

# The BRITISH MOTORSPORT

# MARSHALS CLUB



**MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION RECOGNISED**

**FOUNDED 1957**

**No.3**

**March. 2023.**



**Northern Ireland Region.**

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# Newsletter

March 2023

Cover Story.

Although mainly a car man I have in both the 1980's and early 1990's been a Marshal at the North West 200. The news that all Motor Cycle events have been cancelled for 2023 has devastated not only the sport but several local economies.

I have little sympathy for some hotels and B & B places in the North West who used the event to rip off people with in some cases charging up to three times the normal rate for accommodation but road racing has to be Ireland's greatest attraction. Just wonder if these people who have made a lot of money out of the North West will now give money to support it.

The death of six riders in the I.O.M. TT last year has lead to this insurance problem but as Phillip McCallum rightly says there is a solution, can you ever think of going into a Six Nations Rugby match free , or a Cup Final free , or even a Kirkistown or Mondello race meeting free ? Of course not , we all pay something to support our sport , given the number of people who visit the North West or Dundrod , given the number of people who pay £20 , £ 50 or more to watch a 90 minute football or rugby match what should people pay to watch some of the world's best riders compete over 6 hours of non stop racing ? I know Dundrod has for many years had a strong Supporters Club but is it now time for all road racing clubs to use their supporters clubs to raise funds, if the 100,000 people who are North West fans paid just £10 there is the first £1 million raised.

Will the Assembly help ? What Assembly ? Useless tossers , not fit for purpose.

On a related issue the Tourist board are aware that these events bring in massive revenue to Tourism , the north west claim £17 million , so are the Tourist Board going to support these events ? Watch this space.

Fantasy Grand Prix.

With the first race ( Bahrain ) in early March I had posted entry forms on our website. For the sweepstake it will be decided at our March Zoom Meeting pick 6 numbers from 1 to 10. I will then post your choices after the meeting.

CRAIG BREEN.

It is six years from a local driver lead a round of the W.R.C. Championship , Kris Meeke would go on to win his second W.R.C. event. Craig Breen is only a "reserve" driver for Hyrundai this year but he lead Rally Sweden after several stage wins. Not only that but he followed team orders on the final day to drop to third allowing teammate Neuville to take second place . However the plan did not work , Neuville could not match Breen's times so Bren ended the Rally in second place behind Ott Tanak. It was a fabulous result for Craig Breen and perhaps the Hyrundai team might want to rethink their view that Neuville is their star driver and that Breen is only there to pick up a few points for the team !!!

CLASSIC CAR NEWS.

The market , is spite of the so called Depression , continues to throw up very surprising results.

While the supercars , in general , are losing value at a steady pace , a second series E.Type fully restored was offered for sale in January for under £80,000 less than half it's value pre pandemic , the bread and butter market remains strong , by that I mean 1960's and 1970's M.G. , Triumph , Reliant , Lotus , TVR , Alfa and Lancia cars still attract a lot of bids at U.K. auctions.

With an early Escort Cosworth Turbo selling for over £60,000 , a Mk2 Mid sixties Mini Cooper S selling for £50,000 the market for such cars is still strong. Manual Rover 3500 S are in demand as are both early and late Simitar SE5 models. Anglia last month sold a better than average low milage 1978 Rover SDI 2600 for over£15,700 and a 1975 Ford Granada GXL 3.0 auto for over £17,000 proof that buyers are still willing to pay top money for the right car.

Two big surprises in recent months is demand for BMW 2002 Tii models and the ever popular Mercedes 280SL 3.5 litre convertible. With quite a number of chopped versions around factory convertibles fetch a large premium. Bonhams sold a nice one for £310,000 and RM sold a tatty one for over £240,000. Bonhams also sold a nice BMW 2002 for £42,450 a record for a Tii model.

Retired Cosworth top engineer had an interesting hobby. A large collection of Lotus Elan cars , and especially cars with previous famous owners. He Has been building his collection over many years and has decided to sell off some of them. With S1 and S2 Elan's valued at £40,000 plus what are his Elan's worth ?

1. Series 4 Elan FHC delivered to Jochen Rindt in 1969. Estimate £120,000
2. 1966 S3 Elan bought new by Peter Sellers. Estimate £120,000
3. 1966 S3 Elan supplied to Diana Rigg for the T.V. series The Avengers Estimate £120,000.
4. Keith Duckworths 1968 Elan FHC Estimate £80,000
5. Colin Chapman's Elan 2+2 Estimate £70,000
6. 1968 S3 Elan bought by F1 team Boss Rob Walker Estimate ££80,000
7. 1971 Elan Sprint bought by Ron Hickman Estimate £80,000
8. 1975 The last Elan Sprint FHC to leave the factory Estimate £80,000.

What a collection !!!!

Watched the BBC Programme on the Ards T.T. A bit disappointing given that Pathe News had some superb coverage of the races ( check YouTube ) but it was still interesting. If you missed it , you can see it on BBC I player .

While looking for coverage of the T.T. races I came across one of my best events of all time on You Tube. Boyd's Quarry Rallycross 1982. The year that both the British Rallycross Champion and the European Rallycross Champion came to Boyd's Quarry. The quality is very poor , it,s over 40 years old but for spectacle it is still hard to beat. If you have not seen it , you are in for a treat.

Labour of love.

Justin Drury had fond memories of his fathers Rover SDI reg. NGK 199V which his father had bought new in 1980. Sold to a lady in Doncaster in 1985 its history was lost after it was taken of the road in 1993.

By chance in 2013 Justin found the remains of the car up for sale in 2013 and , either very bravely , or very foolishly , decided to buy it and restore it.

He found Chris Gaunt Auto Restoration Services on the internet close to his home in Sheffield and delivered the car to them. " Chris recalled the body came complete but much in the interior and the Cylinder heads came in bin bags."



The car on first inspection did not look too bad but after the complete shell had been grit blasted the news was bad. The whole shell was rotten , every seam was rusted away and most unusual the roof was rusting inside the pillar joints.

At this point many people would have given up but Chris was still convinced the car could be saved.

Chris had to remove the front nose section of the car , the outer and inner wings the rear wings , lower panels , roof skin , front and rear floors complete with sills. What was left ? " not much" admitted chris.

The V8 engine was sent to Stanwood Engine Company for a complete rebuild while Chris and his team set to work rebuilding the bodyshell. Many many hours were spent on fitting the doors , bonnet , boot lid, floors and sills and the new roof skin to factory spec.

In fact early SDI Rover V8 models were so badly built and had such a poor reputation for reliability that several dealers gave up the Rover franchise due to massive warranty demands Chris was able to rebuild a bodyshell that was better than anything which came out of the factory.



Early Rovers had velour interiors that if you were lucky lasted about 10 years before turning into a nasty pile of dust ( I had one ) . A rare option was leather , an expensive option only offered in 1980 which Chris decided to go for.

The restoration took thousands of hours , cost far more than the car will ever be worth but , and this is the point , he has a car once the family's pride and joy , better than it came out of the Rover factory and with no intention to sell it the family can enjoy it for many years to come.

Is this not what Classic Car ownership should be all about. ?

Future Classic ?

No fan of electric cars but for the rare ( in the U.K.) 2001 Honda Insight ZE1 .

Unlike modern hybrids Honda came up with a unique solution 995 cc 3 cylinder petrol engine , 5 speed manual gearbox but instead of a conventional flywheel it had a 10kw electric motor between the engine and gearbox. Was it a failure ? Far from it , the car had a top speed of 113 MPH and did over 80 M.P.H.

The original problem was the heavy Nickel batteries but in Japan many of these cars have been converted to Li-ion battery packs giving both a power boost but much longer range.



# Robert's RallyBuzz

## Wright Wins Kirkistown Thriller

Kirkistown Race Circuit on the Ards Peninsula in Co.Down is a flat, bleak and cold place, even in July! This was the venue last month for round one of the 2023 McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship.

Organisers North Armagh Motor Club had secured the sponsorship of Eurocables Belfast for the traditional season opener. Eurocables owner Shane Braniff had backed the event many years ago and has now renewed a partnership with the organisers which they both hope will be fruitful and perhaps long-term.

77 rally cars (including 12 R5's & 10 Rally2's) turned out to complete over six 80% sealed surface stages around the race track and its perimeter roads. The venue normally hosts a season of sprints and circuit racing from March through to October. Thousands of trees have been planted so in twenty or so years we may have a forest rally here at Kirkistown!

For my part I was a stage marshal based at Fisherman's Bend on the circuit. I had new recruit Matthew with me to learn the ropes. We had a good day sheltering in the marshals hut from the rain showers which were prevalent for most of the day. Although mild, the wind made it feel much colder.

The action was non-stop from 9.15 am until 4.30pm. Stephen Wright led from start to finish in his Ford Fiesta R5 but the former NI champion had to fight all day for the win. Reigning champion Jonny Greer was back to defend his title and the Carryduff driver had a new Citroen C3 Rally2 at his disposal. Greer was 5 seconds down in second place after SS1 with his slightly less powerful car but then he got his tyres working better in the damp conditions and he closed the gap to Wright on stage two. Staying second throughout the rest of the rally, 1.02 of a second separated Greer from Wright after SS5. On the final test Jonny Greer and co-driver Brian Crawford through caution to the wind and were fastest, but it wasn't quite enough. Stephen Wright and Ger Conway won the Kirkistown Stages by the narrowest margin ever recorded on a NI Championship event; 0.1 of a second!!

While Wright and Greer were in a class of their own out front, Aaron McLaughlin/ Darren Curran finished third but they were 30.7 seconds back in a Fiesta R5. Castleterg men Gareth Sayers and Gareth Gilchrist were fourth in a new Fiesta Rally2 just 1.5 seconds behind McLaughlin. Former champion Derek McGarrity/Graham Henderson had been third, but a misfire in their Polo R5 dropped them back to fifth in the end. Another former champion Stuart Biggerstaff, who had Anthony Nestor co-driving, was sixth in his Fiesta R5. Stuart has registered for the series this year and this was a good start to his campaign.

You had to go down as far as 18th place to find the best of the 2-wheel-drive finishers, Jason & Gareth Black's Toyota Starlet. It was good to see James Leckey back rallying, the former Killarney Rally of the Lakes winner was back after 25 years. He drove a hired McKinstry Motorsport Fiesta R5 to 19th place at Kirkistown. There were a total of 67 finishers.

The 2023 Kirkistown Stages Rally was a fantastic event and even finished ahead of schedule. I really enjoyed the day, our sole casualty was the only Mitsubishi Evo.9 in the event (changed times indeed) that of Nicky Caughey and Graeme Stewart which retired with a puncture. They didn't want to risk further damage so decided to call it a day. Nicky hopes to have better luck at Bishops court.

A fantastic day then at Kirkistown capped by a thrilling battle for the win between Stephen Wright and Jonny Greer. Young Matthew seemed to enjoy himself and hopes to be out mar-shalling again soon. Apparently Wright is not doing the full NI championship this year so Greer took maximum points as the top registered driver.

The 2023 McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship is so un-derrated and deserves more recognition both locally and nationally. Can't wait for round two at Bishops court on March 11th (see rally diary) Bring it on!

## **Close Finish On Rally Fivemiletown**

Number one seed Mark Donnelly won the Samsonas Rally Fivemiletown last month in his Fies-ta R5. The Greencastle driver and his co-driver Stephen O'Hanlon led the first round of the 2023 McGrady Insurance ANICC Forest Rally Challenge from start to finish, but he was chased all the way home by two other R5 drivers. In fact less than 3 seconds separated the top three crews at the finish.

Going into the final stage Donnelly found himself only one-tenth of a second ahead of the VW Polo of Vivian Hamill/Andrew Grennan. Then on that last 2.24 mile Doon test Gareth Mimmagh and Barry McCarney, who had been third in their Fiesta, were fastest and took second place overall, just 1.7 seconds behind Donnelly.

Hamill finished third 2.6 seconds behind the winners. Marty McCormack and Barney Mitchell won the 2-wheel-drive category in their Escort Mk.2 with Alan Smyth second in a similar car and the surprising 2-litre Honda-powered Lada Riva of Shane McGirr third (see photo). 68 cars started the eight stage event and 56 finished. Omagh Motor Club were the organisers.

I was on start radio of SS3/7 Jenkin the longest stage of the rally at 6.8 miles. With me were Rory, Godfrey and David who manned the BMMC rescue unit.

When we arrived at 9am the temperature was only 2% but rose to 7 by mid afternoon. Alt-hough cold it was dry all day with even some sunshine. Both stages ran to schedule and with-out incident. Other BMMC/BRMC members were marshalling elsewhere. We were finished for 3.30 pm. The Forest Challenge continues in September.



**Rally Fivemiletown marked the 10th anniversary of the formation of Strode NI Communications. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Brenda Gordon, we have been providing radio cover for all stage rallies in Northern Ireland since that first outing on Omagh MC's Spring Ral-**



**ly as Rally Fivemiletown was known back in 2013. I have been involved with Strode since then and have missed very few events. When we started I wrote in RallyBuzz that Northern Ireland had the best rally radio safety network possibly within the MSA's jurisdiction and a dedicated team of volunteers to help run it. Nothing has changed in that regard except that it's now Motorsport UK's jurisdiction. Brenda provided an anniversary cake to mark the occasion which was greatly appreciated by everyone.**

## **Rally Diary**

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

**Round 2 of the 2023 McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Let's hope it's as good as round 1! Rathfriland Motor Club are the organisers. Jonny Greer leads the entry list which remains open until the last minute. We are providing timekeepers and stage marshals on the six-stage event which is held totally within the confines of Bishopscourt Race Circuit in Co.Down near Downpatrick. Sign-on remotely at [rallyscore.net](http://rallyscore.net) First car starts at 09.30.**

### **Sunday 2nd April.....BMMC (NI) Marshals Training Day**

**Based again at Transport Training Services, Nutts Corner. The day starts at 09.30 and should finish before 4pm. Lunch will be provided, but please let Rory O'Neill know if you are going as he needs to know how many to cater for. Jim Whittaker leads the trainers and Stephen Wolf (National treasurer) plus John Edwards (National Secretary) have indicated that they hope to attend. The event is supported by the MMP and ANICC and they are promoting it. We hope that**

**this will raise the Training Day profile and result in a good attendance. All Motorsport UK disciplines will be covered including Race, Rally and Speed events.**

*CRAP CORNER.*



Brave or Mad? Motorbike with Viper V10 engine fitted Over 500 BHP and , in theory a top speed of 300 MPH.



## OBESITY IS A REAL THING:



Nick Mason is considering selling his lightweight Ferrari 250 GTO. I am asking for donations , I only need marshal's across the U.K. and Ireland to raise about £25 million to buy this car. Come on , you know you want to !!!!

