

The BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MARSHALS CLUB



MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION RECOGNISED

FOUNDED 1957

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Northern Ireland Region.

Newsletter

William Robert (Roy) Bowman
21st March 1945 -1st January 2024



Roy Bowman 21st March 1945 – 1st January 2024

Roy Bowman sadly passed away suddenly on New Years Day 2024. Roy was the president and treasurer of the BMMC NI region.

Roy's contribution to motorsport spans many decades and he was a founder member of the BMRMC NI section of the Midland Region of the BMRMC in 1979. Many years later, the BMMC NI region came into existence in 1992 with Roy still very much involved.

Over his many years of service to the sport, Roy served in all the leading committee roles and took over as editor in chief of the BMMC NI region magazine in 1996 where his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things motorsport and motoring was often displayed alongside his signature wit. Roy continued as editor of the magazine up until his untimely passing in 2024. The magazine was often described as "unique" and appreciated by not only members of the BMMC NI region, but also nationally and beyond.

Roy also organised a Fantasy GP each season which proved very popular and was often hotly contested. He ran various club events such as a Christmas Quiz which was challenging but great fun and often very competitive.

Alongside his committee and magazine editor roles, Roy was still an active marshal. He was in his element marshalling at Kirkistown Race Meetings (which he very rarely missed) as well as marshalling across the motorsport spectrum at sprints, hill climbs and rallies. Roy was always ready to share his immense knowledge with others whilst on post, providing insightful and informative days for many marshalling colleagues over the years.

As can be expected of someone with such experience in motorsport, there have been many adventures involving Roy over the years. Infamously he was involved in an incident at the Phoenix Park Motor Races in Dublin in 1982 when he was lucky to escape with only a broken leg after being struck by an errant formula Atlantic whilst marshalling at School House along the back straight. But it wasn't long before Roy was back marshalling in his orange overalls.

A perfect gentleman, Roy will be sadly missed by everyone who had the privilege to know him. To Roy's wife Norma, daughter Ceri and the rest of the family circle we extend our sympathies and condolences at this sad time.



Robert Coursey
NI Region Chair
(with contribution from Duncan McGregor)

F1 News

New season approaching

Well, at time of writing, there is exactly one month to go to the first race of the new season in Bahrain. All teams will be attending a 3 day test, also at the Sakhir Circuit between the 21-23rd February, before they hit the track in anger for FP1 on the 29th February (yes it's apparently a leap year again, the day where a person can claim their pension on their 17th birthday theoretically!), with racing commencing on 2nd March. It seems that the first 2 races, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have the race scheduled for Saturday, following the trend started in Las Vegas last November.

Before that, obviously the teams will want to launch their "new" cars for the season ahead. It all starts on 2nd February with the Haas launch and the others will follow within a couple of weeks. In honesty, this is more of an opportunity for teams to show off their new liveries with a bit of fanfare, they rarely give anything away at this stage of the season and have even been known to put a few red herrings on the car attempting to fool their rivals.

FORMULA 1		
Car launches for the 2024 season		
Haas		February 2nd
Sauber		February 5th
Williams		February 5th
Alpine		February 7th
RB		February 8th
Aston Martin		February 12th
Ferrari		February 13th
Mercedes		February 14th
McLaren		February 14th
Red Bull		February 15th

sky sports 

Silly season



Even before the 2024 season has started, we're already looking at silly season for 2025! With the news of Lewis Hamilton moving to the Scuderia in 2025 catching all the motorsport press out yesterday, speculation is already turning to who will race where next year. This season is the first that I remember that the entries for the start of the season are identical to the end of the previous season, with no moves between seasons (obviously a couple of mid season changes last year). With one confirmed move for next season already, it is interesting to note that the following drivers are all out of contract at the end of this season : Perez, Gasly, Ocon, Stroll, Sainz, Ricciardo, Hulkenburg, Guanyu, Bottas, Alonso, Sargeant, Albon, Tsunoda and Magnusson. With more and more F2 drivers currently in reserve and testing roles, expect to see a lot of movement next year, with a few new faces and a few saying goodbye.

Contracts and the street circuit problems

Good to see the Japanese GP will remain at Suzuka until at least 2029 after they signed a new deal with F1. Although it's a middle of the night race for us in Europe, it's viewer appeal is fantastic. With corners such as 130R, it is not only visually exciting to watch, but also a

favourite with the drivers, and when it was the season finale, it led to many an exciting title decider – Prost / Senna x 2, Hunt Lauda in the rain. Let's just hope that the other traditional circuits keep their place, losing the likes of Spa, Monza or Silverstone would almost be criminal. However, F1's owners, Liberty Media (the American Company) seem to be very keen on street circuits at the minute and almost appear to be moving away from new purpose built tracks. In the last generation alone, we've seen races added at street circuits including India, Russia, Valencia in Spain, Singapore, Las Vegas, Miami, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia amongst others, adding to the processional Monaco race as well as Canada and Australia (which I struggle to identify with as street circuits given their nature and openness). Indeed, Liberty media announced this week that Madrid will now host a GP on a street circuit in an industrial area a few miles from the city centre from 2027, although they have not discounted the traditional Barcelona race remaining on the calendar. In response, Circuit De Catalunya in Barcelona are suggesting a €390m investment to upgrade the circuit. Reading various reports on social media, the increase in street circuits seems to be very unpopular amongst the fans of the sport, but it appears profitable for the promoter so will get pushed through.

Uncompetitive?!

This week, Formula One Management (FOM) along with the FIA announced that it had rejected Andretti Motorsport / Cadillac's bid to become the 11th team on the grid, stating that they did not believe the team could be competitive enough! Again, this has angered a lot of fans (and amused many others). Fans have taken to social media to point out that there are several teams already on the grid who are uncompetitive and are only there to make up the numbers. Others have pointed out teams in the 80's who regularly had the "DNQ" beside their race entries. No names mentioned lol. Personally, I think it again comes down to money, FOM has a huge input from the teams who don't really want to change a 10 way split in revenue into an 11 way split.

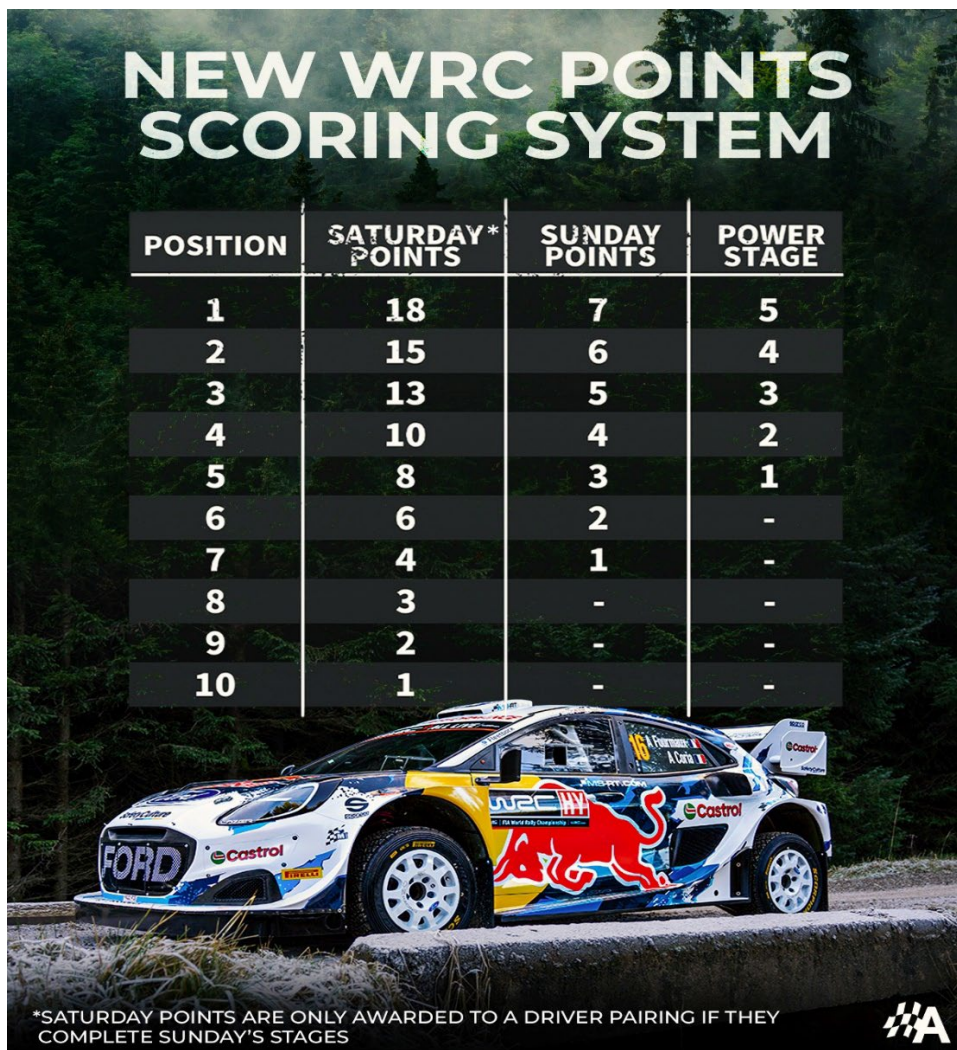
Fantasy GP Update

As per the last club meeting, we are hoping to get the Fantasy GP up and running this year. Wright Holland is trying to get his head around the systems for scoring and driver selection. It appears that Roy may have had a few secrets as to how it was scored (nothing untoward of course). Once we get it sorted, an email update can be sent and teams entered, with results published as usual in the magazine. Wright, I'll say a wee prayer for you, I'm glad I volunteered for magazine duties rather than the Fantasy GP!

WRC

Points


It's been a few years since I've followed the WRC unfortunately. Whenever it went onto premium channels, quite simply I stopped watching it, and subsequently lost track of what was going on. As usual though, I got a bit of interest back with the season opening Monte Carlo event. I was amazed at how few top entry cars were actually involved. There seems to be a much better entry and competition between the WRC2 cars, which have a far greater entry number. One thing that did catch my eye though, was the allocation of points for each event. I've looked at it a couple of days and although it appears to be reasonably straight forward initially, the more I look at it the more I'm confused. And after talking to Robert Coursey, I'm even more confused as the image below doesn't even begin to explain what happens if you retire at different stages of the rally



NEW WRC POINTS SCORING SYSTEM

POSITION	SATURDAY* POINTS	SUNDAY POINTS	POWER STAGE
1	18	7	5
2	15	6	4
3	13	5	3
4	10	4	2
5	8	3	1
6	6	2	-
7	4	1	-
8	3	-	-
9	2	-	-
10	1	-	-

*SATURDAY POINTS ARE ONLY AWARDED TO A DRIVER PAIRING IF THEY COMPLETE SUNDAY'S STAGES



Other Business

Training Days

Duncan McGregor has already held 2 successful training days at Kirkistown for all marshals, whether club members or not. He is due to hold a 3rd training day at Kirkistown on Sunday 18th February. Please contact him directly at dmcgmotorsport@gmail.com for further details.

BMMC / BRMC will hold it's annual Training day on Sunday 7th April at Transport Training Services at Nutts Corner as per the last couple of years – 15 Dundrod Road, Crumlin, BT29 4SS for your Google Maps. This is also an opportunity for MMP Marshals to learn more about Race and Rally and maintain their grade.

Membership

With several new members joining the club recently we now have 61 members. Please remember, we are always looking for more interested new faces, so if you know anyone, arrange a taster day for them, whether it be race, rally, speed or any other discipline.

National

Our National Chair, Nadine Lewis, publishes a monthly blog online. This month, she has answered a few common queries which the club are receiving as reproduced here:

We've had a few queries come in to the club so we would like to address these.....

Volunteering system – this is now live. A few tweaks to some of the events, non-race events to be added and some further enhancements / features being worked on. If you volunteer via our system you have the same rights as anyone else who volunteers direct with a club – so don't think you are missing out! Just ensure you volunteer in advance of the closing date – clubs do have the right to ask for earlier closing of registrations.

Membership packs – these are being sent out in one Mailshot in March. This is the most efficient way to process the packs. Neither your card nor car sticker is required to marshal so you don't need them ahead of the season start. After this renewal period closes car stickers will only be sent to new members and membership cards will be going electronic.

Accounts – a few comments raised about us cutting costs whilst enjoying a healthy bank balance. Our accounts are currently in rude health but we mustn't be complacent.

We have sadly lost a few of our sponsors this year so will be dipping in to funds to ensure overalls remain fully subsidised – and hope to find new sponsors too.

Training events are supported up to 75% of the costs from British Motorsport Trust so we have to use club funds for the balance.

We have introduced Life Membership for individuals who have been with the club 40 years. Although a small percentage of members at the moment this will increase year on year. We have also kept our subscription cost the same for the last 10 years. We have some ailing IT systems which we are patching together currently but will need some significant investment in the coming years. Insurance and general running costs have also increased – along with everything else in life!

Overalls – you don't need them to start marshalling and Lille are working hard this year to reduce their lead times. They are holding a few stock items based on the last 12 months orders to manage the early part of the year rush! So don't wait to get started – ask your recruitment coordinators to lend you a tabard at least until your overalls are ready.

Training weekends are in full swing – so make sure you get along or dial in virtually where you can. These should all be aligned with the new Motorsport UK Pathway so that everyone attending gets the modules they need. For new marshals to collect signatures you can download continuation sheets from Motorsport UK website or request a Record Book directly from marshals@motorsportuk.org.

If you do have any queries please address them in the first instance to your Regional Committees. They can support you with local needs, training, grading and membership questions. Where necessary they will request support from others in order to answer your queries. Same as in working life – if you get no answer or support then please escalate!

And for the rally enthusiasts amongst us it is great to hear that The Probite British Rally Championship [BRC] will return to free-to-air terrestrial television in 2024, after signing a multi-year deal with ITV4 and ITVX to broadcast the six-round series across the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Great work to get this deal!

Social Events

A few of you may have seen my post on the Club's Facebook page a short while ago in relation to Denis Biggerstaff opening his barn for visits. Inside he has a lot of memorabilia and some very special cars – WRC Subaru, 2 x Metro 6R4s, Mini Cooper amongst them. I am currently trying to arrange a club visit to Kinallen for members to experience this. Denis is asking anyone visiting to make a donation which will go towards the Angel Wishes Charity which is close to him. Unfortunately he is encouraging weekend visits which may be an issue due to upcoming events but I will see what I can arrange and I will hopefully have an update in the next magazine.

Editor's note

Well, apart from Robert's Rally report and Crap Corner, that's pretty much it for my first issue. It was initially decided that we would hold off until March, however, we felt it was important to

get out a tribute to Roy. Therefore I cobbled this together at short notice. Hopefully you have found it both informative and an enjoyable read, it's my first effort at putting a newsletter together! I'm keen to stress that this is very much for the member's and I would therefore encourage you to send any prospective content to me at colinrobinson@sky.com and I will happily add this in, even if it's just a wee joke for Crap Corner, all is welcomed.

Robert's RallyBuzz

Northern Ireland

February 2024

A Classic Monte Kicks off 2024

Round 1 of the 2024 WRC, the Monte Carlo Rally (January 25-28) was a cracking event! The season opener attracted just 8 top-tier Rally1 cars on the 68 strong entry list. Thierry Neuville was the star of the weekend. The Belgian driver won the rally for the second time in his Hyundai i20 and he claimed maximum championship points in the process. The Toyota Yaris's of Sebastien Ogier and Elfyn Evans were second and third. Evans took an early lead on the two Thursday evening stages and continued to lead through Friday, but by Saturday afternoon Neuville had assumed control. Ogier tried to catch the Belgian but eventually resigned himself to the runner up position. Ott Tanak on his return to Hyundai was fourth and Adrien Fourmaux fifth for M-Sport in his Puma. All 8 Rally1 cars finished. The pace of the leading cars all rally long was phenomenal!

There were 28 Rally2 machines competing in the WRC2 category. Three drivers were in contention for the win going into the final power stage which finished on the top of the famous Col de Turini. It was a fantastic battle all rally long with the lead changing after almost every stage between Lopez and Gryazin. Yohan Rosell had been in third place but on Sunday he was flying and passed Gryazin for second. Starting that final test he was just 0.9 seconds behind leader Lopez.

Rosell was fastest on the last stage and so the Frenchman won WRC2 in his Citroen C3 but just by 4 seconds from Pepe Lopez's Skoda Fabia. Nikolay Gryazin was third in his Citroen C3 a further 11.4 seconds back. These three were in a class of their own. A great advert for WRC2. There was no snow on the Monte this year, just some damp and icy patches which caught out some of the competitors, but in general, conditions on most of the 17 tarmac stages were dry and very good. There were only 4 retirements from the 68 starters.

New Rally Ireland Dependent on Funding

Plans for a 2025 WRC Rally Ireland are gathering momentum. All Motorsport Ireland now need is the small matter of 15 million euro funding required from the Irish Government to be confirmed. A three-year-deal will allow the Rally to alternate its base and service park between

three different Munster locations. Tralee, Limerick and Waterford are the chosen venues. All are suitable and Motorsport Ireland have decided to give them all the opportunity to host this prestigious event.

What stages will Rally Ireland use? Remote servicing may be allowed in 2025 meaning classic stages such as those in Donegal could be brought into the equation during the three-day event. As the rally will be organised by Motorsport Ireland the event wouldn't be able to cross the border into Northern Ireland. Let's see what happens then, but if MI don't get the funding then Rally Ireland 3 won't happen!

The first time WRC Rally Ireland ran in November 2007 there were 84 cars on the entry list, but that included 26 World Rally Cars (the top-tier at that time). Sadly when the event ran for the second time as the opening round of the 2009 WRC, there were only 36 starters, although 18 were World Rally Cars.

Looking Back Marshalling Memories

40 Years Ago.....1984

The UAC were appealing for marshals for the Circuit of Ireland Rally due to take place on 20-24 April. Back then the rally was a 5-day Friday to Tuesday event with scrutining taking place on Thursday 19th. A total of 1500 volunteers would be required to marshal the rally. The Ulster Motor Show was held on 13-18 February at the Kings Hall in Belfast. Following his purchase of the Davrain Sports Car company in Wales, local Ballynahinch businessman Will Corry unveiled the new Corry Cultra. A Rally version would be campaigned by Stanley Orr in the 1984 BTRDA Championship.

30 Years Ago.....1994

A team representing BMMC won the Northern Ireland Area Final of the Shell Helix National Motor Club Challenge. The event was held at Neville Johnston Garages on the Boucher Road in Belfast. Around 12 teams from throughout NI took part.

20 Years Ago.....2004

The New Year Stages at Kirkistown on January 17th was our first rally of 2004. Jointly organised by the 500 MRCI and UAC, Kevin Lynch won in his new-to-him Impreza S9 which Petter Solberg had used to win WRC Corsica in 2003. Second was Nigel Hicklin and Michael Curran third and top Group N car. 40 competitors started at 09.30 and we had the sixth and final stage completed by 14.35.

We were back at Kirkistown on February 21st for the Eurocables Rally. Round 1 of the 2004 Pacenotes NI Rally Championship. North Armagh MC were the organisers.

Also in February, Carsport Magazine sponsored a Rally Time Trial at the original Balmoral Showgrounds in Belfast. We covered rescue, flag and fire points. Carsport provided welcome shelter for all marshals plus tea and sandwiches throughout the two-day event. Mark Doyle was the star of the show in his little Peugeot 106, he won on both days!

Then a week later we ran a stage of Mid Antrim Motor Club's Clubmans Championship Rally in Tardree Forest. The day passed without incident.

10 Years Ago.....2014

Frank Kelly was named as BMMC NI Driver of the Year 2013. The Moy man had been entertaining everyone on the national rally scene in Ireland for years as he hurled his "Baby Blue" Ford Escort Mk.2 around the stages. Kris Meeke was third on the 2014 Monte Carlo Rally with his first full-time drive for the Citroen factory team. The Dungannon man received the NI Motorsport Award for 2013 at the ANICC Prize giving dinner in Armagh where our Chairman John Cunningham also presented Frank with our BMMC NI trophy.

Rally Diary

Sat. 3rd—Sun. 4th February.....Galway International Rally

Round 1 of the 2024 Irish Tarmac Rally Championship. The Galway entry of 130 cars includes 2023 Champion Callum Devine who sticks with his Volkswagen Polo R5 and the Moffett brothers Josh & Sam in a pair of Hyundai i20's. NI champion Jonny Greer is out in his Citroen C3 Rally2 while interesting entries come from two former British Champions. Matt Edwards (who intends to do the full championship) and Keith Cronin are both in Ford Fiesta Rally2's. The legendary Austin MacHale makes a one-off return to the stages in his 2003 Ford Focus WRC.

Round 2 of the ITRC will be the West Cork Rally based in Clonakilty, now a three-day event and running from 15-17th March. The Circuit of Ireland Rally is Round 3 and will be based in Dungannon this year. Just a one-day rally again in 2024 the Circuit takes place on Easter Saturday 30th March. It appears that the Ulster Rally will also be a single day ITRC event in August.

Sat. 17th February.....Echlinville Distillery Stage Rally

Round 1 of the 2024 McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Organised by North Armagh Motor Club this six-stage 90% tarmac event takes place entirely within the

confines of Kirkistown Race Circuit in Co. Down. The traditional championship opener starts at 9am and should finish around 5pm. We are providing marshals. Food will be provided. Sign-on at the circuit on the day or on-line at rallyscore.net

Sat. 24th February.....Samsonas Rally Fivemiletown

Round 1 of the 2024 McGrady Insurance NI Forest Rally Challenge. Organised by Omagh Motor Club this eight-stage gravel rally uses the usual stages south of Fivemiletown in Co. Tyrone, namely Crocknagrally, Jenkin and Doone. We are providing rescue, radio cover and stage marshals. Sign-on on the day in Fivemiletown or on-line at rallyscore.net

Sat. 9th March.....Race & Rally Bishopscourt Stages

Round 2 of the McGrady Insurance Northern Ireland Rally Championship Organised by Ballynahinch & District MC. We are providing timekeepers and stage marshals for this 6-stage sealed surface single venue rally, held entirely within the confines of the Bishopscourt Race Circuit near Downpatrick in South Co. Down. Sign-on at the venue on the day or on-line via rallyscore.net. Food will be provided for all marshals & officials. Rally starts at 9am and finishes at around 5pm.

And finally: (Really) Crap Corner

× **NIGERIAN MAN DIES AND
AUTHORITIES FIND \$27 BILLION
IN HIS APARTMENT.**

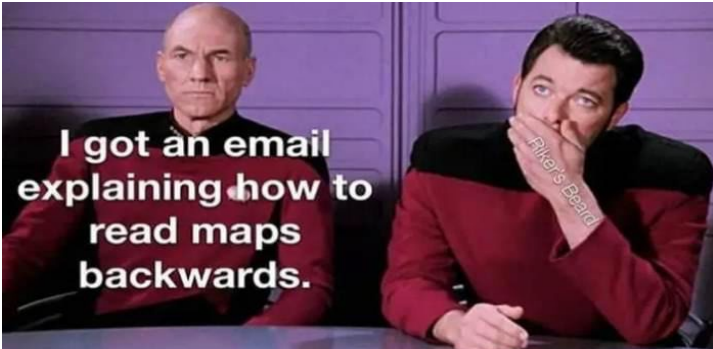


**HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO GIVE IT
AWAY FOR 15 YEARS BUT NO
ONE WOULD RETURN HIS EMAILS**

Irish girls getting a photo with
the DJ on a night out



I went to the Doctor and asked if I could administer my own anesthetic. He said "Go ahead. Knock yourself out".



WHAT PEOPLE THINK GETS YOU OUT OF TICKETS



WHAT ACTUALLY GETS YOU OUT OF TICKETS

