

REPORT ON SCOTTISH MOTORSPORT for MSA COUNCIL

6th June 2017

The clock is now running down to next month's Fatal Accident Inquiry into the incidents on the Snowman, and the Jim Clark Rallies in 2013 and 2014. The costs to our sport have been enormous, including the costs of attendance of both the MSA and the hundreds of witnesses at the FAI. We have lost a major event in the UK calendar for 3 years now, and the Borders area has lost more than £3 million per year due to the cancellation of the Jim Clark. The potential use of Closed Roads in Scotland is also at risk. We await the outcome, and the conclusions with great interest. It may be that the consequences within the sport so far, Rally Future, have been beneficial, but the cost to events, and to individuals, has been considerable, and the ongoing effect of these costs simply adds to the cost in taking part in this pinnacle branch of our sport, resulting in fewer people able to participate at all levels. This is despite the efforts of the Scottish Rally Championship Team, who have applied great imagination in providing an attractive calendar of events. June will see a return to the Argyll forests for a new event based in Dunoon. Some of us will recall the Burmah Rally of old!

Tarmac Rallying, however, is not under threat, with lower costs, and less potentially car damaging, events. These continue to be extremely popular, with entries filling quickly for all events.

The Scottish Sprint and Hillclimb Championship is in good health, reporting a 10% increase in registrations, with 21 newcomers who get free entries in the first year (8 last year) and a big increase in Road Cars – 43 (30 last year) A new scoring system is being rolled out which is proving popular.

The Scottish Motor Racing Club continues to work with the Knockhill Circuit management to provide exciting Motor Racing, with grids slightly down on last year so far. They continue to support young drivers, and are the first Race Club in the UK to introduce a Coaching Programme, supported by Scottish Motor Sports and the MSA Academy. Ecurie Ecosse continues to fly the flag throughout the UK and Europe, and will be at Le Mans this year, 60 years after winning the famous race. No Jaguars this time, but the Team will run the Ligier LMP3 car which competes in the Henderson LMP3 Cup in the UK, and the Le Mans Cup in Europe.

Scottish Motor Sports continues, under the direction of a very hard working Rory Bryant, to implement it's 5 year Club Development Plan. Working with the Scottish Association (SACC) and the SACU, 4 clubs have been selected in the first year, 2 clubs each from 2 and 4 wheel. We have just announced the launch of the SMS Academy to support young riders and drivers in Scotland. This initiative is backed by Niall Mackenzie and Allan McNish, and will support 10 young competitors, aged between 14 and 20, from each of the SACU and the MSA. SMS continues to work with 3 promotional events, the Ingliston Revival, held in June, the Scottish Car Show in July, and the Ignition Festival in August, all of which provide a showcase for our

sport. The largest of these, the Ignition Festival, was held at the SECC last year, and was a great success. This year, it promises to showcase all disciplines, with a particular emphasis on Rallying, with Ari Vatanen and Walter Rohrl amongst many others, featuring. We will miss the services of Alison Clark, the outgoing RDO, who contributed significantly to our sport in Scotland. I hope the MSA recognises the opportunity presented by these events, and makes a significant effort to support them.

Grass roots events still take place in Autotesting, AutoSolo (which is particularly popular) and at other entry level events like Sprints and Hill Climbs. We are presently looking at the possibilities of running a Road Car Championship to attract non-club members into the sport. Watch this space.

There is significant concern in Karting that the number of non-MSA events has now overtaken regulated events. This is also apparent in various other disciplines, with Knockhill confirming the concern that regulated motor racing is by far the smallest part of their activities. Unlicensed grasstrack racing is popular in the east of the country too. Unless we can find ways to cross barriers of cost, and unpopular controls, it is likely that we will not see any change to this trend.

Marshalling and officiating is still extremely demanding in terms of numbers, especially in keeping with the requirements of Rally Future. Training is taking place at all levels, but there remain shortages at most events. Up to now, no events have had to be cancelled, but the lack of young blood coming forward is concerning, and we hope that the work of SMS will help here. Interestingly, the subject of Competitor Training was brought up at the Scottish Rally, where it was very obvious that many competitors, particularly co-drivers, were really not up to speed with regulations and indeed how to organise their own paperwork on event. Whilst there is considerable training and certification for marshals and officials, perhaps there is a need for something similar before Competition Licenses are issued.

Some general concerns have been expressed, again, over response times from MSA departments in support of events, with delays in confirmation of regulations and delays in permit issue being specifically mentioned. We need to address these concerns, which are not new.

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