Straight wall.

Spencer was never headed in race two, with Fowler regaining second, after McCarthy retired having hosed the oil cooler.

Both of the concurrent Cockshoot Cup races were won by Ray Collier's ZR, the second with a critically overheating engine.

After running side-by-side with Pete Morris down the Wellington Straight on the opening lap of the first Porsche Club race, defending champion Mark McAleer showed a clean pair of heels to the rest of the field. Morris retained second until both he and third-placed Mike Price spun on oil on lap seven. Tom Bradshaw came out on top of an entertaining duel with Mark Sumpter for second and third, both counting themselves lucky not to have joined the spinners.

Sumpter and Bradshaw's battle for race two supremacy ended after contact at Luffield on the penultimate lap. Sumpter had led from the start, but Bradshaw had got alongside a couple of times. As he challenged into Brooklands, they rubbed door handles and made further contact with a backmarker into Luffield. Both were out, leaving Morris to take the victory from team-mate Chris Dyer and Kevin Harrison.

Graham Ross secured a winning double in the MG Trophy. Andy

Spencer held the initial gap for much of the race in a secure second, with William Payne snatching third from Doug Cole on the last tour.

Both Ross and Spencer held station from the start of race two, but with Gary Wetton pulling off on the first lap, Cole got his revenge over Payne, as he completed the podium finishers.

Jack Rawles' Austin Healey 3000 had both Equipe Pre '63 & MGB races sewn up on the opening lap. Martin Brewer's Aston Martin Project 214 had to chase down John Pearson's Healey before securing a clear second from lap six. Bob Binfield's Jaguar E-type just kept Paul Kennelly's similar car at bay for third, after Pearson had a couple of spins at Aintree.

In race two Brewer headed the pursuit of Rawles throughout, with Binfield third again after Pearson's early challenge faded.

It was one win each for the TVR Granturas of Will Penrose and Mark Ashworth in Equipe



Spencer (r) was second, despite a spin, in race one and victorious in race two

GTS. Penrose just retained a race-long lead in the opener over Ashworth, with Tom Smith's MGB winning the duel for third over Rod Begbie's TVR. It came down to the last lap in race two though, with Smith leading to Luffield, before Ashworth took the outside to clinch the win, from Smith, Penrose and Begbie.

Although Tom Stoten's Gunn was a lights-to-flag Sports 2000 winner, Michael Gibbins' MCR had shadowed him throughout. That was until a last-lap collision put him out with a puncture and handed Tim Tudor second. David Houghton's similar car was a distant third.

Peter Scherer

RACING REPORTS

DONINGTON PARK: BARC BY MATT KEW
JUNE 2/3

Photo: Ollie Read

ELKMANN TAKES TOP KARTING HONOURS



Elkmann (left) took Division 1 victory

WINNERS
British Superkart GP Division 1
 Peter Elkmann (Anderson/VM)

British Superkart GP F125 Open
 Liam Morley (MS Kart/TM)

British Superkart GP for F250/F450
 Jordan Forde (Anderson/DEA)

Classic Formula Ford 1600
 Race 1: Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)
 Race 2: Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20)

Clubmans Championship
 Race 1: Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)
 Race 2: Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)
 Race 3: Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)

European Superkarts
 Race 1: Peter Elkmann (Anderson/VM)
 Race 2: Peter Elkmann (Anderson/VM)

F250 National/Division 1 UK/F450 National
 Race 1: Jordan Forde (Anderson/DEA)

Race 2: Liam Fox (Anderson/FPE)
Kumho BMWs
 Race 1: James Card (BMW E46 M3)
 Race 2: Piers Reid (BMW E46 M3)

Max5 Championship
 Race 1: Paul Roddison (Mazda MX-5 Mk4)
 Race 2: Paul Roddison (Mazda MX-5 Mk4)

MG Owners' Club
 Race 1: Martin Willis (MG F)

Race 2: Steve Darbey (MG ZR)
Mighty Minis
 Race 1: Dave Rees (Super Mighty Mini)
 Race 2: Dave Rees (Super Mighty Mini)

National F125 Open
 Race 1: Matt Robinson (Anderson/Redspeed)
 Race 2: Chris Needham (Anderson/AME)

Prior to the British Superkart Grand Prix at Donington Park, it seemed as though the drivers had privately agreed that whoever should win must do so in crushing fashion. Nowhere was that more evident than with Peter Elkmann.

Already a two-time winner of the event, he celebrated the GP's 40th anniversary by reaping maximum rewards.

During the headline race for 100bhp Division 1 karts, capable of 140mph, Elkmann was untouchable and won by nearly 10 seconds from fellow German and Anderson/VM driver Andreas Jost.

Although Jost was quicker away at the start, Elkmann occupied the inside line into Redgate and held onto first. A loss of water that resulted in overheating curtailed Liam Morley's race, having started third and briefly passing Jost.

But up front, Elkmann was as much as 1.3s a lap faster than the rest of the field and he duly cleared off into the distance.

After, he waxed lyrical, saying: "It was absolutely a fantastic weekend for us. Maximum points, winning the GP, pole position and fastest lap. There was nothing more to dream about before this weekend."

His triumph in the blue riband race added to taking both European Superkart victories during the championship's opening round. Despite smaller winning margins, he looked just as comfortable as he led home Czech driver Adam Kout each time.

Also winning in a bruising fashion, Australian Jordan Forde was a massive 13s clear of Paul Platt in the GP race for F250/450 karts come the chequered flag. That followed after taking the spoils in the first British National F250/450 race,

although Forde's fortunes took a downward turn when a broken ignition switch sustained on the green flag lap of race two meant he dived into the pitlane from what would have been pole. Second starting Liam Fox instead claimed top spot.

The only exception in the GP trend was during the F125 Open race, in which just 0.037s separated Chris Needham from nicking champion Liam Morley's victory, Matt Robinson having won the previous day's race.

While it may have been the kart races that topped the billing, the Mighty Minis provided the pick of the action with Dave Rees' brace belying two frenetic battles. In the opening race, he led into Redgate but fellow drivers David Kirkpatrick and Alex Comis flanked him under braking into the Melbourne Hairpin. Rees recovered with a superior run into the final corner and survived further threats to take his first championship win, which he dedicated to his late mother.

In race two, up until Greg Jenkins, Mark Ditchburn and Steven Rideout collided at Melbourne and brought out the safety car, any one of the top nine looked in contention. Rees led at the restart but a last-lap pass from Comis looked to have denied him. But Comis was slapped with a track limits penalty which relegated him to fourth but only learned of his costly indiscretion after returning to the pits.

A safety car called to retrieve body work on track allowed Benn Tilley to close and then pass the Van Diemen RF80 of Ben Tinkler in the opening Classic Formula Ford 1600 race. A clean getaway in race two left Tilley unchallenged into Redgate and from there the Merlyn Mk20 driver added a second win.

COVENTRY MOTO FEST

Something old, something new – that seemed to sum up the British Automobile Racing Club's weekend. While its home track of Thruxton was celebrating its 50th anniversary, over in Coventry the British Automobile Racing Club was heading up a new chapter of UK motorsport.

For the first time since the 1990 Birmingham Superprix, competitive motorsport was being staged back on city streets at the Coventry MotoFest Festival. Following newly passed legislation that paved the way for April's Tendring and Clacton Rally, the club was running a points-scoring round of its Sprint championship.

It was Olly Clark, son of World Rally Championship event winner Roger, who topped the times on the city ring road in his Subaru Impreza. But for many, the headline act was Andy Wallace – back driving the seven-litre V12 Jaguar XJR-9 with which he won Le Mans 30 years ago. No stranger to street circuits as winner of the '86 Macau Grand Prix, in many respects he was coming full circle having raced Formula 3 at the '87 Superprix.

"It's nice to see these cars in a museum, but if it can actually run then it's even better," he said. "The city's got a lot of motoring history with the car [Jaguar's headquarters is based in Coventry] so it makes perfect sense to be here."

"The track is very, very tight. There's a couple of chicanes where you're on full lock and the XJR-9 has cold front tyres so if you head in with too much speed then you're going into the barrier."

While pre-weekend estimates of 130,000 spectators seemed ambitious given that

crowds were rarely more than two deep, MotoFest certainly struck the right chord with the competitors.

Chris Hall, chairman of the Midlands branch of BARC, said: "It's been a lot of work, but I'm really pleased with how it's gone. People have said that this is like an accessible version of the [Goodwood] Festival of Speed."

"If MotoFest can crack that then it's bang on. People have come and had a look round and so I think next year we'll sell out [the 50 entries]."

Away from the sprint circuit, the Motor Sports Association and Loughborough Car Club offered free passenger rides around a makeshift autotest route. Part of an initiative to reduce anti-social behaviour in the 2021 UK city of culture, it showcased a legal and regulated way for people to skid round a carpark.

Due to safety restrictions based on the current road infrastructure and barrier set-up, single-seaters were the only notable absences. Otherwise, MotoFest spanned the spectrum of motorsport. Historic sportscars, rally-spec Audi quattros and highly tuned sprint cars were out in force and demonstration runs extended to the current British Touring Car grid. With Power Maxed as the title sponsor of the event, Brands Hatch winner Senna Proctor was behind the wheel of the team's Vauxhall Astra.

"There's a lot of people here and it's always a nice thing to come to," he said of the Festival's fifth running. "For me, it's more chilled out than usual. But I'm enjoying it all."

"It'd be good to doing a few touring car races [on street circuits], but I'm not sure if we'd get round there or how many people would finish!"

Matt Kew

CITY STREETS PLAY HOST TO MOTORSPORT

First competitive event since 1990 Superprix



Clark's Subaru was the class of the field



Wallace wowed crowds in his 7-litre Le Mans winner



Machines of all shapes, sizes and age competed

SPORTING SCENE

Uren and Hall share the hillclimbing honours

Dave Uren and Will Hall shared the honours in the fifth meeting of the British Hillclimb Championship at Shelsley Walsh on Sunday.

The results over the two showdowns, rounds nine and 10, pushed Hall up to second in the points table just one away from table-topper Trevor Willis.

Uren powered his Gould GR55B to top spot with a 23.53s despite pressure from Hall, who was actually faster on his run until his reached the bottom S section, where the rear of the Force WH slid slightly and he clocked a 23.60s. Hall was second, ahead of Willis and Wallace Menzies (Gould GR59) third.

In the second contest, Hall made no mistake and landed a 23.83s run, with Uren just 0.01s behind and Menzies further back on a 23.91s.

The next round of the championship takes place at Loton Park on June 9/10 for rounds 11 and 12.

● Mitch Evans will run the Jaguar Formula E car up the hill at Shelsley Walsh on August 12 to help celebrate the venue's 113th anniversary, and not Prescott, as reported in the *Motorsport News* article on May 23. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.



Uren took the fastest time on day one

SOLBERG JR GETS ANOTHER WIN

Oliver closes on Nordic championship points lead



Oliver Solberg scored his third career RX victory



Solberg is close to top

By Hal Ridge

Sixteen-year-old Oliver Solberg, son of triple FIA world champion Petter, claimed his third career rallycross victory at Arvika in Sweden last weekend and has zeroed in on the lead of the RallyX Nordic Championship.

The Citroen DS3 driver topped the podium after battling his way ahead in the final. The victory came one year after he became the youngest ever Supercar winner at the same venue

using a Latvian licence to drive his father's former car.

Solberg had been blighted by niggling issues in the Holjes season-opener last month, where victory was taken by reigning Nordic champion Thomas Bryntesson. Bryntesson again topped the Intermediate Classification at Arvika and led the opening lap of the final until being passed by Solberg at the start of lap two, from where the OSRX driver remained ahead until the finish. Bryntesson later dropped to fourth with a puncture.

"It's amazing to win in Arvika again and get my title hopes back on track after all the problems we had in Holjes," said Solberg Jr. "We had problems with the launches initially [today] but once we had fixed it, the car was brilliant and I could focus properly on racing. In the final I had a great start and even though Bryntesson got ahead of me through the first corners I felt I was faster. When he went wide into the final corner I just stuck to the inside and was able to out-drag him. After that I just had to focus, keep my lines

clean and keep pushing. It's a great feeling to win again and gives me confidence ahead of my home round in Grenland."

Lukas Walfridson and Philip Gehrman – the latter racing an Eklund Motorsport-run Volkswagen Beetle in rallycross legend Per Eklund's home town – completed the podium. Solberg now lies second in the standings, nine points behind leader Bryntesson. The third of six rounds takes place at Grenland in Norway later this month.

EUROPEAN HOT ROD CHAMPIONSHIP

Haird back on form

National Hot Rods

By Graham Brown

Organiser: Spedeworth When: May 28 Where: Foxhall International Raceway Starters: 27.

Following a long period in the doldrums, Chris Haird bounced back at Ipswich, scoring well in the heats before taking a dominant final victory, which helped him pull a commanding lead at the finish over points championship rival Billy Wood.

For the second meeting running, the racing took place in blistering heat and the Bank Holiday having also brought out some welcome visitors to play in the sunshine. No doubt using it as a pre-World Final test, top Scot Rob McDonald was a nowadays unusual addition to an English grid, and he was joined by Ulsterman Kenny McCann in his Vauxhall Corsa.

Returnee Peter Elliott set off in determined fashion from the front rank of the grid in heat one but it wasn't long before fellow white grader Guy Smith was in bother at Turn 3, some mayhem down there leading to cars spinning and colliding, with Aaron Dew's Ginetta coming out of it very much the worse for wear.

Following a yellow flag clear up, Elliott resumed leading but was soon jumped by Ivan Grayson and Terry Hunn, with Elliott eventually going out after a collision with Jason Kew.

Grayson had Hunn breathing down his neck the rest of the way but without the latter ever being able to make a serious passing attempt. Haird got home third in this one, having eclipsed Carl Waller-Barrett around the outside – no mean feat. The triple world champion was driving his seemingly unloved new



Haird has hit his stride at the right time of the season with Ipswich win

car, which previously had only managed a few laps of Hedgesford before blowing its engine up.

The second encounter began much the same way, with Elliott getting away fast into the lead, but this time with Paul Gomm and Hunn quickly catching him. They soon went tearing past, Elliott dropping back down the order thereafter. Hunn found himself in the same position that he'd occupied in the first race, that of being able to stick right with the leader without being able to see a passing shot anywhere and it was Gomm's always beautifully prepared car which swept under the chequers still just ahead.

Hunn's two second spots certainly did him no harm for the final of course, as they meant he had pole wrapped up, but with Haird sat right behind on row two, no-one was taking bets about anything other than a win for car number 115.

Haird's cause was helped still further when outside front row man Grayson had a big moment on the opening lap, allowing Hunn to easily assume the lead while Haird just as easily took over the mantle of second. The expected pressure was soon on, with Haird

sniffing at Hunn's back bumper for most of a lap before darting under the Mazda and away.

With Haird winning pretty much as he liked, attention switched to the places battles. Here, the expected fast movers gradually worked their way up the leader board, with Billy Wood looking the best of them as he appeared in second long before the finish. He was still too far back to ever bother the leader however, while behind him Gavin Murray acceded to third with Shane Bland fourth, that was until he got disqualified for an early incident which had sent Hunn spinning.

That left Waller-Barrett in fourth place instead ahead of Jack Blood and McDonald.

Results

Heat one: 1 Ivan Grayson (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Terry Hunn (Mazda RX-8); 3 Chris Haird (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Billy Wood (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Colin Hitch (Peugeot 206); 7 Danny Smith (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Shane Bland (Vauxhall Tigra). Heat two: 1 Paul Gomm (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Hunn; 3 Hitch; 4 Grayson; 5 D Smith; 6 Wood; 7 Haird; 8 Gavin Murray (Vauxhall Tigra). Final: 1 Haird; 2 Wood; 3 Murray; 4 Waller-Barrett; 5 Jack Blood (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Rob McDonald (Vauxhall Tigra); 7 D Smith; 8 Billy Bonnar (Vauxhall Tigra); 9 Gomm; 10 Hitch. Points (after 11/12 rounds): 1 Wood 436; 2 Haird 425; 3 Waller-Barrett 424; 4 Murray 375; 5 Weaver and Bonnar 326.

BRISCA F1

Harrison marks his Buxton anniversary in style

BriSCA F1: Buxton

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: BriSCA F1 When: June 3 Where: Buxton Raceway Starters: 38.

Paul Harrison dominated to record his 64th career final win and his seventh at Buxton. Harrison's first win at the Derbyshire track was 27 years and one day ago on June 2, 1991.

Adam Bamford and Jacklyn Ellis swapped the lead in the early stages before Ellis pulled away from the pack. Further back, Will Hunter was slicing through the field with Harrison in tow. As the duo encountered lapped traffic they tangled, with Hunter spinning and coming to a stop on the racing line, which caused a yellow flag.

On the restart Ellis once again pulled away but Nigel Green was on the move behind. He had passed Harrison for second before a flat tyre forced him to retire.

As the race entered the second half Harrison passed Ellis for the lead and

pulled away to win by almost half a lap. On the final lap Lee Fairhurst, Ellis' partner, nudged Ellis wide and won the drag race to the line by 0.038s to claim second.

"When Green got by me I thought he would go on to win, but I was keeping up with him until he had a flat tyre," said winner Harrison. "After that there was some oil down on the track and it was tricky to drive, but I found a good line and the car handled so well."

Ellis was ecstatic with her third position. She said: "Those last four laps seemed the longest I have ever driven, I saw Fairhurst closing in, I tried to let him pass in Turn 1 so I could have a go at him on the last corner, but he slowed down and followed me down the back straight. I can't believe I have got a top three though, I never dreamed of this when I got to the track today."

Result

1 Paul Harrison; 2 Lee Fairhurst; 3 Jacklyn Ellis; 4 Aaron Leach; 5 Frankie Wainman Jr; 6 Danny Wainman; 7 Karl Hawkins; 8 Luke Davidson; 9 Bradley Harrison; 10 Frankie Wainman Junior Jr.

Harrison lifted his seventh Buxton win



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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Stars will turn the spotlight on Le Mans

Alonso and Button ready for one of their biggest motor racing challenges

Fan favourite Jenson Button was candid in his assessment of Le Mans after the test day last weekend. The 2009 Formula 1 champion said it was "disconcerting". He is not wrong: La Sarthe will be quite unlike anything that he has tackled before, and that is what makes his participation all the more interesting.

While Button will be in a privateer LMP1 car, the headlines will be all about Fernando Alonso as he aims to finally take Toyota to the top step of the podium in the twice-round-the-clock race. He conducted more running than Button during the test day and said he feels truly ready for the challenge after getting ample experience and setting the fastest time around the 8.46-mile configuration. There is something magical about Alonso's burning desire to claim more prizes as he struggles to grab the triple crown. In a year when the 24 hours is devoid of all but one factory team, it should keep the spotlight firmly placed on Le Mans.

● MN's preview is 11 days before the big race, to enable fans travelling to France for qualifying to take it with them. If you are going, enjoy.

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

ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Peter Atkins captured this Aston Martin at the recent Blancpain meet at Silverstone



Chris Collier's pic of a wayward Chris Atkinson



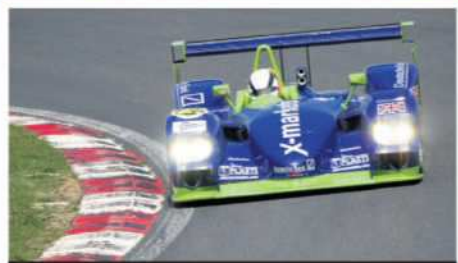
Gary Hill's photo from Brands Hatch



Graham Lomax's shot of a Connaught



Peter Atkins went to Speedmachine World RX



Martin Short at Brands, by Mark Owen



Graham Lomax with his Stokoe cartoons



Robert Taylor's BTCC shot from Thruxton



More hillclimb action from Tim Hall



Sam Nudd caught this off at Croft



World RX at Silverstone from Michael Vickers

LETTERS



Motorsport News, May 30

Meeke out

Thank goodness Citroen has at last seen sense to dispense with the services of Kris Meeke (*Motorsport News*, May 30).

If only for his own safety and well being as opposed from a monetary point of view.

No doubt the usual plaudits will roll out the usual same old lame excuses; ill-handling car, pure bad luck, but enough is enough now before the next crash is more severe or, God forbid, fatal.

I have been at pains over the years to point out to the motoring press and fellow rally enthusiasts that he was never going to be the next Richard Burns/Colin McRae, as much as many, including myself, would like him to have been.

Whatever unfurls in the next chapter of Mr Meeke's life, may I wish him good luck.

If a full-time works drive did come up in the future, whilst it would be brilliant to still see him around, he would be ill advised to take it.

While even after all these years I lament the passing of the Group B era, it goes without saying that the current crop of WRC cars are carrying far more speed through the corners.

If you are unfortunate enough to wrap your car around a tree at a modest 10mph extra, you will hit that tree not at 10 times extra force, but at 100 times.

Mr Meeke may feel he was punished hard for a small driving error.

I am inclined to say that you cannot defeat the laws of physics.

Nigel Thompson
Via email

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WWW.MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

TV GUIDE

Make sure to watch the **Great History of the 24 Hours of Le Mans** and the 1993 running (Thursday, 1400-1500hrs), as Peugeot returned with its 905 Evo 1B in an attempt to claim back-to-back victories.

There are highlights from the third round of the **British GT Championship** at Snetterton (Friday, 1045-1145hrs), which included two races on the Norfolk circuit. Relive the 1987 Rally Sanremo with **Classic FIA World Rally**

Championship (Saturday, 2300-0000hrs) as Lancia attempted to continue its unbeaten start to the season.

Catch up on all on both of the **TCR Europe** races from Spa-Francorchamps on Sunday (2100-2200hrs).

And start the week with the **Windsor Interviews** (Monday, 0830-0900hrs), and David Hobbs – who had an accomplished career in both single-seaters and sportscar racing before switching to broadcasting.



Peugeot went for victory

TV GUIDE

Watch highlights of both **IndyCar** races from Detroit this evening (Wednesday, 1900-2100hrs, BT Sport 3), as Indy 500 winner Will Power tries to extend his lead in the standings.

Take a step back in time with **Classic F1** and the 2008 Canadian Grand Prix (Wednesday, 2100-2315hrs, Sky

Sports F1), currently the only victory for Robert Kubica.

And there's action from the second round of the **European Formula 3 Championship** at the Hungaroring (Friday, 1500-1600hrs, BT Sport 2), with Britain's Enaam Ahmed lying third in the standings after he made his series debut in Pau.

LIVE F1



Ricciardo: Making a splash

Canadian Grand Prix Sky Sports F1

- **Drivers' press conference:** Thursday, 1600-1630hrs
- **FP1:** Friday, 1330-1550hrs
- **FP2:** Friday, 1745-1950hrs
- **FP3:** Saturday, 1445-1615hrs
- **Qualifying:** Saturday, 1700-1945hrs
- **Race:** Sunday, 1630-2110hrs
- **Highlights:** Monday, 0045-0145hrs

Channel 4 HD highlights

- **Qualifying:** Saturday, 2255-0025hrs
- **Race:** Sunday, 2240-0040hrs

LIVE TV

Euroformula Open: Spa

- **Race 1:** Saturday, 1300-1400hrs, BT Sport 2
- **Race 2:** Sunday, 1215-1315hrs, BT Sport 3

GT Open: Spa

- **Race 1:** Saturday, 1400-1545hrs, BT Sport 2
- **Race 2:** Sunday, 1315-1445hrs, BT Sport 3

IndyCar: Texas

- **Race:** Sunday, 0100-0400hrs, BT Sport ESPN

Formula E: Zurich

- **Race:** Sunday, 1630-1815hrs, Channel 5/1700-1815hrs, Eurosport 2

NASCAR: Michigan

- **Race:** Sunday, 1830-2300hrs, Premier Sports

BTCC: Oulton Park

- **All the day's action:** Sunday, 1115-1800hrs, ITV4

LIVE WRC

Rally Sardinia, BT Sport

- **Thursday**
- **SS1:** 1800-1900hrs, BT Sport 1

Friday

- **End of day review:** 2330-0000hrs, BT Sport 2

Saturday

- **SS10:** 0730-0830hrs, BT Sport 1
- **SS14:** 1500-1600hrs, BT Sport 1
- **End of day review:** 2330-0000hrs, BT Sport 1

Sunday

- **SS18:** 0830-0930hrs, BT Sport 1
- **SS20:** 1100-1230hrs, BT Sport 1
- **End of day review:** 2130-2200hrs, BT Sport 1

Red Bull TV

- **End of day review:** Friday, 2100-2130hrs
- **SS14:** Saturday, 1445hrs
- **End of day review:** Saturday, 2100-2130hrs
- **End of day review:** Sunday, 2100-2130hrs



End of day reviews

- **Day 1:** Friday, 2230-2300hrs
- **Day 2:** Saturday, 2230-2300hrs
- **Day 3:** Sunday, 2230-2300hrs

LISTINGS

RACING

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ Oulton Park, Cheshire

BTCC meeting: BTCC, F4, Carrera Cup, Clio Cup, Ginetta GT4, Ginetta Junior **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1445hrs (qualifying from 0905hrs) Sunday, racing from 1220hrs **Admission** adult £34, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ Silverstone, Northants

British F3/GT meeting: GT, F3, Ginetta GT5/Ginetta G40, Caterham 420R, Ginetta Racing Drivers Club, Mini Challenge **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1355hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs **Admission** £26 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

■ Brands Hatch, Kent

American SpeedFest VI: NASCAR Euro Series, Formula 5000, FF1600, Legends, Bernie's V8s/Sports Racing and GT, Modified Saloon Cars, Tin Tops **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1225hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1055hrs (qualifying from 1020hrs) **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ Snetterton, Norfolk

BRSCC meeting: TVR, Open Sports, ST-XR Challenge, Production GTi, Fun Cup **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1115hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ Rockingham, Northants

750MC meeting: Clio 182, Club Enduro, Toyota MR2, Roadsports, 750 Formula, Bikesports, Sport Specials, Armed Forces Race **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1200hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1030hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £16 **Web** rockingham.co.uk **Contact** 0870 1660438

■ Pembrey, South Wales

BARC meeting: Classic VW, Welsh Sports and Saloons, Citroen C1, BARC Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1250hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0925hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £15, under 14 free **Web** barc.net **Contact** 01264 882200

■ Mondello Park, Ireland

MEC meeting: Formula Vee, Formula Sheane, BOSS Ireland, Touring Cars, SEAT, Historic Racing Cars, Fiesta Zetec, Fiesta ST, Legends Cars, ASK Supercars **Starts** Saturday, racing from

1300hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) Sunday, racing from 1300hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) **Admission** adult Euro 15, under 16 free **Web** mondello.ie

SUNDAY

■ Mallory Park, Leics

Classic and Modern Motorsport Festival: FF1600, 70s Road Sports, Historic Road Sports, 500cc F3, Northern Sports/Saloon **Starts** racing from 1100hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) **Admission** adult £13, under 13 free **Web** mallorypark.co.uk **Contact** 01455 502214

RALLY

FRIDAY-SATURDAY

■ Carlisle, Cumbria

ATL Carlisle Stages **Starts** 1800hrs **Admission** free **Web** racrnc.org

SATURDAY

■ Werwik, Belgium

Motul Rally Van Werwik **Starts** 0830hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** scuderiavervica.be

■ Craill Airfield, Fife

Craill Summer Stages **Starts** 1145hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** glenrothes-msc.com

■ Newry, County Armagh and County Down

Mourne Rally **Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** TBA **Web** nadmc.net

SUNDAY

■ Dalton Barracks, Abingdon

Abingdon CAR-nival **Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** TBA **Web** abingdoncarnival.com

■ Portlaoise, County Laois

Laois Heartlands Mini Stages Rally **Starts** 0950hrs **Admission** free **Web** rally.ie

SPORTING SCENE

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ Loton Park, Shrops

British Hillclimb **Starts** 0800hrs **Admission** adult £12.50, under 16 free **Web** britishhillclimb.co.uk

SUNDAY

■ Aldershot, Hants

National Hot Rods **Starts** 1200hrs **Admission** adults £16, concessions £12, children £6 **Web** nationalhotrod.com

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OUT WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

F1 CANADIAN GRAND PRIX REPORT

MERCEDES, FERRARI AND RED BULL BATTLE IT OUT IN MONTREAL



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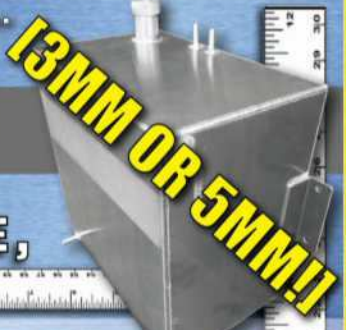
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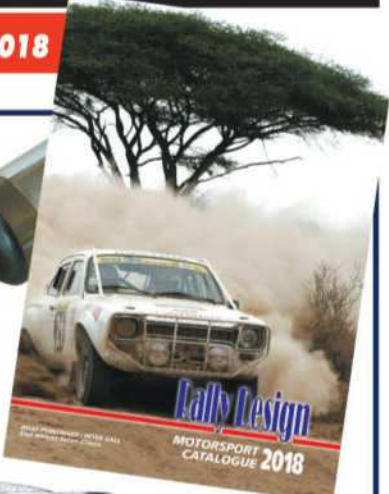
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