

The BRITISH MOTORSPORT MARSHALS CLUB



MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION RECOGNISED

FOUNDED 1957

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The O'Brien Brothers.

Northern Ireland Region.

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2023

Cover Story.

Patrick O'Brien and his brother for the second year running scored a convincing win on the Bushwacker Rally winning 7 of the 8 stage event. It was a rally of attrition with many roads off the road as Robert's report will tell us.

A strange story of what connects me in the late 1960's and an English A.A. Man from Malvern Hills some years later. My mate , late mate Denis had a girlfriend in Deramore Avenue off the Ormeau Road around 1968. The noted that in a front garden near bye a sound but sad looking Triumph 2 litre Renown siting in the front garden. The car a 1952 model turned out to be ex-MOD bought by her late husband. She offered him money to take it away but after inspection he found the drum brakes were locked on , the back axle was stiff and the battery was dead.

He and I brought up a heavy duty battery and to our surprise the car started after a few turns and ran sweetly. We agreed to free the brakes drain the back axle and pump in a mixture of oil and grease and we had a car that drove . I bought it for £10 and drove it carefully back to a lock up shed owned by Denis's father off the Shankill Road. This was long before M.O.T. so we soon discovered that the steering box was detached from the crossmember which was the only rotted part of the car. I was at the time working in the Engineering Department of Belfast Corporation and one of the engineers guys came out and using small cuts of heavy gauge metal welded up both top and bottom of the crossmember with holes to attach the steering box in the right place. My wife and I then painted the car using hand cellulose in the late Peter Curry's mothers garage on the Lisburn Road. We copied pictures of the film The Yellow Rolls Royce and after a lot of work had a car which looked like this.



After running the car for a year it sold at Wilson's Auction for £75. Wish I had it now.

Scroll forward to 1978 and Scott who had served his time as a motor mechanic and was now a A.A. petrol man remembers his time at Technical Collage when his teacher , well ahead of his time , would buy old cars , many with ash framed bodywork , to teach basic skills to both woodworking class and the engineering class how to restore these cars.

Scott was eager to find a car from his school days to work on and found a barn find car close to home. He bought it for £60 in 1978. The engine was seized , it was missing all chrome parts and the brakes were disconnected having seized years ago. The bootlid was also seized and impossible to open. The car had no badges , nothing to say make or model and no paperwork or registration documents.

Undeterred Scott started to strip the car as a weekend hobby and after getting the boot opened found a treasure trove of carefully stored chromework. Grill , headlights , side lights and hub caps showing this was a 1954 Triumph Renown.

Chris and his wife spent over ten years restoring the car , she making things like new seat covers , fitted headlining, with Chris rescuing from a local skip , parts of a Victorian wardrobe to build a replacement dashboard. (In contrast my restoration if you could call it that took only six weeks long enough to get the car fit as a daily driver !)

Mine is long gone



The work has paid off according to the website CULT CLASSICS this Triumph RazorEdge Renown is by far the best example in the world.

NEW CAR NEWS.

On 14th. September the first production MG Cyberstar arrived in the U.K. as part of a world tour.

This the first MG sports car for over twenty years is an all electric car designed and built by the Chinese MG Company.

Expected to roll out mid 2024 it is claimed to produce over 500 BP with an 0 to 62 mph in only 3 seconds ad a range of 500 miles. Time will tell !!!



The new MG sports Car.

CONGRATULATIONS !!!!!



William Creighton and co driver Liam Regan from Northern Ireland are the 2023 Junior World Rally Champions after a fabulous drive in Greece. I have known the Regan family for many years uncle Ian bought my Mk1 Celica off me and I remember father Billy with his superb Mk2 Escort Rally car and the Skoda Estelle

that Ian build as a forest rally car which they still own.

CLASSIC CAR NEWS.

With all the speculation that the market is suffering due to recession, latest results and in particular barn find results no longer appear to back this up. Indeed unlike 1989 /1990 when investors (not car people) were buying up Ferrari's and the like in the late 1980's and selling them within a few months for double the asking price the market is sound. One London property developer admitted to Classic Car Magazine in 1991 that having borrowed heavily to buy both Ferrari and Aston Martin cars in 1989 he lost £1.4 million during 1990.

Biggest surprise was at Anglia where a dilapidated A.C. Bristol sold for over £156,000. The car has history , owned by racing driver Betty Haig in the fifties. It took part in many Hill Climbs and Club races during her ownership winning a number of trophies.

Buying with potential restoration costs of £100,000+ this is a brave buy.



I remember a friend of mine owning a Renault 16 TS . It was a fantastic thing , front wheel drive , hatchback , seating for four adults and French suspension which meant it just glided over bumps in the road. Sold in huge numbers in mainland Europe (it was the model that saved Renault from going bust). It may have sold well across Europe but a couple of British winters showed that sills and floor pans were paper thin and now there are only a few left on the road. So I was interested to see what an original TS 16 properly rust treated by a careful owner from new would make £11,448 seems a fair price for one of the rarest cars in the U.K.

Some records this month in spite of doom and gloom.

The one off Pininfarina bodied Mercedes 300SL with 6.3 engine has been around for a while but in spite of needing recommissioning Bonhams sold it for a way above estimate of £275,000. Bonham's also set a record selling the ex Joe Siffert 1967Ferrari 421P LeMans car for £24,000,000.,

Closer to home the ex Colin McRea family Subaru 22B prototype sold for a record £480,000.

Proof that given the right car buyers will still pay over the odds. A 1975 Alfa Spider recently restored by Alfaholics , the U.K.s leading experts in Alfa Romeo cars it sold for a record £38,250 against an estimate of £20 grand ! Also a very early Mk.1 Spitfire recently restored to " better than new" is soon to be sold with a £20,000 reserve.

This would be another record for a Mk.1 Spitfire as would be the 1991 Citroen AX GTI almost unknown on U.K. roads today but one careful owner has only put 15,000 miles on the car in 32 years and it is estimated at £16,000 to £18,000. As one observer has said " You will never find another one"

The same could be said of the 1937 4 ¼ litre Derby Bentley owned by firstly by the Hon. Oscar Montague-Guest M.P. and then Alan Clark M.P. After Clark's death in 1999 the car has been stored in a barn in rural Kent.

It needs total restoration but sold for £21,850. While it is difficult to predict it's value after restoration the ownership history may push its value above the current guide price for these cars of £150,000 / £200,000.

FORMAL NOTICE of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
B.M.M.C. N.I.Region

The 43rd. A.G.M. of the N.I. Region will take place on Thursday 9th. Nov. via zoom starting at 7.30 PM.

Agenda.

Apologies. Minutes of 2022 AGM. Chairman's Report.

Sec. Report. Treasurers Report. Election of Officers

Fantasy G.P. Report A.O.B.

In accordance with Club rules the following members of the Committee are required to stand down and offer themselves for re-election.

ROY BOWMAN and GOFF EVANS.

There is also a vacant position on the Committee for a Club Recruitment Officer. Interested parties should contact Sec. Rory.

Nominations for Committee must be in writing and seconded at least 7 days prior to the day of our AGM. Nominations can be by post or Email.

I nominate For the 2024 Committee.

Proposed Seconded

I nominate For the 2024 Committee.

Proposed Seconded

Sec. Rory O'Neill 83 Kilrea Road Upperlands BT46 5SB
roneill435@outlook.com

Robert's RallyBuzz

October 2023

Northern Ireland's World Rally Champions

At last Northern Ireland can celebrate, not one, but two, World Champions! 25-year-old William Creighton from Moira and his Belfast co-driver Liam Regan have become the 2023 FIA Junior WRC Champions. At the Acropolis Rally in Greece last month the pair secured the title after a challenging three days. Retiring their Ford Fiesta Rally3 on day one with radiator damage they rejoined the rally and set fastest stage times on the remaining two days to finish fifth. It was enough, the NI crew finished the one-make championship 8 points ahead of their closest rivals after this the final round of the JWRC.

Creighton's prize includes four arrive-and-drive outings in an M-Sport Ford Fiesta Rally2 car in the 2024 WRC2 Championship plus 200 Pirelli tyres. The last World Rally Champion to come from Northern Ireland was Niall McShea. The Fermanagh man won the Production WRC title in 2004 with his Subaru Impreza WRX STI.

Bushwhacker Lights Up Tyrone Forests

Omagh Motor Club tried something different this year for their annual Bushwhacker Rally. The gravel event, widely known as the "Tyrone GP" always attracts a large entry to the classic West Tyrone stages. A total of 93 competitors lined up at the Omagh Showgrounds start on the evening of Friday 15th September. The difference in 2023 was that stages one and two were run in total darkness, the first time since 2002 that night stages were used on this particular rally (see looking back)

Stage one was the 4.6 miles of Carrickaholten which, despite a large amount of spectators, ran without incident. SS2 Lough Bradan (7.09 miles) had also attracted a huge crowd, reminding some of the good old days when night stages were a feature of Rally GB. Lots of cars went off here but 83 crews made it back to the overnight halt in Omagh.

The leaders after Leg 1 were Omagh brothers Patrick & Stephen O'Brien whose Skoda Fabia R5 was 2.7 seconds ahead of the Ford Fiesta Rally2 of Cathan McCourt and Liam Moynihan. The weather had been dry and both stages were in perfect condition.

On Saturday morning 91 cars were able to start Leg 2 of the event which would see the crews tackle 3 daylight stages. SS3 was the first run over the 9.61 miles of Killeter. Then it was on to SS4 Carrickaholten 2 which was run in the opposite direction to Friday. I was on start radio here for the day while Victor was on mid-point. Eighty two competitors started the test right on schedule. Again the weather held up and remained dry but cold all day. SS5 was Lough Bradan 2, also run in reverse direction to the Friday night. O'Brien was just 1.1 seconds ahead of McCourt at the end of leg 2. These two were 20 ahead of Jason Mitchell in third.

Leg 3 started with SS6, a second run of the long Killeter stage. With the gravel roads still in perfect condition, the first four cars were so fast that they beat the "bogey" time so the leading positions remained the same. Then on to our penultimate Carrickaholten 3 stage. O'Brien

beat McCourt by 2.5 seconds here to effectively win the rally because the bogey was also beaten by the leading crews on the final Lough Bradan 3 stage. Jason Mitchell & Paddy McCrudden were third in their VW Polo GTI R5, 24.8 seconds back. Fourth place went to the similar Polo of Mark Donnelly/Sean Ferris.

This was the O'Brien brothers hat trick of Bushwhacker Rally wins and 30 years since their father Kevin co-drove Robbie McGurk to win the 1993 event in an Opel Manta 400. Top 2-wheel-drive finishers were Donall Sweeney & Kyle Diffin in 16th place with their Toyota Corolla AE86. Altogether 73 cars finished. BMMC/BRMC members were out in force over the two days covering rescue, recovery, timekeeping, radio and stage marshalling.

Omagh MC expressed their thanks to everyone who helped out on the event. All 8 stages ran despite the popularity of the night tests which resulted in delays on Friday evening as spectators were moved into safe locations on SS1/2. Having said that, the large crowds cooperated well with the officials.

The McKelvey Asbestos Bushwhacker Rally was the third and final round of the 2023 McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Forest Rally Challenge. Maximum points were scored by Darragh Cairns from Sion Mills who has been declared winner of the Challenge from Andy Magee and Ryan Caldwell. Shane Byrne was the series winning co-driver. Cairns and his co-driver-for-the-day, Mark Preston, finished the Bushwhacker in 12th place overall with their Skoda Fabia R5.

Ryan Caldwell didn't finish the Bushwhacker, but he still won the 2023 Sligo Pallets Irish Forest Rally Championship. All the Strabane man needed to do was start the Bushwhacker which was the penultimate round of the series. At 21 the Skoda Fabia R5 driver has become the youngest winner of this championship.

Looking Back

Celebrating 40 years of my involvement with the Bushwhacker Rally.

First, a short history lesson!!

Omagh Motor Club ran the first Bushwhacker Rally as a 22 stage two-day closed-road tarmac event in 1975. Sponsored by Duckhams Oil, a maximum entry of 120 cars started the gruelling Co.Tyrone event. Ronnie McCartney and Mike Hart were the winners while Ronnie's younger brother Dessie and co-driver Terry Harryman finished second in an identical Porsche Carrera. That one-off tarmac Bushwhacker became the template and forerunner of the now-famous Ulster Rally which started one year later in 1976 and of course still runs to this day.

As a result of all that, the 1976 Bushwhacker Rally became a gravel event using stages in Lough Bradan, Baronscourt and Gortin Glen Forests. The rally has remained in the West Tyrone forests since then, running normally in mid to late September. The Bushwhacker had been a key round of the important mixed-surface ANICC Northern Ireland Rally Championship since its revival in 1988 (originally running in a limited form from 1977-82) but that series became sealed-surface-only in 2022, and so the "whacker" is now a part of the three-round NI Forest Rally Challenge plus a round of the Motorsport Ireland Irish Forest Rally Championship as it has been since 2011.

40 Years Ago 1983

Hugh O'Brien & Patrick McCullagh in a Ford Escort Mk.2 were declared winners of the 1983 Castle Inn Bushwhacker Rally on Saturday 15th October. Unfortunately the event was cut short following a fatal accident. A spectator was hit by Bertie Fisher's Opel Ascona at the finish of the Lough Bradan stage. 1983 was my first time marshalling on the event. Neil Boulton and I were covering the final time control in Castlederg. There were scheduled to be 14 stages and the entry list had 61 cars listed. Seamus McCanny was COC.

30 Years Ago 1993

We were timekeeping on the Woodlander Bushwhacker Rally on Saturday 25th September. As I said earlier, Robbie McGurk/Kevin O'Brien won in the Opel Manta 400. This was Robbie's first hat trick of wins, the Omagh man would go on to win the rally for a record 8 times! James Gilen/Ken Sproule were second in the Meeke Orion RWD. There were 13 gravel stages. The rally was a round of the Maxol NI Championship which had already been won by Stephen Emerson on the Lakeland Stages earlier in the month. Gordon Noble was Clerk of the Course.

21 Years Ago 2002

Omagh Motor Club, under the then COC Declan McAleer, decided to run a two-day Bushwhacker Rally on September 27th/28th. Until then the gravel event had been a one-day round of the NI Rally Championship with around 10 short stages. Declan's idea was to run three stages on the Friday evening, two short quarry tests near Drumquin and a 9-mile stage in Gortin Glen Forest Park which would be run in total darkness. The Saturday consisted of the usual 10 tests in Carrickaholten, Killeter and Lough Bradan.

We were timekeeping on both days with accommodation provided for all marshals & officials at the Ulster American Folk Park overnight halt. The rally was the penultimate round of the M.E. Crowe NI Championship. Sponsored by Molly Sweeney's pub there were 113 entries. Robbie McGurk and Tony Kearns won the 2002 Bushwhacker in a Subaru Impreza WRC '99 beating the older Impreza 555 of Derek McGarrity/James McKee by 3 seconds on the final stage after the two were on identical times going into the 4.5 Lough Bradan test. McGarrity won the NI Championship.

10 Years Ago 2013

Derrick McGarrity/James McKee won the McKelvey Bushwhacker Rally for the second year running in their Subaru Impreza WRC S14. Ronnie McAleer was COC and there were 10 gravel stages on Saturday 28th September. Victor and I were timekeeping on the finish of SS1/6 Carrickaholten. Other club members were on duty as usual. I was taken ill towards the end of the day but still managed to finish my timing duties. There were around 100 starters. The rally was the penultimate of the 8 round Carryduff Forklift MSA NI Rally Championship. McGarrity and McKee won the series. The Bushwhacker was also the sixth and final round of the 2013 Valvoline Irish Forest Championship. Winner of that championship was Mick O'Brien in his Ford Focus WRC.

5 Years Ago 2018

There were 11 gravel stages on the McKelvey Asbestos Bushwhacker Rally. Based in Omagh on Sat. 22 September at the Silverbirch Hotel with a service park in Aghyaran there were 110 starters. Joint COC's were Ronnie McAleer & Lewis Boyd. We were covering radio, timekeeping, rescue and other marshalling duties as usual. Victor and I were timing the finish of the two Carrickaholten stages which both ran without incident. Omagh MC provided breakfast and dinner at the hotel. Winners were the new Valvoline Irish Forest Champions Josh Moffett and Stephen Thornton in their Ford Fiesta R5. As well as being the final round of the Irish series the Bushwhacker was also the penultimate round of the McGrady Insurance ANICC NI Rally Championship which was won by Derek McGarrity for a record eighth time.

Rally Diary

Sat. 14th October.....Glens of Antrim Targa Rally

Sponsored by Woodside Logistics Group. Based at Gracehill Golf Club near Ballymoney where the event will start and finish. There are 4 tests run twice and totalling 9 miles over mixed surfaces in Ballypatrick Forest. We are providing timekeepers and other marshals to assist organisers Mid Antrim Motor Club. Sign on at the event. First car due 10.30am.

Sat. 21st October.....Quinn Offsite Targa Rally

A new Targa event organised by Magherafelt & District Motor Club. We will be providing help as usual. The first car leaves the start at 10.01 from The Elk Inn in Toomebridge. Officials and marshals can sign on at the start venue. There are 10 repeated tests . More details on the organisers website.



WHO ,WHERE ,
WHAT
AND WHEN ?

I took the photo
but no idea of
the year.

The Worst thing about the 20 MPH in Wales is the time it takes to escape the place.

Monitoring the 20 MPH speed limit one Policeman set up at the bottom of a steep hill and clocked a young man doing 65 in a 20 Zone. "Son" says the Policeman "I have been waiting on you all day" "Sorry" says the guy " I got here as quickly as I could"



New Gearbox available for Welsh Drivers of Ford , Vauxhall , Nissen Toyota and Renault / Peugeot cars

Prices from £600 + VAT

2 year warranty .



Policeman clocked a women doing over 40 in the new twenty zone. Out comes

the notebook. Sorry Officer I am a coming from Ubakistan to visit my daughter in Cardiff. My name is Angicikilia Vassagatahia Montrogrothicove. Got that says the Officer putting hs notebook away , please driving within the speed limit.

The new 20 MPH speed limit. There is no evidence that I can see that these safety measures will cause congestion says Minister. He should have said this in welsh to stop the rest of us laughing at him !

