

The BRITISH MOTORSPORT MARSHALS CLUB



MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION RECOGNISED

FOUNDED 1957

No. 12

Xmas . 2023.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all at the BMMC Family.

Northern Ireland Region.

Newsletter

XMAS 2023

Hard to believe that Subaru introduced the Impreza over 30 years ago , In Feb.1993.

Up to then , apart from dedicated Rally fans many people had never heard of Subaru. In fact in 1993 Subaru did not even have a dealership network in the U.K. , their cars were mainly sold at rural agricultural outlets and agricultural shows where the four wheel drive cars were attractive to farmers.

To prove the point in 1993 , the first year of the Impreza Subaru sold 4000 cars at a time Ford sold 381,000 and Vauxhall 303,000 cars. Even MG / Rover who were facing financial difficulties managed to sell over 210,000 cars.

Even before Subaru decided to introduce the Sporting version of the Turbo ,the STI Subaru had delivered several cars to Prodrive in England to turn the car into a Viable WRC contender.

Prodrive took on the management of the new Subaru Impreza rally team and November was a turning point with young Colin McRae dominating the 1993 RAC Rally. Suddenly the Impreza STI was the car making headlines , rally fans wanted to have one and in spite of some initial problems with insurance (Insurance companies could not agree on a group for the car , was it a quick saloon like the Cavalier SRI or closer to a TVR or Porsche 911.) Early owners did have problems with insurance ,(I was nearly one of them) but soon the market settled and Subaru had a full order book for STI and WRX cars which was to last for 25 years.

Today the Impreza WRX is one of the sought after cars on the market, most have been crashed , modified and then crashed , but an early Impreza is today a very valuable asset.



30 years ago the Subaru Impreza STI goes on sale !

NEW CAR NEWS.

The Bentley Batur by Mulliner. The final use of the W12 twin turbo 6 litre engine now with over 700 BHP this is Bentley's fastest ever road car. In spite of the price £1.5 million the 18 cars being built have all been presold.

The Aston Martin DBX 707 SUV. Officially the world's fastest SUV this large car has now 700 BHP thanks to twin turbo's supplied by M.B. AMG as fitted to the AMG GT 63 Black edition. Price is £198,000 and top speed is now 192 MPH.

The new Ferrari SP3 Daytona is a tribute to the 1960's race winning 330P3 and 330P4 cars. This limited edition car (all sold already at £1.7 million each) boasts a 829BHP V12 engine and a top speed of 211MPH.



In spite of disappointing levels of EV sales in recent months new EV cars continue to be offered as an expensive option.

The 2024 range shows some interesting list prices at a time when some models suffer 50% depreciation in only 2 years.

Fisker SUV Ocean 1	£60,800	VW ID4	£46,000	Kia EV6	£48,800
Skoda Enyoq	£49,000	Hyundai Ioniq6	£47,000.		

Are people really going to pay almost £50,000 for a Kia , Skoda or Hyundai ?

CLASSIC CAR NEWS.

While the top auction houses still attract high prices for exotic cars Classic Car Auctions based in Warwickshire showed that there are still bargains to be had. Their Autumn sale produced some outstanding cars at below reserve prices. The restored 1968 Mini Mayfair 1275 Special sold for £8,400 in spite of a restoration that brought the car up to full Cooper S spec inside and out , the 1968 MGB GT V8 sold for £10,600 (dealers are asking £20K plus) and the 1976 MGB GT Sebring replica fitted with a new 1950cc fast road engine sold for £14,000. (A similar Sebring replica without a fresh engine sold for over £20 grand last year !).

The 1967 Ford Cortina GT rebuilt as a Lotus Twin Cam at a cost of £40,000 sold for a heartbreaking £10,900 and a 1980 MINI CLUBMAN 1275 GT with wider wings , minilite wheels uprated suspension and a full history covering 30 years sold for £4,500. Every one of these cars will always sell again for a nice profit. I do hope some of them went to private buyers rather than the trade.

2 cars which set records at Iconic Auctions were a pair of MK3 3.0S Ford Capri's The silver car Reg OWC 827V and the gold car Reg. OAR 576V sold for a record £186,000 ! Why? Both cars now restored are the original two cars supplied by Ford for the T.V. series THE PROFESSIONALS which ran from the late 1970's into the early 1980's. Martin Shaw played Doyle and Lewis Collins played Brodie.

Bonham's October auction sold several cars well above estimate , the 2014 Porsche 918 Spyder sold for £1.1 million the 1995 Porsche 911 type 993 sold for £900,000 and the 2005 Porsche Carrara GT sold for £900,000. The 2011 Merc SLR McLaren car sold for £800,000 . One has to ask are Classic Car buyers buying these cars or are rich investors moving back into the market, the same people who almost destroyed the market in both the mid 1990's and in 2016.

If this is the case I hope they get as badly burnt as happened in 2020 when after lockdown many were forced to sell at a loss.

The prototype Spitfire.

Spitfire reg 412VC was built with a 1200cc engine originally producing 55 BHP but the factory soon replaced this with the 70X engine for the LeMans 24 hour racing getting 110 BHP from 1200CC. They then looked at the best alloy panels to replace the bonnet , wings an doors , fitted a very light roof and in 1964 it finished 21st. at leMans , before beating the more powerful works Alpine Renault cars in the Tour De France.

In 1965 they finished LeMans in 13th. And 14th. Several places ahead of cars with twice the horsepower and with massive factory support. What was dubbed at home as a " hairdressers car " suddenly proved the Spitfire was a real sports car and from 1965 the Spitfire suddenly became a real rival to M.G. Midget and the Austin Healey Sprite. Prior to the LeMans appearance Midgets and Sprites were outselling Spitfires by a huge margin.

The sad Lancia Beta Story.

When did you last see a Lancia Beta on the road or at a Classic Car Show.? I doubt I have seen one in the last 20 years. The car was famous for two reasons , firstly a jewel of an engine in particular the HPE cars with the rare VX supercharged engine an Italian design that matched any Alfa or even Ferrari design. Secondly if you took delivery on a wet day the thing would rust from day one. So what went wrong ?

Well it is simple , Fiat and Lancia in the early 1980's broke into the Russian market , secured a deal were they would help the Russians build European style car plants , provide up to date technology and engines and gearboxes for the 1200 and 1500 Lada cars , etc.

The Russian's could not pay the cost of all this and offered vast amounts of Russian steel .

Fiat and Lancia both agreed and although not all Fiat cars were built using Russia steel all Lancia cars were using it from 1982. It was a disaster. The Lancia Beta and the Monte Carlo coupe , both award winning cars were within a couple of years being scrapped in huge numbers , Lancia being forced to buy back many cars and by 1986 Lancia closed their U.K. dealership.

MISTER COOPER's CAR.

The year around 1953 or 1954 , I was at primary school and had already started an interest in cars. Our coalman had a Morris Minor ,black , a neighbour who

worked for Mackie had a green and black prewar Morris 8 , and a shopkeeper round the corner on the Shankill Road had a dove grey Austin Devon or Somerset. Mr. Cooper was an engineer , a close friend of my father , who worked on the transatlantic route between Southampton and New York. He visited us a couple of times a year always with gifts.

It was the first time I had seen a banana , a pineapple or an American tin plate toy car , in this case a WW2 Jeep , a Ford Hot Rod and a model of the battleship USS Missouri.

By 1959 I was at Annadale School and on the way home would stop at Gardener's Bookshop for a quick look at MotorSport , AutoSport and Autocar.

Mr. Cooper around this time visited with a two tone car which caused a sensation.

I had heard of Mercedes and Auto Union but no one had heard of Borgward. Before BMW appeared on the scene a few years later Borgward were one of post war Germany's most prestigious car makers.

So Mr. Cooper turned up in a Borgward Isabella which attracted a large crowd every time he parked it. I will never forget the first time I was driven into the town centre in the car to pick a Christmas present from Frederik Thomas toy shop next to Robinson and Cleavers.

The 1958 Isabella was light years ahead of any thing we had seen in Belfast before.



When the Germany economy crashed in 1962 Borgward and many smaller companies ended up bankrupt although Borgward Mexico and a sister company in Argentina continued to produce cars in the mid sixties including a luxurious 6 cylinder model.

Borgward disappeared at a time when only Mercedes were competing in the same market. DKW and NSU were small fry , as was Opel and Auto Union and BMW would take several years as Audi and BMW to become major players in the world market. Sad that things went wrong for Borgward as their cars were well ahead of the times in both design and engineering. The fact that they placed more importance in engineering excellence than cost led to their downfall.

Robert's RallyBuzz
December 2023

Seasons Greetings

First of all let me wish all of you RallyBuzz readers a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Time to look forward to 2024 so here are a few important Irish rallying dates for your diary.

2024 McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship

Kirkistown Stages.....17th February (Single Venue)
Bishopscourt Stages.....9th March (Single Venue)
Maiden City Stages.....27th April (Closed Road)
Tour of the Sperrins.....18th May (Closed Road)
Tyrone Stages Rally.....20th July (Closed Road)

2024 McGrady Insurance NI Forest Rally Challenge

Fivemiletown Rally.....24th February
Lakeland Stages Rally.....7th September
Bushwhacker Rally.....21st September
Dogleap Rally.....19th October

2024 Irish Tarmac Rally Championship

Circuit of Ireland.....29/30 March (Easter)
Donegal International Rally.....21-23 June
Ulster Rally.....16/17 August

McCormack Masters Marathon RAC

Marty McCormack and Barney Mitchell have won the 2023 Roger Albert Clark Rally. The Magherafelt Motor Club members headed home a one-two for Northern Ireland drivers in Ford Escort Mk.2's. Omagh's Cathan McCourt, on his first RAC, and Irish co-driver Liam Moynihan were second 5 minutes and 30 seconds back while Welshman Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke finished third in their Escort Mk.2 a further 1 minute and 26 seconds behind.

This was McCormack's fourth victory on the R.A.C. Rally, extending his record. The most successful driver in the rally's 20-year history paced himself throughout the long event but was never lower than 4th overall, despite sliding into a Scottish ditch on Saturday. Marty knew it wasn't a sprint and when others hit trouble he found himself in front when it mattered, at the finish of the final 39-mile stage! A fantastic achievement for the 38-year-old Draperstown driver and co-driver Mitchell from Magherafelt. They totally epitomised the old saying "To finish first, first you must finish".

Marty McCormack's previous RAC Rally wins were in 2012, 2017 and 2019. All of them in BDA-powered Ford Escort Mk.2's.

Meanwhile there was more top 10 success for NI drivers. Vivian Hamill/Andrew Grennan were seventh in their Escort Mk.2 and Robert Woodside/Dean Beckett finished tenth and won their class in a Porsche 911.

The biennial Roger Albert Clark gravel rally for historic cars, which recreates the gruelling RAC Rally GB's of the 1970's and 80's, attracted an entry of 155 of which 70 were Ford Escort Mk.2's. To celebrate its 20th anniversary, the marathon RAC had scheduled no less than 33 special stages totalling well over 300 miles. Leading entries included WRC stars Kris Meeke, Oliver Solberg and Chris Ingram plus 2022 British Champion Osian Pryce, but they all failed to finish.

Pryce was in front after SS1 Crychan, then Meeke led after SS4 Glasfynydd, but retired his Escort MK.2 with a blown engine on the very next test. Pryce led again but the Welshman eventually retired his Escort from second place behind Oliver Solberg in Scotland. After this Solberg led McCormack and increased his lead to 5 minutes until day four. The Swedish WRC star had looked unstoppable, but he went off on SS28 Harewood 2 dropping to fourth. Oliver eventually retired his Viking Motorsport Escort Mk.2 on the fifth and final day. Chris Ingram had earlier retired his fabulous Triumph TR7 V8 from 36th place on SS10 Sweet Lamb Hafren 1 with mechanical problems.

The 2023 Roger Albert Clark Rally ran for five days from Thursday 23rd to Monday 27th November in Wales, Scotland and England.

There were 14 classic stages in Wales on Thursday and Friday including Crychan, Walters Arena, Sweet Lamb-Hafren and Myherin. In Scotland on Saturday the 6 tests included two runs over Ae, Dalbeattie and Glengap. Unfortunately two 9-mile stages in Arroch Hill (SS19/22) had to be cancelled due to accessibility problems. Then in England on Sunday there were 3 repeated stages in the central block of Kielder including Kershope and Mount Common, both 16 miles long, and the second longest stages in the event. On Monday the remaining 5 stages were also in the Kielder Forest complex.

The final stage of the rally was a huge "sting-in-the-tail". SS33 The Big One in Pundershaw was 39 miles long, and it produced a major casualty. Seb Perez and Garry McElhinney were cruelly denied second place when their glorious Lancia Stratos ground to a halt mid-stage, the fabulous sounding Ferrari power unit which had entertained the appreciative crowds all rally long had unfortunately overheated.

The 2023 RAC Rally was a massive success. Huge crowds attended the event right from the Carmarthen Town Centre start in Wales on Wednesday evening through to the Carlisle finish on the Monday afternoon. For example, in Wales all the stage car parks on Friday morning had to be closed early when they filled to capacity.

Big Chance For Evans

Elfyn Evans had been handed a golden opportunity to become 2024 World Rally Champion, now that Kalle Rovanpera has announced he will go part time. Evans, the “Little Welsh Wizard”, will start his 5th season next year with Toyota in the WRC. The 8-time rally winner has been championship runner up three times, in 2020 and 2021 (behind Ogier) and of course this year when he finished second to his Yaris team mate Rovanpera.

Elfyn and co-driver Scott Martin’s only full time team mate next year will be Takamoto Katsuta who has yet to win a rally. The “Wee Japanese Man” will again have Ulsterman Aaron Johnston alongside him in the Yaris Rally1.

Realistically though, Elfyn Evans only challengers for the 2024 WRC title will be the Hyundai i20 pairing of Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak, who has returned to the South Korean manufacturer after just one year at M-Sport Ford in which he failed to tame the Puma.

Toyota should have the best car yet again in 2024. Unless Hyundai can make serious improvements to the i20 Rally1 ASAP, it is difficult to see them challenging the Japanese mark, who have won the manufacturers prize for the past three years. Meanwhile M-Sport Ford have yet to announce their WRC team for 2024. Kalle Rovanpera and Sebastien Ogier will drive on selected events for Toyota.

Apparently Rovanpera will return to a full time drive in 2025. The 13-round 2024 World Rally Championship starts with Rallye Monte-Carlo, running from 25th to 28th January.

Rally Diary

Friday 29th December.....Turkey Run Rally

Maiden City Motor Club are the organisers of this annual clubman Single Venue Rally which is sponsored by MCEVOYMOTORSPORT.COM. Comprising of five stages and based entirely within the Shackleton Complex in Ballykelly. The first car starts at 9.15am. Sign on via [ralyscore.net](https://www.ralyscore.net) or at the venue on the day. We are providing rescue plus stage marshals and possibly radio control.



STEVE PEREZ in action.
A real gentleman who I met on the 2018 Circuit and who returned in 2019 when Fel, Wright and myself were covering refuelling duties at the Kings Hall.

CRAP CORNER.



Grandma was visiting us on Christmas Eve. On leaving I said be careful , Santa is out there delivering presents. Don't be silly Grandma is not scared of Santa.

Don't you listen to Downtown ? One Grandma has already been run over by a reindeer.

