

The BRITISH MOTORSPORT MARSHALS CLUB



SAFER MOTOR SPORT

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Newsletter

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Cover Story.

Just too late and apologies for that was the sad news that Keith White had passed away just before Christmas. One of our most entertaining and respected Rally drivers Keith has entertained spectators and marshals for many years.

Always with a smile and an O.K. Keith was a gentleman and will be sadly missed. Again sorry I did not get this into the Jan. Mag.

The Rally Cars that never ran.

At the height of the Group B era few people outside the F.I.A. and the major manufacturers knew that the FIA were considering a SuperCar Group S for the future, in fact several teams were hard at work in secret looking at potential designs for a new breed of Super WRC cars. At the time of Toivonen's fatal crash some Group S cars had already been designed and prototypes built. So the sudden decision to ban Group B on safety grounds meant that Group S would never happen.

Audi had already produced a mid engined Quattro claiming up to 700 BHP a car hidden until first shown in 2018.

Mazda had also a prototype RX7 with 4 wheel drive and a 450BHP rotary engine, again this car was not shown to the public for several years after the Group B ban.

Lancia at the time of Toivonen's accident had stated work on a revised S4 Delta with substantially lighter bodywork , advanced aerodynamics based on

Ferrari's technical knowhow in the F1 field and with over 360 BHP.

This would have taken Group B to a whole new level !



The mid engined Audi Quattro.



The Mazda Group S Rally Car 1987



Lancia's fearsome Delta ECV Group S car.

Not Group S but worthy of note was the McRae R4 designed by Colin McRae. Who before his fatal accident had intended a limited production run and to compete in the WRC in his own car.



CLASSIC CAR NEWS.

Further lockdowns affects most of us but with on line auctions continuing to attract strong interest one wonders if boredom or perhaps spending less is driving high levels of bidding. For various reasons , not only covid , my Honda since the end of March has only put 1,200 miles on the clock. It must be the lowest mileage 2018 Type R in the country with 10,700 miles on it. If you have access to You Tube auction houses like Anglia and Silverstone now post video of each auction. Check it out !

The most unlikely of cars are currently setting above top auction prices . Can you believe that at Bonham's a 1971 Mini 1275 GT sold for over £18,000 or an average Series 3 Alfa Spider (rubber bumper model that a few years ago no one wanted) sold for £17,900. Cars making silly money include nice Ford Anglia 105E cars now valued at over £12,000 , low mileage XJ S 5.3 (Historics sold one in December for £24,600 and good Triumph TR 7 cars (is there such a thing?) a couple of year ago a TR7 might have cost you a couple of thousand but today they are changing hands for up to eight grand.

A nice Porsche 911 RS2.7 is up for sale at Bonham's this month. With its first owner W.R.C. Champ Walter Rohrl it is expected to sell for around half a million. Not sure if our Cathel Curley is going to laugh or cry about this as his RS2.7 registered AUI 1500 was valued last year at over £1 million pounds.

In the current market place it seems anything goes , I am a fan of both Kim Cairns and Ivor Blaney , dealers who have been around for a long , long time and are very astute at finding good quality cars at sensible prices. But some of the rest , would you pay £20,000 for a Porsche with 133,000 miles on it , a 1933 Austin 7 Cambridge £17,000 or a 1959 Hillman Minx £12,990 or even worse a nice but nothing special Rolls Royce Silver Shadow Mark 1 at over £25 grand ? A search of the internet found similar Shadows for less that £10,000 !

2021 Grand Prix Season.

With no guarantees of what will actually go ahead the F.I.A. have , quite bravely now produced the 2021 Race Season calendar with no less than 23 races.

This is the longest G.P. season in the history of the sport.

Watch this space !

2021 F1 Calendar

March Bahrain March 26 /28th.

April. Imola April 16/18th. China ? April 30th.

May Spain May 7/9th. Monaco May20/23rd.

June Baku June 4/6th. Canada 11/13th. France June 25/27th.

July Austria July 2/4th. British July 16/18th. Hungary July 30th.

August. SPA August 27/ 29th.

September Dutch Sept 3/5th. Italy Sept. 10/12th. Russia Sept 24/26th.

October Singapore Oct 1/3rd. Japan Oct.8/10th. USA Oct 22/24th. Mexico 29/31st.

November Brazil Nov 7/9th. Australia Nov 18/21st.

December. Saudi Arabia December 3/5th. Abu Dhabi December 10/12th.

Good luck with all that !!!!

Historic Rallying has become a big part of the motorsport scene in recent years and for the most part drivers tend to look after and respect the cars they are competing in. Not so in Scandinavia where historic rallying is huge but where cars are cheerfully driven to destruction. On You Tube Blomgrens Rally videos on Historic Rallying is painful to watch with nice and at times quite valuable cars being destroyed.

Forgotten Hero's

ROBERT BENOIST.

Robert Benoist born in Ile De France in 1895 was the son of Baron Henri de Rothchilds gamekeeper. Aged just 17 he served in the French Army before becoming a fighter pilot in the newly formed French Air Force.

He spent the next few years after the war as a flying instructor before a change of job which would change his life for ever and which ultimately would see him murdered by the Nazi's. A real Hero.

Looking for excitement in the post-war world, Benoist joined the de Marçay car company as a test driver. He then moved on to Salmson and was very successful in cyclecar races before being signed to drive for Delage in 1924. The next year, teamed with Albert Divo, he won the French Grand Prix in the race that claimed the life of Italian racing star Antonio Ascari.^[2]

In 1927, driving a Delage 15-S-8, he won the French, Spanish, Italian and British Grand Prix races, earning the season championship title for the French manufacturer.^{[3][4][5][6]}

When the Delage company dropped out of racing, Robert Benoist was without a job and was appointed manager of the Banville Garage in Paris. He did occasional races for the Bugatti team, finishing second in the 1928 San Sebastián Grand Prix in Spain.^[7]

The following year he teamed up with Attilio Marinoni to win the Spa 24 Hours race in Belgium, driving an Alfa Romeo. At the end of the season he retired until 1934, when he made a comeback with the Bugatti team. He was soon made head of the competition department and masterminded the company's Le Mans programme. In 1937 he partnered with Jean-Pierre Wimille to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans^[8] endurance race. Following that victory, Benoist retired permanently, but continued to run Bugatti's racing department until called up into the French Air Force.

World War II

In addition to Jean-Pierre Wimille, Robert Benoist became good friends with another Grand Prix driver, William Grover-Williams.^[9] When World War II broke out and France was occupied, these three race drivers all escaped to Britain where they joined the Special Operations Executive as secret agents^[10] to return to France to assist the French Resistance. Benoist was commissioned into the British Army as a captain.^[1] Parachuted into France, Benoist helped organise sabotage cells and with William Grover-Williams moved weapons from air-drops in the Rambouillet forest to his home at Auffargis for storage and distribution.

In June 1943, the "Prosper" network in Paris collapsed and its leaders, Francis Suttill and Andrée Borrel, were arrested by the Gestapo. In August, Benoist's home was raided by the Gestapo and Grover-Williams was captured and executed with Francis Suttill at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

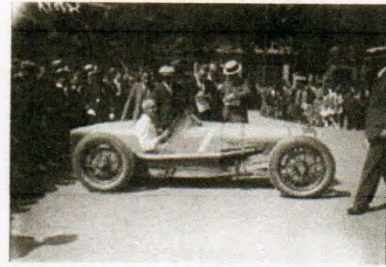
Capture and escape

Three days later, Robert Benoist was apprehended in Paris. While being driven to Gestapo headquarters, Benoist leaped from the moving vehicle and escaped,^[10] eventually being smuggled back to Britain via the underground.

New missions

Benoist returned to France on a second mission, lasting from October 1943 to February 1944, after which he returned to London for a short time before going back to France in March to work in the Nantes area with fellow SOE agent Denise Bloch.

Benoist was arrested on 18 June 1944 and shipped to Buchenwald concentration camp where he was executed three months later, on 9 September.



Benoist at the 1926 San Sebastián Grand Prix



Benoist, French Grand Prix, 1927

Robert's RallyBuzz

WRC Rally NI Is UK's Best Hope Going Forward

Sadly there will be not be a round of the 2021 WRC in the UK. Time was finally called on the proposed Rally Northern Ireland last month. Funding for the Belfast-based event could not be found at this time due to the current critical state of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Rally was due to run in August but that slot on the WRC calendar has now been filled by Ypres Rally Belgium. Whether that country is able to get Covid-19 under control by then remains to be seen!

The hope of the FIA, WRC Promoter and the rally teams is that a date on the 2022 calendar can be secured by Rally NI. Bobby Willis has dedicated his life to organising a WRC event in Northern Ireland. With backing from North Antrim MP Ian Paisley and other interested parties, Willis has very high hopes of a challenging closed-road event taking place when the pandemic is no longer a threat. A summer date would be ideal but that would be a huge bonus. Wales Rally GB has run its course and the World is ready for a free-to-watch Tarmac Classic. The WRC Promoter managing director Jona Siegel said "It is sad we cannot enjoy the beauty of Northern Ireland this year".

If Rally Northern Ireland DOESN'T happen soon, then the UK may kiss goodbye to the World Rally Championship, possibly for good! The Welsh government are not interested in supporting an event in the principality. Other regions of the United Kingdom do not appear to have expressed any interest in organising a WRC event.

There is though, a major snag. The NI Executive at Stormont may not have any money to invest in a Northern Ireland WRC project as soon as next year. In dealing with the ongoing protracted Coronavirus pandemic, the NI government is reportedly broke! That's why I think a date in 2023 is much more realistic.

What a feel-good event the World Rally Championship counter would be for a country which has experienced such a hard time lately. The rally would attract around 120,000 spectators to witness the World's best drivers in action on the best tarmac stages to be found anywhere! Tourism NI would of course be very supportive of an event which should attract up to 120,000 spectators. Hotels and the rest of the hospitality industry would be overflowing, just what is needed following the recent bad times! Let's hope it eventually comes to pass!

Back to the present time. There is no good news! Due to the on going effects of the coronavirus pandemic, lockdown restrictions are in place in Northern Ireland until at least 5th March 2021. Consequently no rallies (or indeed any form of motorsport) will be permitted to run during this period and beyond until the NI Executive decrees otherwise.

Round one of the NI Rally Championship due to be held at Kirkistown on Sat. 13th Feb. has been cancelled by North Armagh MC.

Omagh Motor Club have also cancelled their Fivemiletown Rally on Sat. 20th Feb. which would have been the first round of the 2021 NI Gravel Rally Challenge.

Round two of the NI Rally Championship, the Bishops court Stages scheduled for Sat. 6th March has been postponed. Rally organisers Ballynahinch and District Motor Club are very much hoping to reschedule the popular McGrady Insurance sponsored event to a date later in the year.

With a lockdown also in place in Southern Ireland until at least 5th March, the first and second rounds of the Irish Tarmac Championship, the Galway Rally (7th February) and the West Cork Rally scheduled for 20th-21st March have both been cancelled.

The Circuit of Ireland Rally due to run at Easter (2nd-3rd April) has also been cancelled. The UAC event should have opened the 2021 British Rally Championship and would have been the third round of the Irish Tarmac Championship.

Citing the continuing uncertainty around large-scale gatherings taking place both in Ireland and across the globe which would have the potential to increase the spread of coronavirus, the organisers state that they had no option but to cancel the rally for this year.

COI Clerk of the Course, Nigel Hughes, said “We cannot expect local residents to allow the roads to be closed during this dreadful pandemic which is claiming lives daily. 2021 was to have been the 90th Anniversary of the ‘Circuit’. With the vaccination programme now in full swing, hopefully 2022 will facilitate the anniversary celebrations and the smooth and safe running of the rally on 15th and 16th of April”.

I am afraid many other event organisers in Ireland will be making similar difficult decisions regarding their events throughout the rest of 2021. Covid-19 hasn't gone away you know!

Twenty years ago foot and mouth disease had called a halt to all stage rally in Northern Ireland. The Eurocables Rally at Kirkistown in February 2001 was the last event to be held here. There were 130 starters and we used a new lights and beams electronic timing system for the first time. Despite some teething problems the experiment went well. It was a very cold day and I had a full complement of timekeepers who did a sterling job.

I have just last month attended a webinar organised by Motorsport UK in which a new stage rally timing system was explained. Apparently no time cards are used and timekeepers can sit in their cars while just keeping a master sheet and monitoring the electronic arrival, starts and finishes. Great news for us marshals, especially if the weather is inclement.

Covid-19 was responsible for the changes coming so soon but they would have happened eventually. All we need now are some stages to try it out on! I am not holding my breath.

Robert Coursey; February 2021



Fingers crossed , we will see things like this again !.

CRAP CORNER.

We could stand you in East Antrim. Safe seat and you'd be less bother than our current fella there ...



Had a terrible start to 2021 !

First my ex wife got run over by a bus and the very next day I was fired from my job.

(As a bus driver.)

Lets not rush to celebrate 2021 being the end of misfortunes , warns Johnathan Healy , a History Fellow at Oxford, who makes his point about the twists of fate with a little known entry from the diary of Samual Pepys written 355 years ago.

" The year of our Lorde 1665 has been such a terrible one for ye plague" he wrote " I cannot wait for 1666 , for which I have especial excitement to trye the newe bakery that hath opened it's doors on Pudding Lane."

**IRISH
POST**

**America falling
apart**

**Britain falling
apart**

**Ireland checking
how all this effects
Amazon deliveries**



**"Not today love..."
"The hills are closed"**



**IRISH
POST**

