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Michael Lyons Hesketh Winner Monaco Historic 2021.

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Newsletter

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Cover Story.

Strange everybody here knows Paddy Hopkirk , John Watson and more recently Johnathan Rea but our most successful racing driver of recent times rarely gets a mention in the local or even national press. Michael Lyons whose family come from Hillsborough is better known in France, Germany , Japan and Australia than in Northern Ireland.

Motorsport recently called him unique among modern drivers , in the mould of Salvadori and Moss , two drivers , who in the 1950's drove anything they could get their hands on won more races than they lost.

Lyons is exactly the same , winning races in SuperTouring (Volvo S60) , historic sports cars , historic F1, modern ProAm cars in the Blancpain World series , F5000 cars as well as winning the Historic Formula Ford Championship at the first attempt.

The fact that last month he entered 3 different Formula 1 cars for the Monaco Historic Grand Prix , won all three races hardly rated a mention here. His first win at Monaco 2021 was for G.P. cars built between 1966 and 1972 was in a Surtees , his second win in a very different car was driving a McLaren M26 (1973 to 1976) and his third win was for post 1977 cars driving a 1979 Hesketh. Very few drivers can claim 3 race wins at a Monaco Historic meeting.

His record speaks for itself. In his first full year of racing he won the 2008 British Historic F.F. Championship and the British F.Renault Championship, and in 2009 he not only won the Renault Championship again but won every single race. In 2011 he won the prestigious Derek Bell Trophy at the HSCC meeting at Silverstone and a year later won his first historic F1 race at Monaco. In 2013 he travelled to Australia winning both the Phillips Island Classic sports car races and the Total

Oil International Classic Sports car Championship.

2014 saw Lyons back at Monaco winning the F1 race for 1973 cars , before returning to Australia where he finished runner up In the Tasman Formula 5000 Championship. He returned in 2015 racing a Ferrari 348GTS in the Blancpain Series finishing second in the ProAm Cup class. When not racing the Ferrari Lyons was running an F1 car in the Formula1 Masters series finishing the year in third place. In 2016 he won the Masters F1 Championship and in 2017 won the F1 V F5000 Race of Champions at Brands Hatch.

2018 saw him win again at Monaco in the McLaren and in the Historic Sports Car World Series he took the Group C class 3 Championship. After several wins in the 2019 Masters F1 he returned in 2020 to win the Championship for the second time.

Over the years very few drivers from Northern Ireland have achieved as much racing success as Michael Lyons , he deserved a lot more recognition locally.



Spa Historic in the wet.

Classic Car news.

Well into the second year of lockdown and the online Auction houses go from strength to strength. Even the most optimistic of dealers are shocked by some of the prices being paid. Boredom played a role clearly as so called project cars and barn finds needing months of major work are being sold at double or more of their estimate.

Charterhouse has a Mark 1 Escort RS2000 off the road from the 1990's , non standard vinyl roof , the seats have turned to foam dust , sills and all four wings are rusted through , doors are scrap yet there is enough interest that the estimate is £20,000 / £25,000. Even more extreme is the 1970 Aston DB6 Vantage discovered in a garage after 33 years.. Love the comment "original and complete but needs some work" a more accurate comment would be "basket case , needs total restoration which will cost thousands upon thousands" In spite of this RM Sotheby sold it for £185,000. It's what my old mate Dennis in the trade would call a bottomless money pit.

One car that does deserve to sell well is the ex works ex Pat Moss Austin A40 Farina Reg. Xoe 778. Winner of the Ladies Cup on the 1958 and 1959 Monte the car has been nicely restored in recent years and should hit it's £50,000 estimate.

Poor relation of the MG Midget for years the Triumph Spitfire is suddenly a cool car. The market seems to think so as Historic's in April sold a white 1966 one for £19244. Another Spitfire from Historic's but with 79,000 miles on the clock sold well above estimate at £17,000. Midgets and Sprites are not selling for that sort of money anywhere ?

Bigger story was Historic's MB 280SL Pagoda convertible . Restored some years ago but with the disliked autobox it was estimated at £95,000. It sold for , wait for it , £184,800. Not surprising then that at the same sale a 1963 Triumph Vitesse sold for £23,520 double it's estimate.

Anglia auctions also did well from their May sale with several cars selling way above estimate. A 1962 Aston Martin Lagonda sold for over £165,000 a very average 1964 MB 220SE cabriolet selling for over £50,000 and big surprise an 1989 Ford Fiesta XR2 selling for £20,250 that's over £10 grand what it was worth pre lockdown.

Another exciting car currently for sale is a 1951 Allard K2.

The subject of a recent total restoration this is as close to a brand new Allard as has been on the market for many years.



ALLARD K2 Flathead V8 engine all as new £150,000.

Of all the sports racing cars Porsche have built over the last 50 years the Porsche 910 spyder Group 6 car was one of the rarest . To find one is hard but to find one which is road legal beggers belief.



Essex business man Rainer Becker bought the car from Gregor Fisker in London some years ago and after a few modifications was able to register it for the road Reg.TGC 497E.

This car raced in period by Vic Elford was one of the few open top cars built , most 910 models were closed coupes but due to its small size a couple of the taller works drivers could not get comfortable in the coupes so some were modified with a removable targa roof , this car chassis no.20 was one of the first with the targa roof. Built in 1968 as a Group 6 prototype the car was successful at both Spa and Nurburgring in 1969 and 1970.

Weighing only 580K the car with its two litre flat 6 engine has a power to weight ratio close to 400 BHP.

In spite of its current value £ 5 million + ? he does use it on the back roads around the rural parts of Essex.

With a top speed of 175MPH or more and a 0 to 60 time of just over 4 seconds he admits it brings a smile to his face every time he wheels it out of the garage. Good on him, many people would have locked it away and never dreamed of using it on the road.



Crossle Car Company has been working hard in recent months building a set of race cars for a French T.V. company.

French National T.V. Channel 1 asked Crossle to build a fleet of cars based on the adventures of fictional racing driver and national hero Michel Vaillant. Vaillant was a cartoon strip hero in a famous children's series broadcast in France in the 1970's. The T.V. Company are recreating the series using real people and cars !



Robert's RallyBuzz

NI Rallying Gets Green Light

Fifteen months since the last rally took place in Northern Ireland, the regional government has finally give permission for a return to the stages this month. The McGrady Insurance Stages Rally at Bishopscourt was the last event to happen here back in March 2020. Ironically that same rally, organised by Ballynahinch and District MC, will kick-start the new season. The Bishopscourt Stages Rally on Sat.19th June will be round one of the 2021 McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship.

Although spectators will not be permitted to attend the Bishopscourt event, it is hoped that by the time of the second round of the championship in August, all remaining coronavirus restrictions will have been lifted. Under current government guidelines regarding COVID-19, a maximum of 500 competitors and officials will be allowed at the first event, social distancing must be observed. All the Bishopscourt Stages regulations are available on the Ballynahinch MC website.

As I revealed last month, the 2021 NI Rally Championship will consist of five tarmac stage rallies taking place between June and November. The dates of these events remain the same as I indicated in May's RallyBuzz.

In addition to the NI Championship, plans are being finalised to run two classic gravel rallies in September. The Lakeland Stages organised by Enniskillen MC is scheduled for Saturday 4th while Omagh Motor Club's Bushwacker Rally is due to take place on Saturday 18th. Further details of these events, with regard to marshalling etc, will follow when they become available.

Danny Gormley

I was shocked to hear of the sudden death last month of my very good friend Danny Gormley. He became Clerk of the Course of the Donegal International Rally from 2006-2011 and remained as a senior official on the event until 2019.

Danny was the rally's Chief Timekeeper from 1999 until 2002 and it was during that time that I first got to know him. He became my contact with regard to providing a team of timekeepers for the classic mid-summer three day event based in Letterkenny.

Danny's partner Elizabeth Devine took over as Chief Timekeeper in 2003 with much encouragement and support from Danny as he moved on to become one of the main organisers of the rally. Elizabeth continued in the roll for an unbelievable 17 years, until the last running to date of the Donegal International Rally in 2019.

Danny Gormley was the perfect gentleman, and always had a word for all marshals and officials. Indeed he went out of his way to make sure we were all well looked after on his events. As well as being a director and senior official of Donegal Motor Club he was also a director and long-time treasurer of Derry's Maiden City Motor Club.

Although he moved on to become a senior official, timekeeping remained Danny's first love and he was responsible for introducing electronic timing equipment to both Donegal and Maiden City events. Danny stored and maintained the equipment himself, supplying, delivering and even operating this state of the art timing technology when it was used on many events throughout Ireland.

In 2007 the World Rally Championship came to Ireland for the first time. As Chief Timekeeper I had no hesitation in putting Danny Gormley and his team on the start of Special Stage One. A report in Autosport magazine described the expertise in which the timing controls were operated as first class, especially as this was a new event. In fact Rally Ireland was awarded second best event on the 2007 WRC calendar! That event would not have been the success it was without Danny Gormley and all the other volunteers who helped me with the time controls over four challenging days in November 2007. Indeed we all returned to repeat the exercise in January 2009.

If the Donegal International Rally returns next year following a two-year break due to the devastating coronavirus pandemic, “the best rally in Ireland” will be missing one of its most dedicated and influential officials. That man is the irreplaceable Danny Gormley. He was definitely a one off and I am privileged to have been able to call him my friend.

To Elizabeth, his brothers and sisters and the wider family circle, I wish to pass on heartfelt condolences from myself and all of us in BMMC/BRMC Northern Ireland.

Rally Diary

Sat. 19th. June McGrady Insurance Bishopscourt Stages

Round one of the five-round McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK N.I. Rally Championship. Organised by Ballynahinch and District MC. Contact the organisers with regard to officiating. Current COVID-19 restrictions apply. No spectators will be permitted. A maximum entry of 100 cars are due to start the six-stage 100% sealed surface event. In fact entries were full and closed early having been open for just five days on rallyscore.net. It would appear that everyone wants to get back out on the stages. Check out the seeded entry list when it becomes available on rallyscore.net

Sat. 7th. August Dogleap Stages Rally

Round two of the N.I. Rally Championship. Organised by Maiden City MC. The Dogleap takes place at the Shackleton Airfield complex in Ballykelly, Co. Derry. Hopefully most COVID-19 restrictions will be eased by then. If not, any existing restrictions will apply. We will possibly be asked to provide marshals and other officials on the day. More information will be available later.

Sat. 21st. August Loughgall Stages Rally

Round three of the N.I. Rally Championship. Organised by North Armagh MC. NOT based at Kirkistown as I indicated last month, but centred in Loughgall Country Park, County Armagh. There will be stages within the park plus a closed-road test nearby. Again more details will be announced in the coming months.

Crap Corner.

Paddy decides to sell his car. Murphy who knows a thing or two about cars tells him how to clock it to get a better price. A week later he meets Paddy in the pub. "Well did you sell it?" Paddy says "Are you mad, I'm going to keep it, sure it's only got 9,000 miles on it."

A down on their luck Irishman, Scotsman and Englishman are working as casual labour on a large building site. The foreman worked them hard. Come lunchtime the Englishman opens his lunchbox. Cheese again he moans if I get cheese tomorrow I swear I am going to throw myself off this awful building. Right you are says the Scotsman my sausage sarnies are the same everyday.

Ham Ham Ham I am sick of ham says the Irishman. Next day they open their lunchboxes. More cheese, more sausage, more ham. They look at each other, nod, and fall from the ninth floor. At the funeral the wives are in tears. I would have made him something else if he had said the Englishman's wife. Me too, I thought he loved sausage sobbed the Scotsman's widow. Don't know why he jumped said the Irish wife, he always makes his own sandwiches.

Paddy tells the barman he has just had a new hearing aid fitted in Boots. "What make is it?" asks the barman. "quarter past three" Paddy replies.

PADDY IS FITTING A
KITCHEN IN A POSH HOUSE
WHEN THE WOMAN ASKS
HIM IF HE'D LIKE
SOMETHING TO DRINK.

PADDY ACCEPTS AND
SOON AFTER THE WOMAN
BRINGS HIM A MUG OF
COFFEE.

"EXCELLENT COFFEE, TO BE
SURE"
SAYS PADDY.

"THANK YOU" SAYS THE
WOMAN. "MY HUSBAND
BROUGHT IT BACK FROM
BRAZIL"

"THAT'S GREAT" SAYS
PADDY. "AND IT'S STILL
WARM AS WELL!"

