

BRITISH MOTORSPORTS MARSHALS CLUB

NI REGION



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NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024



Cover story

The Circuit of Ireland once again took place over the Easter weekend. Centered in Dungannon, 4 stages were run twice over one day. Long gone are the days of 50 plus stages run over 5 days, from Belfast to Killarney and back again! A big congratulations to Matt Edwards and David Moynihan who were victorious this year. See full report in Robert's RallyBuzz.

40 Years of Prodrive

Best known for the iconic 555 Subaru's which won numerous WTC titles, the Banbury based firm was founded back in 1984 by the now MSUK chairman, David Richards. Their first creation was the Rothmans Porsche Carrera SC RS 911, which won on it's debut in the 1984 Qatar Rally. As Robert explains later on in RallyBuzz, it's Circuit of Ireland debut, in the hands of Henri Toivenen, didn't go so well.



8 of these beasts were supplied to Prodrive, out of a total of 20 built by Porsche, for Toivenen in the European Rally Championship and Saeed Al Hajri in the FIA Middle East Rally Championship.

Producing 280bhp from a 3.0L engine, this should have been an instant success. However, a lack of support from Porsche didn't help. Neither

did the unreliable gearboxes which had to be replaced at virtually every service. Throughout the 40 years, Prodrive have employed David Lapworth as their Technical Director, who has been responsible for the masterful creations. More about Prodrive in future mags, hopefully next month we'll see the 6R4.

WRC



The image shows the 2024 WRC calendar with a dark blue background. At the top left is the WRC logo with 'FIA' and 'FIA WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP' below it. At the top right is '2024 CALENDAR'. The calendar is a table with 12 rows, each representing a rally event. Each row includes the date, rally name, country code, event type, and a flag. A 'JUN' badge is present next to several event names. At the bottom, there is a 'JUN' badge and the text 'EVENT COUNTING TOWARDS THE JUNIOR WRC CHAMPIONSHIP'.

Date	Rally Name (Country)	Event Type	Flag
28/01	Rally Monte-Carlo (MCO)	MIXED	MONACO
18/02	Rally Sweden (SWE) JUN	SNOW	SWEDEN
31/03	Safari Rally Kenya (KEN)	GRAVEL	KENYA
21/04	Croatia Rally (HRV) JUN	TARMAC	CROATIA
12/05	Vodafone Rally de Portugal (PRT)	GRAVEL	PORTUGAL
02/06	Rally Italia Sardegna (ITA) JUN	GRAVEL	ITALY
30/06	ORLEN Rally Poland (POL)	GRAVEL	POLAND
21/07	TET Rally Latvia (LVA)	GRAVEL	LATVIA
04/08	Secto Rally Finland (FIN) JUN	GRAVEL	FINLAND
08/09	EKO Acropolis Rally Greece (GRC) JUN	GRAVEL	GREECE
29/09	Rally Chile Biobío (CHL)	GRAVEL	CHILE
20/10	Central European Rally (AUT/CZE/DEU)	TARMAC	EUROPE
24/11	FORUM8 Rally Japan (JPN)	TARMAC	JAPAN

Some slight amendments to this years WRC Calendar as per the schedule alongside.

Today saw the final stages of Safari Rally Kenya. Now a gravel round of the WRC, it was won in Style by Kalle Rovanpera, by a margin of over a minute. Not bad for a driver who is only doing a partial season, doing a total of 7 events. Next up, a trip to Croatia for all the teams.

Indycar

Last weekend saw an unusual event in Indycar. Taking place at Thermal in California, the Thermal Club boasts it's own race track in a country club setting. To join the club, basically buy an on site property, prices currently start at \$3.8 million. This will give you access to your own multi layout racetrack! The Indycar series turned up for their second race of the season. This was a non-championship scoring round, however offering \$1.75m in prize money with \$0.5m to the winning driver. No tyre changes allowed during the race and during the 2 heat final, so various strategies during the race which was eventually won by Alex Palou, the Spanish driver competing for the Chip Ganassi team.



For those who follow Indycar, HBO are currently showing a documentary about the British Driver, Dan Wheldon, who was tragically killed while competing at the Las Vegas Speedway in 2011. Hard to believe it was 13 years ago. The documentary, Lionheart, is not yet showing in the UK but if you have a VPN you can stream on HBO, or wait for it to appear on Sky soon.

Drones

Drones are becoming much more common these days, it's hard to walk through a park without seeing amateur enthusiasts having a go. Indeed, the previous newsletter featured drone shots of our training day, courtesy of Wright Holland. TV and movie companies are using more and more now, they are much cheaper to use than the previous norm of hiring a helicopter for aerial shots. However, to date their use in motorsport has been limited, due to restrictions in flying over spectators and crowds in general. BTCC / ITV have experimented before at Thruxton, where they were used for aerial footage over a section free from spectators.

However, Red Bull have started upping the stakes in the drone wars. Prior to the start of the F1 season, Red Bull held a test day at Silverstone, where they used the latest drone technology to film Max Verstappen testing the new F1 car.



Capable of hitting speeds of 220mph this lightweight drone, developed by Dutch Drone Gods has a very short battery life when at full speed, only 3 minutes, however DDG are constantly updating and improving. Red Bull are currently in discussion with F1 and the FIA as to how this can be

used in a safe manner. It is suggested that this 2 camera drone may be trialed in non spectator areas at both Shanghai and Austin. We'll hopefully see the results soon, what I've seen so far is incredible.

F1

King Carlos returns! After the first 2 practice sessions in the second round of the year at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Carlos Sainz did not continue due to appendicitis and spent the day before the race having his appendix removed. He returned to the circuit on race day to see his very able replacement Ollie Bearman finish in a very respectable 7th position on his F1 debut. There was a lot of doubt as to whether he would be fit for round 3 in Melbourne, but he was, and he was

bloody quick throughout practice and qualified on the front row beside the usual polesitter, Verstappen.



MV made his usual quick getaway but on lap 2 ran wide and Sainz got past. Seconds later, smoke could be seen coming from the rear right of the Red Bull and he pitted immediately. As he entered the pit, his rear right brake exploded

and his record breaking winning streak came to a sudden halt. Sainz could not be caught and drove the perfect race to claim his 3rd F1 win. Hard to believe this lad doesn't have a drive for next year!

Staying with F1, the controversial 2008 season is back in the spotlight. If you remember, Felipe Massa crossed the finish line in a very wet end to the race in Brazil, believing he had just become World champion for Ferrari on his home turf. However, after Massa crossed the line Lewis Hamilton managed to pass Timo Glock on the last corner to move up one place and take his first world title. Now the controversy has nothing to do with Brazil (where Timo Glock is still Public Enemy number 1!). It goes back to the Singapore race in September. Massa led the start of the 15th lap, however, shenanigans were afoot behind him. Alonso, driving for Renault that season was a fair distance behind, when his team mate, Nelson Piquet Jr crashed into the wall, bringing out an immediate safety car. Alonso dived into the pits for pretty much a free pit stop while Massa had to complete almost a full lap, dropping him down the field and losing him vital points in the title race. At the following season's Hungarian Grand Prix, Renault announced that they would not be retaining Piquet Jr's services for the following season. He immediately retaliated by claiming that Flavio Briatore and Pat Symonds at Renault had asked him to deliberately crash to allow Alonso to pit – no blame was laid at Alonso's door. After an FIA investigation these claims were confirmed and Briatore and Symonds received lengthy bans from F1, which were later overturned in a French court. Massa felt that had this not have occurred he would have got enough points to win the Driver's title that year, however, as the trophy had already been handed out at the end of the season he had no recourse according to FIA rules. Massa, is now taking the FIA, Formula 1 and Bernie Ecclestone to court in London, claiming that they were aware of this

before the end of the season and could have overturned results in his favour. However, he states that he is aware that it is too late to be awarded the title but wishes the powers that be to be held accountable for not taking appropriate action at the time. Interestingly, Bernie Ecclestone agrees that he is doing things the right way.

Fantasy F1

Scores so far after 3 rounds:

Name	<u>Bahrain</u>	<u>Saudi Arabia</u>	<u>Australia</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>China</u>	<u>Miami</u>	<u>Qatar</u>	<u>Abu Dhabi</u>	<u>Total</u>
Wright	29	25	7						61
Robert	25	21	14						60
Paul	24	26	5						55
Daniel	23	21	10						54
Rab	10	14	27						51
Chris	22	17	9						48
James	20	25	1						46
Elizabeth	12	8	8						28
Rory	0	11	13						24
Ian	5	7	5						17

Next race this weekend at Japan

Kirkistown Race Meeting



Saturday 23rd April saw the first Race meeting of 2024 at Kirkistown. By the end of the day I think we were all glad for the marshals huts. A very windy day with short heavy rain showers made the racing a bit more fun though. With a good field of Scottish minis and the

largest field of Vees I've seen in a long time we had some excellent racing, not to mention the Kirkistown Minis and Fiesta, saloons, FFord, Roadsports and Global lights – albeit far too small a starting grid to be entertaining unfortunately. However, it was good to be back and I had Ben and Vanessa with me on post – both at their first car race meeting, with Vanessa coming from the world of Road Racing bike marshalling and Ben attending his first car race at 16 years old. Thankfully both are now well versed in waving flags which was a big relief to my “war wounds”.

Next race meeting for cars and Superkarts is Saturday 27th April – Keep in touch with Chief Marshal Fel Mclroy for sign on times and a timetable closer to the event. Before that, the Croft Hillclimb is on 13th April and again Fel is keen for volunteers. To keep up to date with all other events, visit the ANICC website at www.motorsportni.org and navigate to the calendar page.

(Scottish minis photo courtesy of Gary Craig and reproduced with permission).

Berger's Ferrari finally recovered

During the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola in Italy in 1995, thieves someone managed to bag themselves 2 Ferrari road cars, belonging to the then Ferrari drivers including the Austrian, Gerhard Berger.



The red F512M, worth a cool £350,000 disappeared and was not heard of again for 28 years.



In January this year Ferrari conducted a routine check on a Ferrari being sold to a US buyer through a UK broker. They immediately flagged the vehicle as being stolen – from Imola in 1995!

Ferrari contacted the Met Police who launched an investigation. It was found that shortly after the theft, the car was moved to Japan, where it stayed unnoticed until it was brought to the UK last year. The Met's Organised Vehicle Crime Team were able to secure the vehicle to stop it being exported to the US as was planned. It is believed that this was the work of an Organised

Crime Gang. The second Ferrari is still outstanding.

Robert's RallyBuzz

Jonny's Late Late Show @ Bishops court

Jonny Greer was the red-hot-favourite to win the Race & Rally Stages at Bishops court last month. Indeed the current NI Champion eventually won the rally, but it wasn't easy. Donegal men Aaron McLaughlin and Darren Curran in their VW Polo GTI R5 led from the first stage and stayed there until a slight mistake on the penultimate test allowed second placed Greer and his co-driver Niall Burns to get ahead by 1.9 seconds. Jonny kept his Citroen C3 Rally2 in front and was 3.7 seconds ahead of Aaron at the end of the eighth and final

stage. This was Greer's fourth straight win at Bishopscourt, all of those victories in Citroen C3's.

It was a long, cold and very busy day for us marshals. Having arrived at the Co.Down race circuit for 07.30, Goff, Nigel and myself covered all eight stage starts. We started the first car at 09.03 and the last one at 17.09. As well as timekeeping, there were BMMC/BRMC members covering stage marshalling. The only breaks in the action were when the stages were changed round allowing us to catch a short lunch break. Although it was dry for most of the event, we did have a rain shower midway through.

The single-venue, sealed-surface, Bishopscourt event, was organised as usual by Ballynahinch and District Motor Club. This year, subtle changes at the race circuit meant there were no stage "merges", meaning that competitors were not impeded or "held up" by other cars as they tackled the eight single-lap-four-and-a-half-mile tests. Due to these changes there were no complaints nor indeed any major incidents. The total stage mileage was 35.84 miles, almost exactly the same as in 2023 when there were six two-lap stages totalling 35.80 miles.

There were 84 starters (19 Rally2/R5 cars) and 65 finishers on this the second round of the 2024 McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Derek McGarrity, third on round one, was a non-starter and Kirkistown runner-up Stuart Biggerstaff's Fiesta R5 ground to a halt on SS3. All this left Kyle White/Sean Topping third in their Hyundai i20 R5, 36.8 seconds behind McLaughlin. Philip Allen/Dale Furniss finished fourth in their VW Polo GTI R5 and Jason Dickson/Martin Brady fifth in a Ford Fiesta Rally2. Best 2-wheel-drive car was the Darrian T90 GTR+ of Barry Morris and Martin Harte who were 6th overall. In the Nissan Micra Challenge there were 8 starters and they all finished, with Steve Whitford and Jonny Hart taking the win and finishing 28th overall in the process.

Going into the next round of the NI Championship, the Claudy-based Maiden City Stage Rally on April 27th, Jonny Greer leads with a maximum of 60 points while Aaron McLaughlin is next on 54 and Jason Dixon third with 51 points.

Don't forget; highlights of the Race & Rally Bishopscourt Stages can be found on the dedicated McGrady Insurance Motorsport UK 2024 Northern Ireland Rally Championship channel on YouTube. There is excellent separate coverage

of each round of the Northern Ireland Nissan Micra Challenge, also on YouTube.

Edwards Wins Compact Circuit

Round 3 of the 2024 Irish Tarmac Championship, the Circuit of Ireland Rally took place on Easter Saturday 30th March. Just eight stages (4 repeated) totalling 67 miles in and around a service park in Dungannon, Co.Tyrone were on offer. In fact the event was almost identical in competitive miles to last year's rally, based not far away in Cookstown. The stages this year hadn't been used for a number of years.

Running without a title sponsor, the organising Ulster Automobile Club decided to stick with the compact format for 2024 and as a direct result they had attracted a large entry of 102 competitors. Looking forward, the UAC hope to join forces with a Southern Irish club and bring the "Circuit of Ireland" element back into what was an iconic event in the past.



The rally was a great success, with a huge battle for the win between Welshman Matt Edwards and Keith Cronin from Ballylickey in Co.Cork in a pair of Ford Fiesta Rally2's. At one time there was only a tenth of a second between them as they shared fastest times with 4-apiece on the eight

tests. In the end Edwards and his Irish co-driver David Moynihan came through to take the victory by 14.4 seconds from Cronin and Mikie Galvin after an inspired tyre choice for the second loop of stages. Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes finished third in a Citroen C3 Rally2. Cathan McCourt/Brian Hoy were fourth and Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy fifth, both of them also in Fiesta Rally2 machines. Top 2WD finishers were Jason Black/Karl Egan in sixth position with their Toyota Starlet. There were 91 starters and only 56 made it to the Dungannon finish after a challenging day's rallying in the narrow and twisty lanes of South County Tyrone. Leading retirements included Callum Devine, Jonny Greer and Desi Henry who all succumbed to the tricky and slippery conditions.

BMMC/BRMC members were out in force on the Circuit of Ireland. We covered rescue, timekeeping, radio points, stage marshalling plus other official duties on the event. I was acting as finish radio on SS4/8 Ivy Hill, the final 7.32 mile stage in each loop. The weather was typical for an early Easter, we had sunshine, hail, thunder and rain but both runs ran without any problems. Despite stage four starting some twenty minutes late, by the time the cars returned for the final stage eight the rally was back on schedule.

British Rally Championship

Former ERC champion, Chris Ingram won round one of the 2024 Probite Motorsport UK British Rally Championship. The VW Polo GTI R5 driver and co-driver Alex Kihurani finished the closed-road North West Stages In Lancashire ahead of Ulster crew and JWRC champions William Creighton and Liam Regan in their Ford Fiesta Rally2. Meirion Evans was third in the first British Isles appearance of the new Toyota Yaris GR Rally2. The revitalised 2024 BRC had a massive 130 starters on the North West Stages, no less than 44 crews in top class Rally2/R5 cars! Amazingly 102 finished the 8-stage (57.5 miles) event. Of course the British Rally Championship will NOT be visiting Ireland this year, unfortunately.

Looking Back

40 YEARS AGO

The five-day 1984 Rothmans Circuit of Ireland Rally (19-24 April) was supposed to be a benefit for the Rothmans Porsche 911 SC RS driven by Henri Toivonen. It didn't turn out that way. The rally started in Belfast on Good Friday with around 80 cars. After a two-night halt in Waterford and 54 stages later, 36 cars finished back in Belfast on Easter Tuesday. Billy Coleman and Ronan Morgan eventually won the rally in their Dealer Opel Team Ireland Manta 400, but only after nine of the top-ten cars retired. It was one of the toughest Circuit of Ireland's ever!

Jimmy McRae set the early pace, but crashed on the second run over Hamiltons Folly on day one (I was spectating close by). He consequently retired his AC Delco Manta with a blown head gasket. Bertie Fisher's Manta then led for nine stages as the rally headed south before he too retired with a broken half-shaft.



Henri Toivonen took over in front for 15 stages, but an accident while taking part in a charity kart race on Sunday evening in Waterford left the Finnish superstar with leg injuries. Henri continued, but dropped to third place and then eventually retired his Porsche after SS44 in Co. Sligo when the gearbox completely failed after he “crashed” the gears due to his injuries. I remember timekeeping on the finish of SS40 in the Partry Mountains on the Galway/Mayo border late on Monday night. When Toivonen arrived I asked him how things were going, his response was quote “I have only one gear left and it is fifth!” The extraordinary driver was still ninth fastest on that classic 11 mile stage.

After that it was an almighty battle for the lead between Austin McHale and DOTI Manta team-mate Billy Coleman through Mayo, Sligo and Donegal which was only resolved when the leading McHale car suffered a blown engine with just three stages left to run! Coleman was then able to cruise to the win in Belfast on the Tuesday afternoon. Ernest Kidney was second in his Sunbeam Lotus and former World Hot

Rod Champion Davy Evans (on his first ever rally) third in a Nissan 240RS.



Rothmans sponsored the Circuit of Ireland for six years (1983-88) but failed to win the classic event with any of their cars.

Rally Diary

Sat. 27th April.....Eakin Bros. BJT Stage Rally

Round 3 of the 2024 McGrady Insurance NI Rally Championship. The first of three closed-road events, this one is organised by Maiden City Motor Club. The

action takes place over three stages in the Dunamanagh and Claudy areas. Sponsored once again by Eakin Bros. Brian James Trailers. There are six stages totalling 41 miles, SS1/4 Lisbunny SS2/5 Altishane SS3/6 Calhoun's Dip. Rally HQ and the service park will be at Robinsons Concrete in Claudy. Of course BMMC/BRMC will be providing rescue, radio cover and other marshals on the day.

Sat. 18th May.....GO! Tour of the Sperrins

Round 4 of the 2024 McGrady Insurance NI Rally Championship. Based in Magherafelt and organised by Magherafelt & District MC. There are due to be three repeated closed-road stages. Once again BMMC/BRMC will provide rescue, radio cover and other marshals on the event. More details next month.

💩😂 CRAP CORNER 😂💩



Dad Jokes
@Dadsaysjokes

I went to the beekeeper to get 12 bees.
He counted and gave me 13. "Sir, you
gave me an extra."
"That's a freebie."







Why alien abductions happen only at night

