

## **It was hot in the heat**

After the cancelation of the scheduled fifth round of the SW Adair Tyres Northern Ireland Sprint Championship round in St Angelo Airport Enniskillen on 04 June the championship was down a round. However the 500MRCI agreed to host the Reserve Championship date on 09 July and it turned out to be a sizzler of an event!!

With an entry of 68 starters and the sun splitting the trees, and boiling most of the competitors, the weather was up there with the action on the track. There were several competitors on Saturday evening with faces like beacons and a few of our more “bald” competitors were suffering like a solar panel in the desert. Either way we won’t complain about a bit of heat at Kirkistown.

Steven Gault was the man to beat after the first timed runs as he was a mere 0.21secs faster than Tony Greenan in his more modern Dallara. Ryan McGimspey was also on a mission as he was third after first practice. Rob Dwane put a stonker of a time of 106.78 secs on the board during his second timed run and this turned out to be the time to beat. Indeed Steven Gault tried hard but was unable to beat his first timed run time of 113.26.

Tony Greenan also pushed hard but was unable to beat his first time of 113.47 although he proved to be super consistent setting times of 113.74 and 113.78 in his remaining 2 runs!! You must remember that Tony is driving an out and out race car, which was competing in Mondello the following weekend in the Formula Boss championship. Tony’s car is heavier as it runs in full race trim and is also running a restrictor. This just shows how well Tony was pushing!! Ryan McGimpsy drove like a demon to finish fourth overall with a fastest time of 118.29 secs.

In terms of driving like a demon David Strain made another of his legendary re-appearances and proved to us all that he hasn’t lost the knack. Despite only managing 2 timed runs, and neither of these were trouble free David still managed to pull off a class winning 133.55 sec run which put him 18<sup>th</sup> overall. You have to remember that this is in an 8v Peugeot 205 GTI!!!

Andy Hawthorne also decided to spruce things up a bit and bolted a set of slicks onto his road legal Westfield SEi and ran in class 7 for the day. With David Hawthorne on Holiday only Steven was there to keep Andy’s feet on the ground, but he simply was no match for Andy who won the class by 2.5secs, finished ninth overall and second in the specialist category in a road legal car!! It was also good to see David McMullan back out again, this time in Scotts Reis Aero. Having never driven the car before David improved steadily and wasn’t far from the mark at the end of the day!!

Once again Ethan Faulkner was the man on a mission in his little 1000cc Jedi. Ethan wrestled the car to 5<sup>th</sup> overall a mere 3.19 secs behind the vastly more powerful and experienced Ryan McGimpsey. Once again this is an incredible drive on Ethan’s behalf.

Working down the time sheets it was great to see the beautiful Historic spec Escort MK 2 of Jimmy Mills out to play. Admittedly Jimmy was only out to do a bit of

testing in the car but his car did draw a lot of attention in the paddock as it simply is gorgeous!! Other interesting cars on the day included Aaron Vance who left his Renault Clio outside one evening, having sprinkled it with some of Kathy's fairy dust and when he awoke the next morning it had morphed into a BMW M3!! An M3, for that Matter which Aaron had no difficulties adapting to.

Andrew Blair "borrowed" his father Bills immaculate historic Mk1 Mini and drove the wheelnuts off it, even managing to pip Gerry McGarrity in the process. Having driven it so hard it will be interesting to see if Bill will ever allow him out in it again!! Long-time competitor, although usually in some form of locater field / seven type of car, Mark Crawford debuted his new Lotus Elise which he had purchased. Mark also had a good run and promises to return to play again soon. One other car which simply cannot be missed was the wonderful famous white Escort Mk2 of Peter McKinley. This is the famous "scort" which was made famous throughout the world on YouTube by Simon McKinley who used to do things in this escort that just seemed impossible. If you haven't seen videos of Simon, in the "scort" then you've never seen motorsport!! The car also still carries Simons name on the door as a reminder to us all of the talent that was Simon McKinley, a man who is still missed amongst us all.

In terms of the Categories we will start with the Road going category where the car in front was once again a BMW however in his case it was a new unfamiliar name at the top of the pile. Aaron Vance debuted his new BMW M3 and is bound to have shaken both Connor and Andrew Robb with his superb pace on his debut. Aaron finished a whopping 28<sup>th</sup> overall and ahead of Gerry McGarrity who took the honours of second in the road going category on the day. Third place went to the hard charging Paul Forsythe who is really starting to come to terms with his wee Peugeot 106. Even with today's results Conor Hamill lead the road going category ahead of Andrew Robb with Crawford Ewing third.

Modified Category championship honours on the day went to Oliver Cormican who had a rocky start to the day before proving to us all that he hadn't lost any of his pace during the timed runs. Indeed Oliver was having so much fun that he opted not to do his third run as he was afraid that he may get over excited somewhere!! Second modified car home was David Strain in his Peugeot 205 gti but sadly David isn't championship registered so second placed pints went to the hard charging Ken Colbert who was the sole Colbert competing today. I jokingly asked if Stephen was giving him a chance, but if you know Ken you can imagine the answer lol!! Third placed points went to Raymond Johnston in his beautiful Mk2 Escort. After today Stephen Colbert still leads the modified Championship ahead of Oliver Cormican with Ken Colbert third.

In the specialist Category Jim Hutchinson took the category win in his RSR Escort on his way to finishing 3<sup>th</sup> overall. As always the ever consistent Jim was within the same second on all his runs – Jim simply doesn't believe in settling in and getting faster each run, hes flat to the mat from the start!! Second in the specialist class went to Andy Hawthorne on his first day with slicks on his car. Andy also finished 9<sup>th</sup> overall as well. This is impressive when you consider his car has a heavier car engine fitted, as opposed to the lighter bike engines which others run in similar cars. Also the Westfield was not set up for slicks so it was a learning experience every run. Third in

the category went to Patrick Roche who is really coming to terms with his RSR Escort and getting faster every day!! In terms of the championship Jim Hutchinson is in charge at the top with a tight three way battle behind him which see Scott McMullan leading Steven Hawthorne by 1 point and David Hawthorne only 2 points behind Steven.

In the Heaslip Ladies Challenge Emma Campbell took another challenge win ahead of Kathy McDade and Amy Hawthorne was third. Amy has a new car, another Renault Clio, but this one is caged and now runs in class 6B. Therefore Amy`s conversion factor is back to 1 again under the challenge rules. Once Amy has completed 3 events she will be back on a par with the rest of the girls. Challenge trophy wise Emma now leads overall ahead of Kathy McDade with Sheryl McBride third ahead of Amy and Catherine Donnelly. With 11 points separating first placed Emma Campbell and fourth placed Amy Hawthorne dropped scores will come into play here as both Sheryl and Amy have missed a round so far whereas the other girls haven`t!

In fairness it`s hard to just pin point a few people in the report when really every driver out there deserves a special mention, but all in all it was a superb day with superb weather and no one left the circuit without having smiled at least once during the course of the day.

In terms of the remainder of the season we will be getting back on track again with round 6 of the SW Adair Tyres Northern Ireland Sprint Championship with the next event at Kirkistown on 07 August. This is of course the British Championship double header event when the fastest sprinters in the UK come together at Kirkistown, With the smaller number of large single seaters competing in the Motorsport UK Sprint Championship this year, I predict a local winner, but then again I`m always going to be biased towards my competitors!!

See you all then

Now for the class battles:

### **Class 1 – Road Cars up to 1700cc**

Paul Forsythe took another class win with a 146.97sec run finishing ahead of Alan Wallace in his Honda Del sol (154.00 secs) and third place went to Kathy McDade. Class 1 has been close this season and all of the class 1 cars are getting faster which is great to see. Championship wise Alan has a 3 point lead over Paul Forsythe (who has already missed 1 round) and Mark Brogan is third 3 points further back and with 2 missed rounds. Kathy McDade has a strong fourth place and another good result could see her leap frog up the points table. It`s amazing just how powerful fairy dust can be!!

### **Class 2a – Road cars over 1700cc**

This was a class of 2 sides today. On the positive side it was great to see Tom Lawther back out again after he has missed a couple of rounds lately. Tom and his big Rover are a very positive aspect of the paddock. On the negative side there were only 3 cars running in class 2a today which is very unusual, and in no way linked to Toms

return!! Aaron Vance debuted his new BMW M3 and showed us all the potential that this package now has by taking the class win. Aaron was never much off the pace in his Renault Clio but this car puts him right in the mix. Rumour has it Aaron Vance left his Renault Clio outside one evening in the rain, having sprinkled it with some of Kathys fairy dust, and when he awoke the next morning it had morphed into a BMW M3!! Second on the day went to Ian Thompson who is starting to tame the Beast of a 3.2 Porsche Boxter which Ian throws about like a matchbox car. Third in class went to Tom Lawther who taught Ian Thompson and most of the paddock how to throw a car around. How Tom continues to make that SD1 go so fast whilst being so sideways is beyond me. I do know that when I saw Tom coming out of the front chicane he needed a helmet extension to try to contain his massive smile!! Championship wise Conor Hamill still leads Andrew Robb and Crawford Ewing is third ahead of Aaron Vance.

### **Class 2b – Road cars Mazda MX5**

Paul Magill once again was the man to beat in this class today which had 4 participants. Paul took the honours by 4.5secs from Barry McCann with Mark Smyth third ahead of Craig Smyth. As always the Mazda's proved to be incredible to watch as they don't seem to know how to lift off for any of the chicanes, especially Paul Magill, who I'm convinced doesn't have a brake pedal in his car!! Championship wise Paul has a 9 point lead over Adam Brogan with Conor O'Boyle third ahead of Barry McCann. Also congratulations to Paul Magill on the arrival on 15/07/22 of his new daughter Zoe Magill. Congratulations to Paul, Ann and the entire Magill family. Will Zoe be the first female competitor in our Heaslip Challenge trophy in an MX5?

### **Class 3 – Road cars specialist Production cars 4wd**

The long straights of Kirkistown really suited Alfred Robb in his beautiful Yaris GR. Alfred was impossible to beat in class 3 despite the best efforts of Paul and Tony Grady who finished second and third respectively in their dual driven Subaru Imprezza. As always the Grady boys were having a ball but Paul took the upper hand today, and had to buy the chips on the way home. These 2 fellas are the life and soul of the paddock and if there's any banter going on, rest assured they are either in the middle of it or close to it!! Championship wise Alfred has a 7 point lead ahead of Paul Grady with Tony Grady third. When you look at the championship points it shows that on average Paul appears to be the fast Grady brother, but I wouldn't say that too close to Tony lol

### **Class 5 – Road cars specialist Production cars**

Class 5 sadly is now reaping the benefits of the ridiculous Motorsport UK requirement for all road going cars to be taxed as now only 2 cars are competing in class 5 due to this requirement. Richard Munnis proved to be the fastest in class once again as he and Davis had a good tussle amongst themselves all day. Davis now seems to have got to grips with his MNR Vortex and all 3 of his runs were within the same second, indeed there was only 0.42 secs between his fastest and slowest run. When you look at Richard Munnis he also was super consistent and there was only 0.40 seconds between his fastest and slowest runs. Championship wise Richard now has a considerable lead in the class championship and with Andy Hawthorne now

moving to class 7 with his car, it is unlikely that Richard can be caught, but ..... never say never.

### **Class 6a Modified Cars – Series Production cars 8v**

Class 6a once again was thin in numbers with many of the regular competitors missing for various reasons. Karl Johnston once again took the honours with a class win and a new course record on the day as he won by 2.72 secs ahead of Chris Nichol in his mini. Local man Jonathan Smith was third in his Escort Mk 2 and is having a ball competing. Having spoken to Jonathan he is having more fun in the car than he thought he would have and is already been enquiring about what permitted modifications he can make to catch the minis. Championship wise Karl has a 10 point lead ahead of new comer Chris Nichol and Gary Milligan remains third.

### **Class 6b Modified Cars – Series Production cars 16v**

As has been the norm over the last 3 or so years, the name Colbert adorned the top of the class timesheets, but as of late it has been Ken Colbert as opposed to Stephen, who sadly due to work commitments, has missed our last couple of rounds. Ken took a convincing class victory as well as being 20<sup>th</sup> overall in the family Sunbeam. However Tommy Gardiner from Galway pushed Ken hard all day and at one point Ken was seen checking and adjusting tyre pressures to try and eek that extra tenth. Third on the day went to Andrew Straney who was on his own in the Astra. Local rumour would tell you that Andrews usual sparring partner Rudy Tate was banned from driving the Astra again after borrowing it for Carncastle and forgetting to take his foot off the throttle from the start line to the finish line!! James Lightbody took fourth in his BMW Mini and headed off Dessie Martin by a comfortable 2.42 secs. Championship wise Ken Colbert has regained the rains at the top of the championship from his son Stephen. Dessie Martin is only 3 points behind Stephen and 2 ahead of James Lightbody. I predict that this will be a lose run class come the last round.

### **Class 7 Modified Specialist Production Cars 2WD.**

Well, Andy Hawthorne left here today proving, not that he needed to, that he is the fastest Hawthorne. Despite running the car for the first time on slicks and without making any set up changes in his heavier Car engine Westfield Andy took the class win by 2.5 Seconds from son Steven Hawthorne, with times which would've put him on the same pace as the ex-fastest Hawthorne (David). Steen was second in class and had a tight battle with Scott McMullan who had a frustrating day despite finishing only 0.31 secs behind Steven. Fourth on the day went to Trevor Roberts who had a frustrating day as he tries to adapt to his new Westfield Megabusa which has not been kind to him this year. David McMullan made a very welcome return to the class in Son Scotts Reis Aero and proved that he hadn't forgotten anything as he pushed hard to finish ahead of newcomer Robert Fitzgerald. Interestingly the top 5 of this class were separated by only 5.9 secs with the top 3 split by only 2.81 and 2<sup>nd</sup> to fourth by a mere 1.15 secs. Close or what!! Championship wise Scott leads the class by 1 point from Steven Hawthorne who has 6 points over third placed David. Andy is fourth ahead of Graham Boyce, Robbo and Trevor Roberts. Once dropped scores are counted this is going to be very close at the top, whilst Scott will be there or thereabouts the battle between the Hawthorne's will be close, and with Andy giving his

“young bucks” a couple of events head start it will be interesting how much he can reel the 2 upstarts in!! Get the popcorn ready for this one!

### **Class 8 Sports Libre cars Special Saloons**

Class 8 again is filled with RSR Escorts and 3 of the 5 which have competed this year were out to play. Jim Hutchinson once again proved to be the man to beat as he lapped super consistently. Jim was so consistent with his times that we had to check that it really was him driving and not a robot!! Second went to Patrick Roche who really is dialling his RSR Escort in and he was closer to Jim today than he has ever been getting the gap down to 4.65 secs. Sadly Patrick had an engine glitch the following weekend at Mondello which hopefully is a simple fix as I can't wait to see if Patrick can reel Jim in anymore. Third in class went to one of the most relaxed men in the paddock in Richard O`Mahoney. Richard as usual was full of craic all day and laughed and joked his way round the paddock smiling from ear to ear. I swear that if he could convert his fun to BHP no one could touch him, even Jim!! Now if we could only get Patrick, Jim and Richard out on the same day as Rory (Grandad) Stephens and Gerard O`Connell, we would have one of the best classes in the country!! So far we have seen them all out, but not together. Come on fellas make this happen, you know you want to!! Championship wise Jim leads the way from Richard O`Mahoney with Patrick Roche third ahead of Rory, Gerard and Seamas Hobbs.

### **Class 9a Sports Libre cars Saloons and GT`s**

As mentioned above Peter McKinley brought the famous “scort” out to play and dominated class 9 today as he threw the escort around the track with armfuls of opposite lock and bucket fulls of fun! Second in class went to returning competitor Mark Crawford in his Lotus with Jason Frazer finishing third ahead of Emma Campbell. It's great to see so many different cars entering class 9a this year but like with class 8 we just can't seem to get them all out on the same day. Championship wise Jason Frazer has overtaken Emma on points to lead class 9a by 1 point from Emma. Third is Dan Campbell who leads Damien Corey, David Frances and Garry Campbell.

### **Class 10 Sports libre Cars – small capacity Rally cars**

Class 10 has taken a bit of a revival this season for a couple of reasons. Sadly Dermot O`Hagan suffered a mechanical issue early on which side-lined him from the get go, but it was still a super close class. David Strain made a welcome return with his little Peugeot 205 and despite having a disaster of a day which resulted in him only getting 1 clear run he set the pace early on and couldn't be caught. David pipped second placed Raymond Johnston by a mere 0.38 seconds which is superbly close. Third went to Alan Roddy who is relishing the challenge of having some competition at last. Alan has had to up his pace to keep himself in the mix and is having more fun this year than ever before. He and Dermot have been having a superb battle between them all season but sadly Dermot was unable to continue this today. Andrew Strain finished fourth and is also finding his feet in his wee 205. It's true to say that the extra competition in class 10 has pushed everyone to up their game for this season, and everyone is having more fun at each event which encourages more people to

participate! Championship wise Alan Roddy tops the tables from Dermot O`Hagan and Andrew Strain leapfrogs to third ahead of Raymond Johnston, Brian little and Joshua Baird.

### **Class 11 Sports libre Cars – large capacity Rally cars**

Class 11 was a bit thin on the ground today but there are still cars out there to compete. Sadly Stewart Strain had other commitments which ruled him out but he sent a deputy, in the form of his brother Noel Strain to keep his seat on the podium warm. Noel who was third in the class last season in his BMW mini took the class win ahead of Derek Robinson who is coming on leaps and bounds in his Talbot Sunbeam. Hopefully Jaye Nevin will finally get his 205 back out again for the next event to continue with the battle that he was having in the class last season. Championship wise Dereks win now puts him 7 points ahead of Stewart Strain in class 11. This will be a close run in championship wise as the season continues.

### **Class 12 4WD sports Libre Cars**

Finally Oliver Cormican had some company again in class 12 when Adrian Kielt finally got his car back out after a horrendous run of bad luck of late. Oliver took the class win and only completed 2 of his 3 timed runs due to openly admitting to having so much fun in the car that he was afraid of making a silly, fun induced error somewhere. Fair play to Oliver to have the wit to put the car on the trailer rather than making an error. Adrian also had a good day's craic in the car and was getting faster as the day progressed. Hopefully he will do some more events as it's true to say he had well and truly got the bug back. With Ryan Murrays car now ready to go again and the Lancashire brothers in the background class 12 is gathering up to be a good class again. If we could get them all onto the grid at the same time it would be a 4wd horsepower fest!! Championship wise Oliver cormican has a 15 point lead over Ian Lancashire with Adrian Kielt third

### **Class 14 small Capacity Racing Cars**

Ryan McGimpsey once again proved to be the man to beat in class 14 and he lead from the outset ultimately finishing 4<sup>th</sup> overall in the process. Ryan was ultra-consistent in his times and as always proved to be a true sportsman when he donated spares in an attempt to help out a fellow competitor who was having mechanical issues on the day. Second in class went to Ethan Faulkner who proved to be find of the season this year. Ethan plugged away at his times and got down to ta 121.48 secs and fifth overall. Don't forget that Ethan's car is drastically under powered at only 1000 cc compared to Ryan's 1300 CC car. George Stevenson took third on the day in class 14 in his force PT. George is pushing hard in the little car as he gets to grips with it and is becoming faster and more competitive with every mile driven. Sadly George made an extremely rare mistake which meant he only managed 1 timed run, but rest assured he will be back at the next event going even faster. John McNamara rounded out the class in his 1.3 Mega pin which he is now finally getting to work for him. John Donnelly has been helping John with the car and it is progressing in the right direction. Championship wise George Stevenson still leads the class from Ethan

Faulkner and Ran McGimpsey but with dropped scores etc to come into play this class will run to the end of the season and I don't fancy predicting a winner.

### **Class 15 large Capacity Racing Cars**

Despite their being a smaller than average entry for class 15 today with only 4 competitors it was still a great class. Rob Dwane powered his way to the class win and fastest overall, and a wee birdie tells me he had his eye on the class record. Unfortunately he didn't get it this time but I'm told he will be pushing hard for it at the next sprint. Second on the day went to Steven Gault who drove the wheels of his Dallarra to get down to a 113.26 sec run, which was a mere 0.21 secs faster than third placed Tony Greenan in his more modern, race spec Dallara F317. Fourth in class went to probably the most experienced driver in the paddock Robert McGimpsey who once again was out having a ball in his turbo charged RMG. Championship wise Rob Dwane is still the man to beat ahead of Tim Woodside and Steven Gault and the class championship reflects the overall championship as well.

### **Class 16a Historic Road Cars**

Andrew Blair proved to me the man to beat today in his father's beautiful Mk 1 mini as he strolled to a class win by a mere 0.02 secs from Gerry McGarrity. Andrew drove well and had a fantastic tussle with Gerry and only beat him on his last run. Gerry sadly was only able to complete 1 timed run today and I'm sure, had he done more he would've pushed Andrew Harder. Third on the day went to David Cochrane whom has finally got his mk1 Escort back again and he picked up where he left off. Mervyn Getty was best of the rest in fourth ahead of Ian McCullough and Davy Young. In terms of the class championship Gerry McGarrity is still the man to beat with Bill Blair, Mervyn Getty and David Cochrane all trying to keep up.

### **Class 16b Historic Saloons and Sports cars**

Today we had a 4 car entry in class 16b which is great to see especially with Jimmy Mills bringing out his beautiful Ford Escort for a bit of fun. Jimmy took the class win ahead of Trevor McIlroy in his new lightweight Sebring Sprite and Robert Chambers in his Ford Anglia. Sadly Robert only managed 1 run after a mechanical woe sidelined him. In terms of the class championship Robert Coulter still leads the way in class 16b and he is well on track to win his first ever championship in any form of motorsport which will be a great achievement.