



Newsletter September 2005

INTRODUCTION by Bruce Lyle, Chairman

MSA COUNCIL – NEW RALLY TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

For many rally competitors it has been an anxious time over the past few weeks since the news was leaked that the MSA were planning to introduce a number of changes relating to the Technical Regulations affecting many types of vehicles running in Scotland.

At last week's Council Meeting it was agreed that these proposals, which are seen to relate specifically to safety for the FIA, should go out to consultation. There will plainly be a lot of discussion expected and the Technical and Rallies Committees fully expect considerable input from those concerned. Following the consultation period the amended (if they are to be) proposals will be put before the Council meeting in June 2006. Only if approved will they be ratified for implementation in 2007. It should be remembered that rallying has for many years been intended to be production car based primarily for reasons of safety.

RALLY SCOTLAND – A THREE DAY HIGHLAND CHALLENGE

Following on the success of the Lombard Revival Rally last November, we have spent some considerable time looking at the possibility of bringing back the "good old days" of the Scottish Rally, before even it took to the forests.

We have finally come up with a proposal that fits the bill. The event, to be run on 20, 21 and 22 April 2006 will be run to the same Endurance Rally regulations as the Lombard Revival: in particular two-wheel drive cars with up to 1400cc petrol/1900cc diesel non-turbocharged engines. We plan a start in Stirling – we hope at the Castle - then on to Knockhill for some tests before heading for Aviemore at the end of the first day. Friday and Saturday will have loops of around 400 miles, of which around one-third will be competitive tests, including some forest usage. Saturday night will feature a decent party at Aviemore, with competitors dispersing on the Sunday.

Alongside the Endurance cars will run a Historic event, generally following the same route and undertaking some less demanding tests. The route will encompass castles, distilleries, stately homes and as many "haggis and tartan" type locations as possible. We see the bulk of the entry coming from south of the border so we want to make it attractive to them with an entry fee package including bed and breakfast at Aviemore.

Once the route is firmed up a bit we intend to be in touch with local clubs, a number of which have already declared an interest, to help put this fun event together. The organising team is headed by Roy Campbell who knows a thing or two about this kind of event (remember the Highland Fling?)

POLICE FIVE

As one of its "public" activities, RSAC Motorsport is represented at regular liaison meetings with the Association of Chief Police Officers (Scotland), or ACPOS for short. At a recent meeting in Perth, we were able to put on the agenda the question of new legislation in England covering corporate manslaughter, the likelihood of similar laws being introduced in Scotland and their relevance to organisers of motor sport events. Several Scottish clubs had expressed concern that they might be open to prosecution in the event of a fatal accident.

The following extract from the minutes summarises the discussion:

"Mr Lord opened the discussions by highlighting that a member from his club had recently attended a seminar and was concerned that should the tragic occurrence of a road death occur at an organised event then an organiser may be liable to prosecution for Corporate Manslaughter.

Mr Bald informed Mr Lord that as yet there was not a crime of Corporate Manslaughter in Scotland; however, he was aware that the Scottish Executive were looking at this issue. He did point out that there were existing common law and statutory offences, which might be applicable, if an organiser would be shown to have been grossly negligent in some way. Mr Bald then gave examples of scenarios when a prosecution may arise.

The examples of "reckless conduct" included a case where a shopkeeper had been selling teenagers kits with all the equipment required for glue-sniffing. The ACPOS representatives felt that, for a successful prosecution to be brought against an event organiser, something really drastic like an arrow deliberately erected to point off the road at right angles over a steep cliff would be necessary.

It was reassuring to hear the ACPOS views and to reinforce the good relations which exist between event organisers and the Scottish police forces. We were also able to raise the question of the wording of the letters sent by some forces to the organisers of navigational rallies. In some cases this gave the impression that the police disapproved of, and discouraged, such events. We have been assured that this will be amended in future.

Over lunch it was interesting to hear some behind-the-scenes stories of policing the G8 Summit at Gleneagles. We were assured that the police officer struck by a cycling George W Bush is making a good recovery.

60TH SCOTTISH RALLY

For a change, the headlines on the RSAC Scottish Rally weren't made by the competitors on the international event, though the Higgins family did their best with Mark taking an emphatic win and David ending up in Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary after an off-road excursion in the Forest of Ae. It was the McRaes who secured the column inches, with Jim, Colin and Alister heading the entry list for the national rally and battling it out to see which of the three Mark II Escorts came out on top. Alister took the honours, with Jim and Colin achieving an honourable draw and tying for the second family podium spot.

Elsewhere, Barry Johnson took the National rally win, with Tony Arnsby, James Wozencroft and Gavin Bristow heading the Stars of the Future categories, Andrew Glover the best of the Land Rovers and Gordon Boyd top Historic driver.

The event was again supported by Dumfries and Galloway Council, whose nine years of backing for the event makes them one of the country's longest-serving rally sponsors. Additional financial support came from Scottish Power, DA Autoparts and Palmerston Furniture. We are very grateful to them all.

There was a special word of thanks from the Forestry Commission after the event. One of their tenants who lives in the middle of a stage went away on the day of the rally and left the competitors to it. When he returned, he found that the stage marshals had rescued a line of washing from a passing cloudburst. We've always said that our marshals are outstanding: this just proves it!

UKRC

Only a few weeks after the Scottish Rally, it was off to Knockhill for the sixth UK Rally Challenge. This year's route permutations involved less use of the perimeter area and more of the west paddock, which meant that a small but dedicated team of helpers had to spend most of Saturday afternoon and evening moving metal barriers into position – and then, on Sunday evening, removing them again! The new layout also meant that there were eighteen stages instead of eight, which meant extra work for the marshals and timekeepers.

Named the Albar Challenge in memory of Alan Barr, the popular rally driver from Barrhead who sadly died earlier this year, the event featured a very special car number 1: Alan's own Subaru Impreza, driven on this occasion by none other than Jim McRae and co-driven by Alan's wife Moira. After a day-long fight, Jim and Moira took the overall win by just four seconds from John and Jim Rintoul.

SCOTTISH HILLRALLY

The next event on the RSAC Motorsport calendar was the ninth Scottish Hillrally: two days of off-roading, with over a hundred miles of special stages, on the Perthshire hillsides. Over a year ago, it had been decided that this wasn't an activity compatible with the tight security which surrounded the G8 Summit at Gleneagles, so the traditional date was changed by two weeks to give us uninterrupted access to the stage venues. Perth and Kinross Council again provided invaluable financial assistance.

A sustained marketing effort by 2004 winner John Cockburn saw many new competitors taking part in this year's event and, by all accounts, they liked what they saw. The friendly welcome, tough stages and extended social side (the post-event party was still going strong as dawn rose over the Perth Agricultural Centre) ensured that they will be back in 2005.

After a battle which saw the lead change hands several times, Hugh Haines emerged as winner of the main event, with Ted Leahy taking the National B honours and Thomas Cubby winning the Thistle Safari event for vehicles which aren't road legal.

If you haven't seen this dramatic form of motor sport before but would like to become involved, why not volunteer to marshal in 2006? Perth is easy to reach from all parts of Scotland, and we should be very pleased to hear from you.

THREE LOCHS CLASSIC

The fourth event of our season took place on Saturday 20 August, when sixty Veteran, Vintage and Classic cars made their way to the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club at Rhu for the Three Lochs Classic. Joining us as Guest of Honour for the day was Jim McRae, following his successful appearances on the Scottish Rally and the UK Rally Challenge. Now, if we can only get him into a Hillrally vehicle, he'll have the complete set!

Bill and Karen Niven from Kinross took the overall Concours award in their 1970 MGB, and the prize awarded by West Dunbartonshire Council for the best conserved car went to Jack Bradley's 1925 Rolls-Royce. There were on-the-road quizzes to be completed and a more demanding question paper to keep the brain cells occupied during the afternoon. Who needs su doku puzzles?

The most poignant award, though, was the first presentation of the Ross Finlay Trophy, named in memory of the leading Scottish journalist who died last year. Ross's wife Pat made the presentation to Frank van Hombergh, whose 1912 de Dion Bouton was judged the best of the pre-First World War cars.

Our thanks to the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club for hosting the event, to Arnold Clark for their sponsorship and to Bradley Support Services and Oddbins for supporting class awards.

TWO WHEELS GOOD, FOUR WHEELS GOOD

A recent newcomer to our Development Group is Charlie Mackenzie, who represents the Scottish Auto-Cycle Union. A bit of lateral thinking concluded that the two (and three!)-wheel fraternity have many aspects of their sport in common with ourselves, so Charlie has been invited along to assist in this respect. We hope that this initiative will develop a greater understanding between the two sports and that some joint projects may result.

FOUR WEE WHEELS EVEN BETTER

Congratulations to the Scottish team on their victory in the ABkC Inter Nations' Challenge held at Golspie at the beginning of September. This is the first time that Scotland has won the premier award.

NAVIGATIONAL RALLYING

Alan Cowan of the East of Scotland Association has produced a discussion paper on the future of navigational rallying in Scotland. Anyone who would like to receive a copy should contact alan_g_cowan@zen.co.uk.

FREEDOM TO ROAM

The Freedom of the Glen Family of Hotels offers clubs an off-the shelf package which allows members to enjoy West Highland hospitality among some of the most beautiful scenery to be found anywhere in Scotland. For less than £199 per person they are offering:

- Itineraries taking in the delights of the West Highlands
- Maps of each route with stop-off points
- Two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at one of the group's four-star hotels
- Half-day meeting room facilities
- Packed lunches
- Entertainment on one night
- Book ten rooms or more and the organiser stays free

This is probably of particular interest to one-make clubs, several of which have already taken advantage of the offer. For more details contact Kirstie Grant on 01738 583858.

MEET THE TEAM

Because the mailing list for this Newsletter has expanded considerably since the last edition, we'd like to repeat our introduction to the members of the RSAC Motorsport management team.

Bruce Lyle is company Chairman and a former competitor in most forms of the sport. Among the highlights of his career are tenth place on the 1982 Scottish Rally driving a Chevette. In the same year – and in the same car – he was Scottish Sprint Champion. Turning to racing, he then took three race wins at the wheel of a Fiesta XR2. Bruce is also President of Scottish Sporting Car Club and our representative on the Motor Sports Council. His wide business experience as Chairman of Merson Signs Limited is of incalculable worth to RSAC Motorsport as we move into the next stage of our development.

John Cleland needs no introduction to followers of the sport worldwide. He is as familiar a figure in Australia as in his native Borders. He raced professionally for Vauxhall for 15 years and twice won both the British Thundersaloon Championship and the British Touring Car Championship. He has also competed in rallies and speed events, and once – memorably – the Scottish Hillrally. John is also a regular competitor in Australia's top saloon car event, the Bathurst 1000.

John Cowan has been involved with the Scottish Rally for over thirty years, starting as a marshal and working his way up to Deputy Clerk of the Course and Steward. As a former Chairman of 55 Car Club, John has detailed knowledge of the Perthshire area which has proved invaluable in the organisation of the Scottish Rally and the Scottish Hillrally.

Mike Gascoigne has been involved with the Scottish Rally as a marshal and as an official for over 30 years. He is the Chairman of its organising committee and those of the Scottish Hillrally and the UK Rally Challenge. Mike has just stepped down as Chairman of the Scottish Motor Racing Club and acts as Chief Observer on Knockhill race days. He is the long-serving Secretary of the Scottish Motorsport Marshals Club and is the Scottish representative on the MSA's Training Steering Group.

Gordon Hastie has held many official posts within motor sport and is a former member of the MSA Regional Committee and Rallies Committee as well as a former Chairman of the West of Scotland Association. He was one of Scotland's finest road rally navigators for many years and also competed in stage events in a variety of machinery before becoming a regular Competitors' Relations Officer on British and Scottish Championship rallies. As an MSA Steward Gordon attends many different events from karting to autocross.

Catherine Higgins is one of our two members of staff and works with Jonathan Lord at our office in Linwood. As Motorsport Administrator, Catherine is Secretary of the Meeting for all our events as well as looking after route authorisations and many other administrative tasks.

Jonathan Lord is chief executive of RSAC Motorsport. He is Clerk of the Course for the Scottish Rally, the Scottish Hillrally and the UK Rally Challenge as well as making the odd guest appearance as Clerk of the Course on other rounds of the British Rally Championship. Jonathan competed on stage rallies as a co-driver for many years but never had the desire or, he admits, the ability, to take the wheel himself.

Jim McRae is another member whose name is known worldwide as the founder of the McRae rallying dynasty. His five British Championships speak for themselves, and his heavy involvement in the current World Rally Championship scene as mentor to sons Colin and Alister is invaluable to our discussions.

Andrew Pemberton has years of experience in national and international rallying, co-driving on Scottish Championship events and contesting the Rally of Great Britain on several occasions. Andrew's second rallying home is the Isle of Man, where he has formed a successful partnership with his regular driver James Vickers.

Andrew Wood is also a former Vauxhall works driver and a double champion, but in his case his titles were won in the forests rather than on the track. A former member of the British Junior Rally Team, Andrew has won the Scottish Rally Championship twice, most recently in 2000 at the wheel of his Audi Quattro, and remains a force to be reckoned with.

Barry Wood specialises in classic and historic motor sport, racing and rallying a variety of machinery including a brace of Lister Jaguars and a special Healey 3000 built for Stirling Moss. His experience of this fast-growing area will enable RSAC Motorsport to become more involved in historic motor sport.

Our team members are keen to help motor clubs in any way possible and, in particular, would be pleased to come to speak at social evenings. Please let us know if you are interested in arranging this.

Don't forget – we welcome your views on matters mentioned in this Newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any opinions regarding articles which have appeared. If you'd like to suggest items we could feature in the next edition, just phone or send us an e-mail.

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SCOTTISH MOTOR SPORT EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

CAR RACE – KNOCKHILL

9 OCTOBER

SCOTTISH MOTOR RACING CLUB

HILLCLIMBS

17/18 SEPTEMBER DOUNE

LOTHIAN CC

KART RACE

18 SEPTEMBER

CRAIL

EAST OF SCOTLAND KC

25 SEPTEMBER

GOLSPIE

NORTH OF SCOTLAND KC

2 OCTOBER

LARKHALL

WEST OF SCOTLAND KC

9 OCTOBER

BANFF

GRAMPIAN KC

16 OCTOBER

CRAIL

EAST OF SCOTLAND KC

23 OCTOBER

LARKHALL

WEST OF SCOTLAND KC

30 OCTOBER

GOLSPIE

NORTH OF SCOTLAND KC

SPRINTS

2 OCTOBER

ALFORD

ABERDEEN & DISTRICT MC

STAGE RALLIES

Forest

1 OCTOBER

COLIN McRAE STAGES

COLTNESS CC

Tarmac

14-16 OCTOBER

TOUR OF MULL

2300 CLUB