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MARSHALS CLUB



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THE GROUP B STORY.

Newsletter

JUNE 2023

Cover Story.

June 1982 the F.I.A. in an attempt to attract more major manufacturers into the W.R.C introduced completely new Rally regulations known as Group B. This was a complete relaxation of the rules which up to then encouraged manufactures to produce high performance rally cars based on existing road cars. In fact as long as 200 road versions of the Rally car could be produced then further development of these cars was not subject to further restrictions. As a result cars like Ford RS200 , Lancia Rally 037 , the later Lancia Delta S4 (with 500 BHP) and the Audi Quattro Sport S1 and wide bodied S2 were given a green light , followed by cars like the Metro 6R4. Only Opel and Mazda stayed with rear wheel drive the Ascona and Manta and the Mazda RX7 , all the rest had permanent 4 wheel drive systems.

Although journalists called it the Golden Age of Rallying it was also the most dangerous. In 1983 there were several serious accidents but a single fatality , driver Reizo Hygen at the Thousand Lakes Rally. In 1984 Ari Vatenen and Codriver Terry Harriman had a massive crash in Argentina in the T16 , Vatenen was so badly injured it took him over 12 months to recover and 18 months before he was allowed to drive again. In the Circuit 1995 a Ford RS200 found 2 young spectators on the road , one of whom was hit and lucky to survive and a month later on the Tour De Course Attilo Betage was killed in a high speed accident.

Worse was to follow , the 1986 Rally Portugal saw an out of control Ford RS200 plow into a packed crowd at 100 MPH. 3 died at the scene and of the 30 injured 11 sustained life changing injuries.

A couple of months later Henri Toivenen considered the fastest of the Group B drivers and his codriver Sergio Cresto died in a high speed accident in Corsica and the F.I.A. decided that Group B should be banned and a new version of the pre 1982 regulations should be reintroduced for the following year.



Spectators in Portugal 1986.

Classic Car news.

A strange story from America , in 1963 Chevrolet introduced the Sting Ray Corvette with the split screen rear window. Some owners complained it did effect rear vision and after only 13 months production Chevrolet produced the car with a one piece rear screen. It is a fact that many owners replaced the split screen with the later rear screen , cutting out the metalwork between the roof and the rear deck. Modern owners of original split screen Corvettes are laughing all the way to the Bank as original cars are now considered very rare collectors pieces. From January auctions have sold 3 Barret Jackson started with a £102,000 sale Mercum then sold one for £163,000 and since then the have sold the third for over \$207,000.

Proof that if you do have a Classic Car original condition is more important than messing about with it.

Auction results in the U.K. prove it is an unstable market. A 1964 Mark 1 Lotus Cortina sells for £69,000 a LHD early E.Type sells for £172,000 , a 1970 Morris Minor Traveller restored to as new condition sells or £8625 and the almost forgotten Rover Metro GTI 16 Valve sells for over £6,000. Rover SDI cars are

selling well. A few years ago seen as old bangers top of the range models like the Vitesse are now £20,000 , the value of both the standard V8 and the Vanden Plas V8 have jumped up in value by 20% from last year and there is strong demand at auctions or these cars.

One car (is it a classic) is the original MG ZR . Rarer than the Ford cars they were competing against Manor Park have just sold a 40,000 mile original car with the all important head gasket replacement for just £3500. In spite of early head gasket problems this is a much nicer car than Ford XR3i which ceased production less than a year before the MG went on sale. MG ZR cars never sold anywhere like the Ford but with similar handling and performance they should be worth more.

I have in the past reported on cars whose value was effected by previous ownership.. In 2014 the Steve McQueen 275 GTB Ferrari sold for \$10,175,000 in spite of a much lower milage 275 GTB selling for \$3 million. Now the McQueen car is up for sale again , in the same condition it was 9 years ago. Will it still make \$10 million ? watch this space.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Silverstone Auctions have just sold an unregistered 1996 Ford Escort Cosworth Lux for a world record price of just over £163,000. In a private collection from new , never on the road , and the interior has never been touched.



GROUP C.

It was not only Group B rally cars that created controversy the introduction of F.I.A. Group C regulations during the 1981 season resulted in Porsche winning every round of the 1983 World Sports Car Championship with the mighty 956c.

Derek Bell recalls being asked to test both the massively successful 917 Carrera Am car and the still untried 956c at the Porsche test track. " No comparison , the 956c was over 2 seconds a lap quicker."

Bell's team mate for 1983 was Jochen Mass who worried that with mileage the new alloy monocoque chassis would soften and was aware that older 956c cars were less stable than newer low mileage 956c cars. This caused some jealousy within the team about who would drive what car. The Porsche strategy was also to run several private teams to ensure they won the Manufacturers Championship.

At Monza the works cars were beaten by Bob Wollek in a privateer car but all 956 cars finished in the top 7 places. But as Tiff Nedell reported after driving for the Richard Lloyd Team , 956 were scary , dangerous things , your head set above the roll cage , the spool diff could lock the rear wheels in the wet making it difficult to control and as we later found out there was little protection from a frontal impact.

Derek Bell recalls the 1983 Nurburgring sharing the car with the young Stefan Bellof. Bellof was setting lap record after lap record and Bell pleaded with the Porsche boss to slow him down. He was ignored and eventually Bellof crashed handing the win to Mass and Ickx. Bell then refused to share the car with Bellof at LeMans fearing he would either crash the car to blow it up inside the 24 hours.

Bellof had by this time gained the attention of several F1 teams and at Spa several F1 team Managers were there to watch him. One commented that he was another Ayrton Senna , given his speed and car control. Midway through the race Bellof crashed heavily and died at the scene. Bell believes Bellof could have beaten Senna in F1 if someone could have talked to him about the balance between speed and risk but sadly no one did.

Over the next couple of years Porsche continued to run original 956 cars but people like Joh Fitzpatrick and the Joest Racing team had concentrated on further development of the car to the extent that by 1985 the works cars were 7 seconds a lap slower at LeMans than the privateers and Porsche had to go back

to the drawing board to design what was to become the 962.

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FORGOTTEN HERO'S. Bill McGovern.

A somewhat eccentric and wild driver Bill three times winner of the British Saloon Car Championship talks about his early life. Aged 6 he was evacuated from London to Wales and soon was learning to drive a tractor. He remembers driving it at speed downhill with the farmer hanging on behind.

In 1951 he joined the Victorian Machine Tool Company in North London as a 14 year old apprentice. It was a dull job and I was happy to leave to do my National Service. Posted to Egypt Bill soon got the chance to drive Willys Jeeps Austin Champs and even Sherman Tanks across the desert. His driving got noticed and he ended up as batman driving a Senior officer around Cairo.

Returning home he set up a small furniture company in North London, his first new car being a Vauxhall VX4/90 (I owned one but that is a different story).

One encounter in the car was to change his life. I was driving home from the West End to Kilburn when a Riley 1.5 appeared in my mirror. It was a wet night with no traffic so I raced him to Harlesden did a handbrake turn. The bloke in the Riley was Gerry Marshall who invited me to a meeting at a Harrow pub next Thursday night. After meeting up with Gerry and friends a few times it was clear that the Vauxhall had to go. Driving past the Speedwell centre in Finchley Road I spotted a Mini Cooper S and bought it on the spot.

Gerry suggested we take the car down to Brands Hatch for a test day (cost us £3 each!) and in terrible wet conditions I managed to beat him.

At the first race of the year at Brands 1965 I started third but when the two drivers in front of me slowed for the corner I kept going and managed to keep the car on the track staying in front to win the race. At that year's Race of Champions I tried the same move but rolled the car heavily. A Lotus Cortina also rolled at the same spot and I and Jim Clark shared an Ambulance to the Medical Centre.

By 1966 the new Hillman Imp was starting to appear in saloon car races and Bill was invited to join the Emery race team which were running 3 cars in the Championship. Bill proved to be the quickest of the three drivers but financial pressures meant they were never front runners so Bill joined the Bevan Imp team in 1968. The Bevan Imp proved very competitive and Bill soon started winning races.

By 1970 Bill was the man to beat and he would go on to be the British Saloon Car Champion in 1970 , 1971 and 1972. Although he would continue to partake and win many Club events after this he put his business first and never again took part in any Championship events.

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

Ian has had a busy season so far racing his cars in street races across central France.



Robert's RallyBuzz

June 2023

It's All Systems "Go" For Jennings In The Sperrins

The penultimate round of the Northern Ireland Rally Championship took place last month. Sponsored by local NI petroleum company "Go", the 2023 Tour of the Sperrins was organised by Magherafelt and District Motor Club and took place over six challenging closed-road stages in the Sperrin Mountains of counties Derry and Tyrone. SS1/4 Iniscarn was 5.56 miles long while SS2/5 Glenhull ran at 7.75 miles and SS3/6 Barnes Gap was 7.28 miles in length. Central service was in Magherafelt and Rally HQ based in Walsh's Hotel, Maghera.

Garry Jennings hadn't won a significant rally for some time. Prior to the Circuit of Ireland (Cookstown) in April the Kesh driver (who is also sponsored by "Go") had up-graded his Fiesta R5 to a new Rally2 version. The 2013 Irish Tarmac Champion has had very limited success since his glory days in Subaru World Rally Cars. All that changed last month.

Paired with ultra successful Letterkenny co-driver Rory Kennedy, Jennings was in second place behind Jonny Greer's Citroen C3 after stage one of the "TOTS" but then went fastest on SS2. Garry took the rally lead with another fastest time on SS3 and then he won all the remaining tests to win the event by 5 seconds from a battling Greer. Third place went to Desi Henry in his Citroen C3.

Amazingly, Frank and Lauren Kelly finished 9th overall and won the 2WD section of the Sperrins with the same "Baby Blue" Escort Mk.2 in which they had that massive accident on the "Circuit". Now totally rebuilt, the famous car claimed victory on the very last stage of the rally beating the similar car of Camillus Bradley/Crawford Henderson by 2.5 seconds. Scotsman David Bogie had been leading the class by 17 seconds when he retired his new Mk.2 with mechanical problems.

"GO" TOUR OF THE SPERRINS RALLY (Top 10)

1. Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy.....Ford Fiesta Rally2.....39.46.3
2. Jonny Greer/Niall Burns.....Citroen C3 Rally2.....39.51.3
3. Desi Henry/Paddy Robinson.....Citroen C3 Rally2.....40.05.5
4. Jason Mitchell/Paddy McCrudden.....VW Polo GTI R5.....41.18.5
5. Jason Dickson/Martin Brady.....Ford Fiesta Rally2.....41.20.5
6. Gareth Sayers/Gareth Gilchrist.....Ford Fiesta Rally2.....41.56.2
7. Ian Dickson/Kenny Bustard.....Ford Fiesta R5.....42.28.3
8. Martin Cairns/Peter Ward.....Ford Fiesta Rally2.....42.28.7
9. Frank Kelly/Lauren Kelly.....Ford Escort Mk.2.....42.47.8
10. Camillus Bradley/Crawford Henderson....Ford Escort Mk.2.....42.49.3

We were busy on the Tour of the Sperrins. Lots of BMMC/BRMC members were officiating. For example on Stage1/4 Iniscarn (5.56 miles) we had our rescue crew at the start line then four of us manned the flying finish and stop controls. Victor and I were "double jobbing" covering radio and timing. There were some technical issues with our timing equipment but we managed to overcome them. No major incidents were reported and the weather was dry and sunny all day. 100 cars started the rally and 87 finished.

With one round remaining in the NI Championship, Jonny Greer is back in the frame following his retirement at Shackleton. As Garry Jennings is not registered, Greer scored top points on the Tour of the Sperrins. Closest challenger Derek McGarrity had a poor rally finishing back in 15th place but he is probably still in contention for the title. The final round is another closed-road event: The Carryduff Forklift Down Rally takes place on Saturday 22 July. Championship Points up-date next month.

Rally Diary

Fri. 16th—Sun. 18th June.....Donegal International Rally

Round 5 of the Irish Tarmac Championship. Based in Letterkenny. A full entry list of 160 are due to start including 36 R5/Rally2 cars. Heading the entry are last year's winners Josh Moffett and Andy Hayes in their Hyundai i20 R5. Callum Devine at 2 is the driver on form this year in his VW Polo but has not had much luck in the past in Donegal.

There are 20 special stages. Friday is based around Donegal Town with 3 repeated tests. Saturday is the big day with Carnhill and Garrygort each run 3 times and Knockalla twice. On the final day, Sunday, there are the usual stages of High Glen, Atlantic Drive and Fanad Head which are run twice in that order.

We are due to be timekeeping over the three days. The event has a new title sponsor and as a result will be known as the "Wilton Recycling Donegal International Rally".

Sat. 1st July.....Loughgall Stages Rally

A departure from the usual format of this North Armagh MC organised clubman event this year. As well as the normal sealed surface stages within Loughgall Country Park there will be a closed-road stage nearby. Altogether 7 tests are planned, four in the park and three over the six-mile Kinnegoe closed-road stage.

Central service will be in the Country Park. We are providing radio cover and stage marshals. The event is sponsored by the PRM group & RPM motorsport. Last year the Loughgall Country Park Rally was won by Aaron McLaughlin & William Neill in a Fiesta R5.

CRAP CORNER.

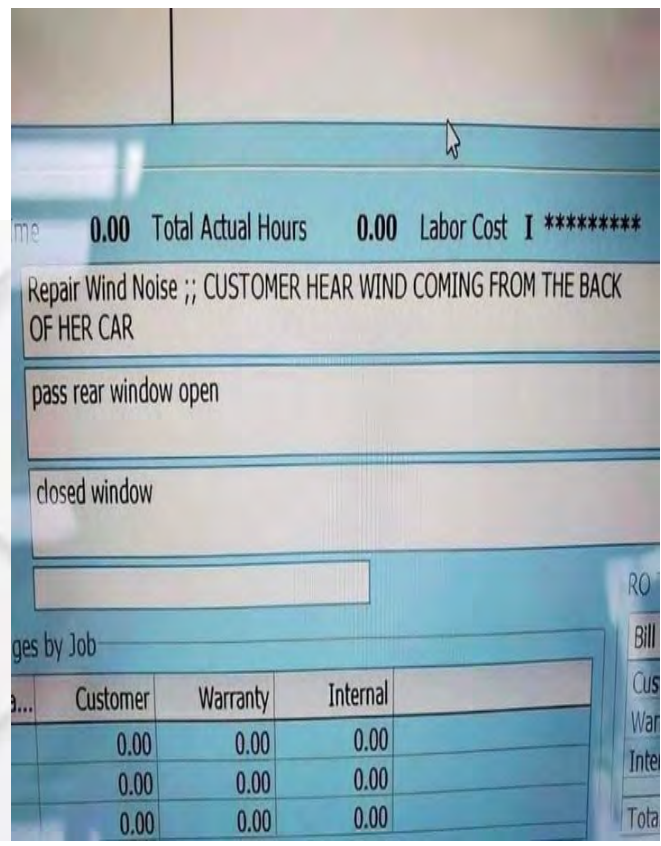


When making a cup of tea for the wife I shouted from the kitchen, "do you want a Kit Kat Chunky?"

Don't remember much after that! 😞

I asked my daughter to give me the phone book. She laughed at me, called me a dinosaur and lent me her iPhone. So the spider is dead, the iPhone is broken and my daughter is furious!

BLOND DRIVER ?



After a gruelling 2hr car chase, the paparazzi finally managed to lose Harry & Meg.

J