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Newsletter

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Cover Story.

The early 1980's was probably the best time in the history of the sport to be a rally marshal. Not only was the Irish Championship filled with entries but both the European Rally championship and the W.R.C announced in 1973 had from the late 1970's saw great interest across the globe.

Regulation changes to the early W.R.C. events saw many of the main motor manufactures taking an interest and by 1980 Ford , Opel/Vauxhall , Peugeot , Fiat Datsun / Nissan , Toyota , Renault , Lancia , Saab , Audi and Porsche were all running works or semi works teams.

It is no surprise that apart from W.R.C. rounds both the R.A.C. and the Circuit of Ireland received massive press coverage in both Motoring News and Autosport which attracted several works teams.

Not that the fact worried the regular competitors , front runners McRae , Fisher , Coleman , Brooks continued to beat all opposition..

1982 saw McRae win in an Ascona400 , Brooks second in a Chevette HSR and new boy Henri Toivonen third in another 400.

1983 saw Brooks win in the DTV Chevette , Fisher second , McRae third both in Ascona 400 cars. Things were about to change , however , with the introduction of Group B , or were they ?

Lets look at the W.R.C. drivers taking on the Circuit Marku Alen who said the Circuit was as tough as a WRC Rally , Bernard Begiun , Tony Pond , Per Eklund , David Llewelin , Louse Aiken Walker , Hannu Mikkola and Michelle Mouton . Did they conquer ? No. In fact it was 1986 before Llewelin won the Circuit.

1984 saw several Group B cars entered with little success , Billy Coleman won in the Manta 400 , local drivers Ernest Kidney took second in his Sunbeam Lotus and a novice Hot Rod driver Davy Evans in his Nissan 240RS took an almost unbelievable third beating some of the best known names in professional Rallying 1985 saw little change with McRae winning again in his Manta400 chased all the way by , who else Brooks and Fisher, once again the WRC cars failed to trouble the top three.

1986 and at last a WRC car the Metro 6r4 driven by Llewelin won the event but the big news of course was the death of Henri Toivonen and his co driver in

Corsica which prompted a ban on Group B cars in WRC events. Rally teams which had spent millions on development of these cars lost interest and it took several years for the sport to recover. As for the Circuit , it continued with strong sponsorship into the 1990's with it's 5 day round Ireland format to the delight of spectators and us marshals. We will never see the like again !



Two of the most successful Group B cars , Lancia Delta S4 and Peugeot T16.

CLASSIC CAR NEWS.

A tale of two countries and quite obviously two different economies as in December U.K. car auctions saw many cars sold for well below estimate but the Christmas auction in the U.S.A. saw buyers setting records with heavy bidding in particular Sotheby's which set several new record prices and saw the Sotheby staff laughing all the way to the bank.

U.K. first. Barons sold a 1976 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow LWB which in spite of only covering 600 miles in the last 14 years had been M.O.T. ed every year and with a current M.O.T with no advisories it sold for £4,550. A few years ago a scrap Rolls Royce would have sold for more.

Anglia also reported poor results , a nice 1985 Ford Capri 2.8i sold for £9,900 that is £20,000 less than a similar car sold in August ! 1961 Sunbeam Rapier Convertible sold for £7,600 and a one family from new 1957 M.G. Magnette went for £6,500.

Ferrari G.T. driver Matt Griffen sold his Pug 205 GTI in December. In spite of bills of over £20,000 for a very nice restoration he accepted £6750. Why ?

Cannot believe that a 1985 Mini Cooper S with bills for £30,000 and a semi race tuned 1293 engine sold for only £12,000. A year ago it might have sold for over £30,000.

Auction results over the last three months show a big change compared with 2021. Ford's , early Mini's including the 1275 GT have all increased in value as has Triumph Sports cars , Morris Minors , early VW Golfs , BMW early 3 series and the like. In contrast the more exotic Classic's have taken a big hit. Ferrari , Porsche , Aston Martin , Bentley and Bristol have all lost significant value.

A good example is the nice Maserati 3200 GT being auctioned in February , estimate is £8,000 to £10,000. Anglia will be selling a well restored Ford Granada 3.0 GXL , estimate £9,000 to £11,000. When was the last time a Ford Granada was worth more than a Maserati ?

Across the pond RM Southey's had a different result in December with punters bidding record prices. A nice Porsche 928 GTS sold for over £25,000 a 1987 Merc 560 SEC AMG set a record at £700,000 (U.K. value at best £100,000 and a 2005 Porsche Carrera GT sold for £1.6 million.

A rare 1988 Porsche 959 SC was always expected to make it's £1 million estimate but £2.9 million ?

Another unknown quantity was the 1982 roadgoing version of the Lancia R37 Stradale , £500,000 was a new record . Biggest surprise was the original 1990 Mercedes Benz 190E 2.5 16Valve EVO. One was sold in the U.K. last yar for a new record price £120,000.

This one more than doubled the record selling for over £300,000. In all my years taking an interest in the Classic Car market and spending time trying to follow trends what is happening at the moment defies belief.

MORRIS GARAGES.

In the 1920.s Cecil Kimber established Morris Garage in the town of Abington Oxfordshire and in 1930 the first M.G. was built.

Production continued until the outbreak of war , by which time M.G. was known not only at home but it's reputation was world wide , having won several International races , not least the 1933 Tourist Trophy held In Northern Ireland in the hands of Tazio Nuvolari , One of the worlds best known drivers. Dick Seaman who would go on to drive for the mighty Mercedes Benz team , E.R. Hall who finished second 3 times at the T.T. and Whitney Straight all had success in M.G. cars.

By accident , looking through some old press clippings I came across The Abingdon M.G. garage reincarnated some 4670 miles from Oxford. It is the lifetime

work of Canadian Peter Welsh from Vancouver who enjoys tracking down rare M.G.s and carrying out a complete and detailed restoration. " I have bought and restored over 16 M.G. cars and I don't even like driving" he joked in a recent interview.

Pride of place in the garage is a works K3 Magnette raced by Eddie Hall , It raced in the Ards TT and also won the 1933 BRDC 500 mile race at Brooklands at an average speed of 106 miles per hour , a remarkable feat from a car with a 1087cc six cylinder supercharged engine.

At Brooklands it proved quicker than several 4 1/2 litre Bentley's and a works 8 litre car , several Riley , Invicta , Alvis and Aston Martin cars all with larger engines

The car is possibly the most valuable M.G. in the world.



1933 ex works M.G. K3 Magnette

Another extremely rare M.G. is the Arnold bodied TD. Bought as scrap in the U.S. it took years to find all the right bits to restore the car , it is now a 100 point concours winner.

Other rare cars include an early 1931 M Type , a 1932 J2 , 1932 F1 with special bodyworks by Stiles , a 1936 SA Charlesworth tourer and a 1936 PA Airline coupe and a pair of 1939 TA and TB models. All totally restored , matching number cars.

Post war Peter has restored 1949 YT and TC models, a 1952 TD , a 1955 TF 1500 an MGA TwinCam and more recently 1974 euro spec MGB GT and a 1980 MGB Le roadster.

The garage is now full to the brim so no further projects are currently planned although he has also bought a little Messerschmit KR200.



Robert's RallyBuzz

Here We Go!

The 2023 season starts this month with two important rallies here in Northern Ireland. First up we have Round 1 of the five-round ANICC McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship.

The eurocables Belfast sponsored Kirkistown Stages will take place on Saturday 18th February. North Armagh Motor Club are the organisers of this traditional season opener. Eurocables owner Shane Braniff is a longtime supporter of NI Motorsport but it has been some years since he has backed this particular event. The North Armagh club are hoping to continue this relationship going forward. Title sponsors McGrady Insurance have now backed the NI Rally Championship for the past 16 years.

Then on the following Saturday (25th) the four-round McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Forest Rally Challenge begins. Samsonas Rally Fivemiletown is based at the Ecclesville Centre in Fintona, Co.Tyrone and promoted by Omagh Motor Club.

South of the border, the 2023 Irish Tarmac Rally Championship gets underway with the Corrib Oil Galway International Rally on Saturday 4th-Sunday 5th February. Based in Loughrea 142 cars are due to start the two-day 15-stage event with Josh Moffett back to defend his title in the same Hyundai i20 R5 as last year. The main opposition will come from Josh's elder brother Sam in a similar car, Meriron Evans, Jason Mitchell and Callum Devine in Polo's plus the Citroen's of NI Champion Jonny Greer and Cathan McCourt. Desi Henry is on the start list in his Fiesta Rally2.

Surprisingly, Alastair Fisher is not on the Galway entry list. Apparently the Tyrone driver, who won the 2022 Circuit of Ireland, does not have the budget to contest the full 2023 Irish Tarmac Rally Championship.

Meanwhile in Monte Carlo, a big surprise (I don't think). Sebastien Ogier won for the ninth time. The rally was completely devoid of snow and ice. All 18 stages were in perfect condition for a tarmac rally, dry and smooth. In fact there was only one retirement in the top 10-car Rally1 category.

Although Ogier won the Monte, the real winner was current World Champion Kalle Rovanperä. The young superstar finished second to his Toyota teammate, and with Ogier only competing part time again this year, Rovanperä is odds on to dominate the 2023 WRC. Only his full-time Toyota partner Elfyn Evans, Thierry Neuville at Hyundai and M-Sport's Ott Tänak can realistically be seen as potential challengers to Kalle the "Flying Finn".

In the supporting WRC2 category, both Northern Ireland Hyundai i20 drivers had a challenging Monte Carlo Rally. William Creighton finished 45 overall after various problems. Josh McErlean was 57 out of the 67 finishers as he too had an eventful rally, retiring on the Saturday with mechanical problems, but then returning on the final day Sunday to set some competitive times on the last four stages.

Russian-born Nickolay Grayazin had dominated WRC2 in Monte Carlo. His brand new Skoda Fabia RS Rally2 led from the start on Thursday night, but as the result of a puncture on Saturday evening he lost 30 seconds, finishing the rally just 4.5 seconds ahead of the Citroen C3 of Frenchman Yohann Rossel. Then a protest by Rossel's team over a "corner cutting incident" resulted in Grayazin receiving a 5 second penalty dropping him to second place just 0.5 seconds behind Rossel.

In total just 74 competitors started the first round of the World Rally Championship. The next round is Rally Sweden (9-12 February) Hope there is some snow!

Rally Diary

Sat. 18th February.....eurocables Belfast: Kirkistown Stages

Round 1 of the 2023 McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Organised by North Armagh Motor Club and based at the Kirkistown race circuit in Co.Down. The six-stage sealed-surface event is due to start at 09.30 and should finish no later than 17.00. We are providing marshals and other officials on this one. Jonny Greer won the event and the Championship last year. It is unclear if the Carryduff driver will be on the final seeded entry list which is due to be published on Tuesday 14th February. A maximum of 100 cars can start. Marshals and officials can sign-on now via rallyscore.net

Sat. 25th February.....Samsonas Rally Fivemiletown

Round 1 of the 2023 McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Forest Rally Challenge. Organised by Omagh Motor Club and based at the Ecclesville Centre in Fintona. There will be 4 repeated gravel stages in counties Tyrone/Fermanagh to the south of Fivemiletown. We are due to provide timekeepers, rescue crew and radio cover. In fact this event marks 10 years since Strode

NI (The radio safety network) began to operate on stage rallies here in Northern Ireland. The first car is due to leave Fintona at 09.30. Last year's winner was Desi Henry who went on to win the challenge. A maximum of 100 cars are permitted to start. The full entry list will be published after the closing date of Tuesday 14th February. Marshals and officials can now sign-on via. rallyscore.net.

Sat. 11th March.....Race & Rally Stages @ Bishopscourt

Round 2 of the 2023 McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Rathfriland Motor Club are the organisers of this single-venue sealed-surface rally based at Bishopscourt race circuit in Co.Down. We will be providing timekeepers and stage marshals for this event. Marshals and officials can sign-on via. rallyscore.net. Jonny Greer won last year. Expect a full entry list for this popular rally. More details next month.



Came across this ex works Opel Ascona 400 for sale in England. You know the old saying , If you have to ask the price you can't afford it ! ROY

CRAP CORNER.

HRH Prince William



Knock Down Ginger
World Champion 2019



Larry the Cat
@Number10cat

Terrible to hear about Piers Morgan. Not the fact his account's been hacked, just terrible to hear about him.

1:43 PM · Dec 27, 2022

2.6M Views 3,271 Retweets 96 Quote Tweets 51.6K Likes

MY wife was foolish enough to buy Prince Harry's book. In it he claims he killed 25 Taliban fighters then goes on U.S. T.V and says " I never said that" in spite of millions seeing him say it on T.V. Is the guy mad or what ? Love the King Charles response to the book ! " Rubbish book and the Twit still thinks he is my son. Time for a DNA test".



EATING IN IRELAND IN THE SIXTIES

Pasta had not been invented.

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at
Christmas time.

All crisps were plain;
the only choice we had was whether to put the
salt on or not.

A Chinese chippy was a foreign carpenter.

Rice was a milk pudding, and never, ever part of our dinner.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Only Batchelors
made beans.

Fish didn't have fingers in those days.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

People who didn't eat potatoes were regarded
as crazy.

Indian restaurants were only found in India.

Cooking outside was called camping.

Seaweed was not a recognized food

"Kebab" was not even a word, never mind a food.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and
was regarded as being white gold.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly muesli was readily available; it was
called cattle feed.

Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only
ever seen a picture of a real one.

Water came out of the tap, if someone
had suggested bottling it and
charging more

than petrol for it, they would have become
a laughing stock.



Everything Changes

