

"Radical still make 20 machines a month"

Ten years of the mighty SR3, p28



Photo: Steve Jones

SPORTSCARS SOUGHT FOR TARGA



'Targa' is for modern cars

The Tour Britannia will hold races for modern machinery this year as event organisers aim to boost interest by appealing to sportscar owners.

The new Targa Britannia event will be introduced in 2012 to run alongside the historic-based Tour. The series, which will run from June 7-9, has been

introduced to encourage cars such as Mazda MX-5s, Toyota MR2s and Caterhams.

The series will be based at Harrogate and will run rounds at Croft, Cadwell Park and Mallory Park. Both the Targa and the Tour will share a common route, taking in three races and a series of asphalt

special stages during three days of competition.

Event organiser Alec Poole said: "We think there are plenty of competitors out there with modern machinery who would like the chance to tackle something rather different."

In 2011, Mike Smith and former F1 driver Ian Ashley

contested an invitation class of Tour Britannia in a Caterham R500 when their intended Porsche 911RSR hit gearbox problems just before the event. "It was a fantastic experience," said Smith. "I don't think anyone had ever competed across the Epynt ranges in the rain in an R500 before."

Lithuanians enlarge British operations

The Jura Racing squad will expand its UK operation in 2012 by running two Renault Clios alongside its existing two-car Carrera Cup GB squad.

The Lithuanian squad has been a leading Carrera Cup team for the last two seasons but will now have an even bigger operation at BTCC meetings.

The Porsche team will remain unchanged with FIA Academy driver Jonas Gelzinis and Tautvydas Barstys, while Clios will be run for 20-year old Ignis Gelzinis (the younger brother of Jonas) and Tautvydas Barstys Junior.

"Our plan is to build the team," said team boss Audrius Gelzinis, father of the racing brothers. Both Ignis Gelzinis and Barstys Junior will make their UK racing debuts this season and both have ambitions to graduate to the Porsche squad in the future.

Barstys was a professional basketball player in Lithuania and has competed in enduro motorcycle events.

Sharp starred in G55 last year and is keen to build upon that



Photo: Jakob Ebrey

Sharp eager to add British GT outings to Supercup title campaign

Tom Sharp hopes to dovetail his challenge for the Ginetta GT Supercup title with selected rounds in the British GT Championship this year.

Sharp, 21, was one of the stars of the one-make series last year, taking nine outright wins in the G55 class and finishing third in the overall points. He

will re-enter the series this year with his family run IDL Racing team using a new G55.

The Camberley man took part in a handful of 2011 British GT rounds in the developmental GT3 G55 and hopes to race in the class more this year with the improved V8 version.

"Last year was phenomenal

for us because we never expected to have the run of form that we did," said Sharp. "I got a lot of attention and it was great for my reputation but this year we're definitely aiming for the title."

"The next few months are going to be busy with testing because it's vital to get as much mileage as possible."

Lotus Sport returns with twin Evora bid

The Lotus Sport UK team will return to the British GT Championship this year with a two-car assault.

The factory-backed team will again enter a brace of Evoras into the series' GT4 class. The team took three race wins in 2011, running Freddy Nordstrom and Leyton Clarke to third in the class points.

Indian racer Sailesh Bolisetti, 23, is the first driver to be confirmed. Bolisetti won the Indian Volkswagen Polo Cup before contesting the DTM-supporting Scirocco R Cup.

Lotus Sport UK team chief Gary Ayles said: "Sailesh is a strong talent and we're



Photo: Jakob Ebrey

Lotus Sport is returning for more British GT with a pair of Evoras

delighted to have him at the team. He's ready for the move to Europe and I think he's a star in the making."

The team has yet to announce its other drivers but former Renault Clio

Cup champion Phil Glew is reportedly still in the frame for a seat with the team. Glew said: "Nothing is done yet but I had a blast racing the Evora last year and it'll be an even stronger car this season."

Scottish teenager in switch to car racing

Young Scot Elliot Paterson will make his racing debut in the Ginetta Junior Championship this season with his first race at Brands Hatch coming just three weeks after his 14th birthday.

Paterson, who completed his ARDS test at Knockhill in October, is thought to be the youngest Scot to hold a race licence and has already done some testing at the Fife track.

Paterson is the son of Russell, a successful racer in his own right - most recently in Morgans, and has grown up around his dad's racing. Elliot has completed a couple of seasons karting but is too tall for frontline karting.

"Due to my birthday I could do three full years in Juniors," said Paterson, who has the support of his school, Morrison's Academy in Crieff, for the project.

THE VOICE OF NATIONAL RACING

MATT JAMIES

"We could see drama unfolding in front of us"



Photo: Gary Hawkins

Yes, this is Druids hairpin the wrong way around

It's not unusual for me to get up early on a Sunday morning and make my way to Brands Hatch for a day's motorsport but last weekend was a first - I was heading to my favourite circuit for a rally.

Regular readers will know my feelings on rallying, which is principally a branch of the sport that I don't understand. But, as with most things in life that are legal, I had to give it a go.

I'd been to a single venue rally at Pembrey before and seen the promenade stage at Bournemouth for Rallye Sunseeker. But the Chelmsford Motor Club's offering last Sunday seemed far more agreeable for a circuit racing devotee like me.

Don't forget, the years are advancing so I like my creature comforts. This was a rally event that featured somewhere decent to park, a grandstand, the chance to warm up and get something to eat in the Kentagon, MSV's well looked after toilets, a proper commentary service with a commentator who knew what he was talking about and a relatively up-to-date results system, so you knew who was doing what.

As far as I was concerned, that took away all of the things I don't like about rallying in one step.

What was also interesting - and something you wouldn't get on a normal rally - was that each of the eight 4.6-mile stages were contained mostly within the Indy circuit loop.

That meant we could see the drama unfolding in front of us - including the cruel tyre problem that robbed John Indri of a win on the penultimate stage. The compact nature helped me to follow the flow of the event and the narrative of how it was won, which is something which is easy to do with a circuit race but something I have never been able to work out on a rally.

Then there was a huge variety of cars, too. They ranged from a Micra through to a Ferrari 308GTB via a huge array of sideways Mk1 and Mk2 Ford Escorts (and a special mention to the press-on style of Mini marvel Andy Pecover).

Do I sound like I might be a rally convert? Not quite. While Brands Hatch's event was a refreshing change, I'm still not sure that I'd enjoy traipsing miles through a Welsh forest to catch a brief glimpse of a car at full tilt. They tell me it is amazing and to do it just once would change my mind but I am pretty sure that it wouldn't.

I prefer to stick to things that take place where I can see them, which is why the Brands Hatch Stages was the perfect compromise for the rally and racing fan. Just don't tell anyone I said that.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
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