

The **BRITISH MOTORSPORT** **MARSHALS CLUB**



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Chris Smiley TCR Honda Civic Type R

Northern Ireland Region

Newsletter

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Cover Story.

TCR UK is part of a global Touring Car Championship supported by many major manufacturers running 2 litre turbocharged engines to a set of very strict regulations . Drivers in the U.K. series if successful have the chance to race internationally.

It is for this reason that BTCC driver , Carrickfergus man Chris Smiley has joined TCR for the 2022 season. A wise decision as he is fighting for the Championship with young Wicklow driver Max Hart (the RIAC Young driver of the Year) After the first rounds Hart is leading 74 points and Chris second on 71 points.

The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride 2022.

I am a car person at heart but when on Sunday 22nd. May I found the above event was starting at the Titanic Quarter and later regrouping at Belfast Castle I could not resist a look! I am so glad I did , older members may remember Stephen Potts and Terence Bradley both great competetors on the glory days of the Retro in the 1990's when Colin Rossborough and I were running the tests. Stephen still has his rapid MG Midget 30 years later but the ex works TR4 that Terence used has gone back to England. It seems when you are too old for rallying you buy a big motorcycle ! Stephen was on his recently restored Moto Guzzi 1000 (wearing of all things a pure white suit) and Terence a nice Triumph 750. Chatting to them brough back many memories. They remembered many of the old crowd , Big Colin , Craig Hunt and of course Tigger to name but a few. Great day great entertainment.





On the right my old mate Pottsy from Retro days

CLASSIC CAR NEWS.

April Fools one expert called it. With the current climate starting to have an effect on the trade and with many cars selling below estimate there were some real bargins but also some shocking results. A famous Mercedes 280 SE Coupe (first owner Wernher von Braun the German rocket scientist who oversaw the Saturn moon programme sold for only £13,500. A UK 1955 MG TD valued last year at £25,000 sold for a silly £10,600 as did a well restored Frogeye Sprite with loads of history and bills selling way below estimate at £12,500. Brightwells auction offered a manual Rover 3500S with a £20grand bill for restoration and it sold for £11,400. Bonhams also sold a 1993 AC Ace Brooklands (the 1993 Earls Court Motor Show car) with only 28,000 miles on the clock for £21,850 . This 5.0 litre V8 was previous valued at £40,000. The rusty but complete AC Greyhound with the 2.6 litre engine sold for £40,250 at least 20 grand less than expected.

In contrast Collecting Cars sold a 1986 Renault 5GT Turbo for £26,500 way above estimate and the owner of a 1961 Citroen Bijou who had spent 4 years and many thousands restoring it (why?) saw it sell for £38,000 (again why?) H and H were surprised when bidding for an average 1967 Volvo P 1800S reached £40,500 way above it's £24,000 value. With the early half bumpers fitted and in white to look like the 1965 The Saint T.V. car it clearly fooled a few people.

But the real April fool has to be the rare 1965 Citroen 2CV Sahara , this 4 wheel drive car with two 425cc engines has been in a barn from its one owner died over 40 years ago. Never restored and a non runner it was offered by the French auction without reserve and the French must know something I don't as it sold for , wait fot it , £127,800. No Joke.

Two cars for sale that caught my eye , the first a race prepared TR2 which as raced at Goodwood several times still wearing it's Belfast reg.



SZ 2859 is a 1955 TR2 with it is claimed a significant racing history



This MGC GT Sebring with a Downpatrick Reg. AIJ 5969 is currently on sale in England. Anyone know the history as I have never seen it before ?

The Story of SKOECH.



The year was 1921 when James B Skeoch (pronounced Skee-Ouch) opened a small car factory in Dalbeattie Scotland. The cycle car he was building was powered by a 348cc Precision engine , a two speed Burman gearbox and single chain drive. The car was shown at the 1921 Scottish Motor Show in Glasgow but in December the factory caught fire and 6 of the 10 cars built were destroyed along with the business.

50 years later James son Ronald decided to build a Skeoch . He found an original Precision and a Burman gearbox in News Zealand with 4 wheels from the U.S.A. and an original steering column in the U.K.

Sadly he died in 2017 but then James granddaughter Fiona Sinclair found that Ronald had not only left car parts in his house but had original plans , photographs , radiator and badges in the loft and was determined to restart the project. She contacted Martin Shelley who had helped Ronald locating parts and although Martin was too old to help he pointed her in the direction on the Dalbeattie Shed Club who had won the 2017 U.K. Shed Club on the Year. These Shed Clubs supported by the MSA UK offer free tools and equipment to local men in depressed areas and as Dalbeattie was the home of the original factory it was the perfect choice.

Work started but Covid closed the shed from March 2020 to August 2021 but when it reopened the men were keen to complete the project . An Amel carb was found along

with a BTH magneto , and an Austin 7 axle and Ford T steering column were adapted to fit. Drum brake on the rear axle was adapted from a Ford Model A van and the chassis , ash frame and alloy body were all made in the shed from plans and period pictures.

The car first started in 2021 but at the Annandale Distillery in August 2021 Fiona and her mother both had a ride in the completed car. The car made several runs round the Annandale estate at speeds of 35 MPH without a problem and will take pride of place at the Sinclair family home.

Robert's RallyBuzz

Desi Henry Wins Maiden City Stages

The Northern Ireland Rally Championship resumed last month with the Maiden City MC's Eakin Bros. Brian James Trailers Stages Rally. Rally HQ and the service park were based near Claudy, Co.Derry. Two closed-road tests close to Donemana and Artigarvan in West Tyrone were run three times giving a total of 39.96 stage miles. Round 3 of the tarmac series had received a full entry of 100 cars of which there were 94 starters and 71 finishers.

Victor and myself were on start radio for SS1/3/5 known as Altishane. The BMMC/BRMC NI rescue unit (crewed by Rory and Goff) was also covering these stages. All three tests ran smoothly and in dry conditions, apart from a heavy shower at the start of a slightly delayed SS3 which caught out some of the leading crews.

Desi Henry and Paddy Robinson won the rally on the final test. The Ford Fiesta Rally2 crew, having led early on, were overtaken on stage four by the Citroen C3 of Cathan McCourt/Liam Moynihan. Henry then clinched the win by just 2.3 seconds when McCourt had an overshoot on the last test.

Garry Jennings in his Fiesta R5 was a very late entry as he and Rory Kennedy prepared for the Donegal International later this month. The Kesh/Letterkenny pairing finished third overall. Joe McGonigle was fourth in his Fiesta Rally2 but as he was the first registered NI Championship runner to finish he scored the maximum 30 points. Alan Carmichael finished fifth in his Hyundai i20 R5 while top 2WD finisher was Damien Tourish in sixth place with his Escort Mk.2. Aaron McLaughlin took eighth in a Fiesta R5.

Championship leader Jonny Greer was a last-minute entry, but he crashed out of second place on SS3 when his Citroen C3 Rally2 clipped a bridge 2 miles into the 7.05 mile stage. Two top Donegal drivers setting up their VW Polo R5's for their home event had bad luck. Declan Boyle and Donagh Kelly both retired with mechanical problems early on.

Derek McGarrity who finished the Maiden City event in seventh place with his VW Polo R5 now leads the championship on 83 points from Aaron McLaughlin on 80 and Joe McGonigle with 79. Derek's young son Michael is fourth on 71 while Jonny Greer drops back to fifth with 61 points. It's great to see such a level playing field in this year's NI Championship with almost everyone now in R5/Rally2 cars. There are two more rounds to come, both on closed-roads.

The Tyrone Stages this month and then the Down Rally in July. May the best crew win! It couldn't be closer!





PICTURED ABOVE: THE TOP THREE FINISHERS in the Maiden City Motor Club Eakin Bros. Brian James Trailers Stages Rally.

1st Desi Henry/Paddy Robinson.....Ford Fiesta Rally2

2nd Cathan McCourt/Liam Moynihan.....Citroen C3 Rally2

3rd Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy.....Ford Fiesta R5

McERLEAN STARS IN PORTO

Turning to the 2022 World Rally Championship: Huge congratulations to Northern Ireland driver Josh McErlean who (like Desi Henry) is from Kilrea in Co.Derry and his Co.Cavan co-driver James Fulton. The pair were the surprise winners of SS16 on the recent Rally Portugal in their Hyundai i20 Rally2 car. The short Super Special Stage around the streets of Porto, which was the final stage on Saturday (day two of the three day event) was streaming wet for the first Rally1 supercars, but once the cobbled streets had dried out, the following Rally2 cars were able to set faster times. McErlean was running well down the field after problems on the days earlier rough gravel stages. The young Kilrea driver took full advantage of the drying

conditions to beat everyone, including the eventual rally-winning Toyotas of Kalle Rovenpera and second placed Elfyn Evans. Josh McErlean was classified 40th at the end of the rally on Sunday. There were 56 starters and 50 finishers. Not great numbers for a WRC event!

Rovenpera is the man-of-the-moment having won the last three WRC events. The 21-year-old is now 46 points ahead of his nearest challenger Thierry Neuville after four of the thirteen rallies in the 2022 Championship.

Rally Diary

Sat. 4th June.....MJE Tyrone Stages Rally

Round 4 of the Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Organised by Cookstown MC and sponsored by MJE Wheel Repair Specialists. Three short closed-road stages near Rally HQ in Stewartstown, Co.Tyrone will be run three times giving a total of 45 stage miles. We are covering timekeeping, radio and rescue on this Mid Ulster event. All the leading NI Championship contenders are in the 100 strong entry list which is headed by Claudy Stages winner Desi Henry. Interestingly the MacHale brothers Gareth and Aaron make a return to the stages in a pair of VW Polo R5's

Fri. 17th—Sun. 19th June.....Joule Donegal International Rally

Round 5 of the Irish Tarmac Championship. The 50th anniversary of the above event. Donegal MC have planned a total of 20 closed-road stages over the three days. These included all the classics; Knockalla, Fanad Head, High Glen and Atlantic Drive. We are timekeeping on Saturday and Sunday. Except a full entry of 160 in the main event cars plus historics and juniors. Can Alastair Fisher win the event so beloved by his late uncle Bertie who won the rally four times? Calum Devine, Josh Moffett, Desi Henry and company may have other ideas about that! The 50th Donegal International Rally should be a cracker!

Sat. 2nd July.....Loughgall Country Park Rally

Last year this event was a round of the NI Rally Championship. Now that things have returned to normal following COVID-19 restrictions, the single venue rally reverts to clubman status. Organised by North Armagh Motor Club. We supply radio operators and stage marshals for the popular sealed-surface rally.

Sat. 23rd July.....Carryduff Forklift Down Rally

The 5th and final round of the 2022 Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Organised jointly by Rathfriland & Ballynahinch and District Motor Clubs. Rally HQ and service park is based at the Eikon Exhibition Centre at Balmoral Park near Lisburn. We are providing a rescue crew, radio operators, timekeepers and other marshals for this closed-road stage rally. Stages will include the classic Hamiltons Folly.

CRAP CORNER.



BANGOR UPGRADED TO “CITY MOST UP IT’S OWN HOLE “ status for Queen’s Jubilee. There was dancing in the streets of Bangor last week as the Queen declared it as the first city up it’s own hole in Northern Ireland. The move comes as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which will also see the towns of Larne , Lurgan and Strabane upgraded from “holes” to “dumps”.

Speaking to the Ulster Fry Her Majesty revealed she had thought long and hard about which N.I. town should receive the title. “One got a map out and realized there were no other big towns that one had not already decided could be cities. Fair enough there is sod all in Bangor but one did Newry and Lisburn which was a bit of a joke , both are as close to being cities as one is as being the next Pope.”

One did think about Ballyhalbert as we have a caravan there but Charles said that would be favouritism and would annoy the people of Ballywalter.

A spokesman for North Down Council said “ This will bring big benefits to the area ,as a result Bangor is now in a position to host the 2038 Olympics . we also plan to build the world’s tallest building and replace the wee train at Pickie with one of those 200MPH Japanese yokes.

CORRECTION We have been reminded the LondonDerry / Derry as a City has been up it’s own hole for 300 years.

Welsh Joke.

An English man , a Scotsman and a local man are walking on Bangor (Wales) beach when they come across a very old bottle , when they lift it out pop a genie who grants them three wishes. The Scotsman is a crofter and wants 100 more sheep , the Englishman wants a wall round England to keep the Scots and Welsh out. “What sort of wall ?” asks the Welshman. The Genie replies “It is 200 metres high 100 metres thick so the only way in or out will be by plane , but what about your own wish ?” Fill it with water was the reply.

