



MSA announces 2012 stage rally seat regulations

Following approval by the Motor Sports Council, the MSA has confirmed a new regulation that means stage rally competitors will not be required to replace FIA homologated seats for the 2012 season.

The new regulation (to be read in conjunction with R48.10.6) is as follows:

R48.10.6.1

For any vehicle issued with an MSA Competition Car Log Book prior to 1st January 2009, the requirements of R48.10.6. are satisfied until 31st December 2012. This is provided that the seat(s) have previously been FIA Homologated and in addition the seats have the appropriate seat mountings in accordance with R48.10.6.

Date of Implementation: 1/1/12

“This issue has generated substantial correspondence from competitors and a considerable amount of debate at Regional Association meetings in recent months,” said MSA Chief Executive Colin Hilton. “The MSA makes no apology for its commitment to improving safety within motor sport and there is complete agreement that standard production car seats have no place within stage rally cars. This new regulation will achieve that and will allow a further 12 months to consider how best we move forward in the future which, being mindful of the current economic climate and the interests of existing competitors, seems entirely sensible.

“I would like to reiterate that the responsibility for the safety of a competitor lies exclusively with that competitor. The MSA reminds everyone that just because items are within their ‘life’, does not automatically make them safe. The MSA continues to advise competitors to take all possible precautions to keep themselves and others safe in the course of their motor sport activity.”

Martin Hines, 1948-2011

Karting legend Martin Hines passed away on Sunday 28 August following a battle against cancer.

Hines enjoyed a karting career spanning several decades, earning him the nicknames Mr Karting and the Karting Guru. He was the FIA World Karting

Champion in 1983, 1991 and 1992, as well as a five-time European and six-time British champion.

The founder of the Cadet kart class and boss of Zip Kart, Hines helped to launch the careers of numerous star drivers, such as David Coulthard, Jenson Button, Lewis Hamilton, Gary Paffett, Anthony Davidson and Jason Plato. He also took over the motor sport accessory retailer Grand Prix Racewear in 2009.

“Martin had a passion for karting and his introduction of the Cadet class brought a new era to young people in motor sport,” said MSA Chief Executive Colin Hilton. “In the past 20 years I have been able to turn to Martin as a voice of wisdom and experience. We send our deepest sympathy to his wife and family at this sad time.”



Chris Walker - Karpix.net

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MSA launches new Scottish Motorsport Festival

October's Colin McRae Forest Stages Rally and RACMSA Rally of Scotland will mark the start and finish of the new Scottish Motorsport Festival (1-9 October), a week-long celebration of the sport's long-running success north of the border.

The new initiative – backed by EventScotland, the national events agency – kicks off with an all-star forum run by Colin McRae Vision on the eve of the McRae Stages on 30 September. Those attending include 1984 World Rally Champion Stig Blomqvist and 2003 World Rally Champion co-driver Phil Mills.

Other Festival events include: an introduction to karting for schools; a special autotest pitching the media against leading Intercontinental Rally Challenge competitors; Scottish debuts for part of Colin McRae's car collection; and the launch

of a new rally championship for 14- to 17-year-olds at Scone Palace.

Paul Di Resta, the latest in a long line of Scottish F1 drivers, said: "When I was starting out in karting there was a lot to inspire me. I was

always hearing stories about the great Jim Clark and, of course, Sir Jackie Stewart, who continues to help and support Scottish drivers. But it's not just Formula 1 where Scottish drivers have shown their skill. We have been well represented in most major championships around the world with drivers like Dario Franchitti, my cousin, winning the Indy 500 twice and Allan McNish having great success in sports cars.

"We also have a great tradition in rallying thanks to the legacy of Colin McRae, who is surely remembered as one of the most spectacular drivers of all time. With icons like these there is plenty to inspire the next generation of Scottish motor sport stars."

The full schedule of events and timings are available from the new Scottish Motorsport Festival website: www.scottishmotorsportfestival.co.uk.



MSA titles wrapped up

A raft of MSA Champions across various disciplines have been crowned in recent weeks, as the 2011 motor sport season enters its closing stages.

Brazilian Felipe Nasr secured the Cooper Tires British F3 International Series title with a podium finish at Rockingham. "It's a unique feeling for sure", said the 19-year-old. "It really is amazing; I don't think I quite understand what it all means yet! There has been a lot of hard work behind this, taking the title so early shows we worked harder than the others and we deserve it – everyone from the team, my family and everyone that has helped us. I'm really, really happy."

Elsewhere, Scott Moran took his third Nicholson McLaren MSA British Hill Climb Championship with a double run-off win at Gurston Down in August. "When I started competing in the British championship it took two years for me to win a run-off; I never thought I'd win a title, so to have three is amazing," he said.

Meanwhile Steven Ferguson was confirmed as the MSA British Autotest Champion (pictured below) and Richard Davies (pictured above) the MSA British Autocross Champion after the final rounds of both championships earlier this month.





Rally of Scotland is just around the corner

Some of the world's leading rally drivers and teams are gearing up for the RACMSA Rally of Scotland, the UK's round of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge, on 7-9 October.

"The Rally of Scotland's simply a great event for the country, with many of the top international stars putting on a show on what the drivers and public regard as the best competitive stages about," said five-time MSA British Rally Champion Jimmy McRae, who will drive the 'Zero' course car. "I have a lot of knowledge of the stages around Perth from my own rallying days and the McRae Stages event but I haven't been down in the Carron Valley in Lanarkshire for 20 or more years."

McRae's son Alister has entered the event, as have Guy Wilks, Andreas Mikkelsen, Juho Hanninen, Freddy Loix, Thierry Neuville, Bryan Bouffier and Jan Kopecky. Proton, Skoda, Peugeot, Ford, Mitsubishi, Subaru and Citroen will all be represented on the entry list.

The rally gets under way with a Ceremonial Start at Stirling Castle on 7 October, and takes in classic stages such as Craigvinean, Drummond Hill and Errochty before finishing with two stages through the majestic grounds of Scone Palace near Perth on 9 October. Public admission costs £20 per vehicle at the entry to each stage, with the exception of Sunday morning's Carron Valley stage, priced at £10.

For more information – including latest news, route details and full stage timetable – visit www.rallyofscotland.com.

Redditch & District to hold open evening

Redditch and District Car Club is holding an opening evening on Monday 12 September, with discounted membership available to attendees.

As part of the event there will be a simulated rally service area and marshal's post, talks on rally navigation and marshalling, and a chance to meet former British Rally Champion Russell Brooks.

There will also be a car display featuring a 1965 BRM P261, a Citroen C2 rally car, a Subaru Impreza Time Attack car and much more. Prizes will be awarded to whoever arrives in the most interesting car.

The event begins at 7.30pm at The Stag at Redhill, Alcester Road, Stratford-Upon-Avon, B49 6NQ.

Renault MSA Awards applications open

The MSA is inviting submissions for the tenth Renault MSA Young Motor Sport Journalist and Photographer of the Year awards.

Established in 2002 with support from Renault UK, the awards are designed to recognise the new generation of motor sport reporters and photographers working in UK motor sport. The two winners will each receive a trophy and a cheque for £1000 at the MSA's prestigious 'Night of Champions' ceremony (pictured) in January. In addition, the winning photographer will have their pictures displayed on the walls within Motor Sports House, and may also see their work printed in *MSA* magazine.



Renault Communications Director, Jeremy Townsend, said: "Renault UK has a long track record of helping young talent in motor sport, not just on the track but also off it. It is rewarding to see the roll of honour that has been produced in the past decade and we look forward to continuing this in the future."

Candidates must have been aged 25 or under on 1 January 2011 and be able to demonstrate published work involving domestic UK motor sport. They can come from local, regional, specialist or electronic media and are required to submit a minimum of three published articles or photographs from the UK media this year.

Application forms are available by email from media@msauk.org and entries must be sent to the MSA Press Office by 11 November 2011.



RTP duties take MSA Trainers to South Africa

MSA Trainers visited Cape Town last month to deliver a presentation to the Confederation of African Countries in Motorsport, on behalf of the FIA Institute for Motor Sport Safety and Sustainability.

The MSA is one of just three FIA Institute Gold Standard Regional Training Providers, along with the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) and the Spanish governing body, RFEDA.

The African Motor Sport Development Workshop was chaired by the MSA's Allan Dean-Lewis MBE, as a member of the FIA Institute Executive Committee, who highlighted the fact that African ASNs had been slow to engage with the Motor Sport Safety Development Fund. "The Fund is there to support clubs of all levels to develop their grass roots," he said. "The Institute is committed to making this a reality and ensuring that all ASNs [National Sporting Authorities] are aware of the funding and most importantly know how to access the funds for their given project."

Francois Pretorius, Chief Executive of Motorsport South Africa, added: "Motor sport in Africa has a lot of specific issues that need to be addressed. Today's workshop highlighted Africa's need and I am confident that following today's discussions more African ASNs will be seeking funding this September."

Green Paper update

The MSA Kart Committee has published the first proposed regulation changes resulting from the Karting Green Paper, a discussion document on the future of the sport that was issued last year by the Kart Sporting Committee.

The proposed changes, regarding new classes and class homologation, are available for consultation online at www.msauk.org/regulations until 7 October 2011. The two documents, which should be read in conjunction with each other, include proposals to provide stability for competitors and



Barnicoat takes first CIK-FIA Academy win for the UK

Ben Barnicoat lies a close second in the 2011 CIK-FIA Karting Academy Trophy following a win and a second-place finish in round two at Essay, France last month.

The Karting Academy Trophy is a three-round world championship for 13- to 15-year-old karters, all of whom are put forward by their ASNs; the MSA chose Barnicoat to be this year's UK representative.

The Racing Steps Foundation-backed karter dedicated his first Academy win to Martin Hines, who passed away the same weekend. "Had it not been for Martin, I would not be here," he said. "He was the one who discovered me allowing me to integrate the Racing Step Foundation. Thanks to him, I know that if I perform well and work hard I will have a true opportunity of reaching great heights. I could never thank him enough and I obviously want to dedicate this victory to him."

The fight for the title now looks to be between Barnicoat and Monegasque karter Charles Leclerc, and will be decided at Sarno, Italy on 4-6 November.

teams, such as introducing a three-year homologation period for new classes.

MSA Kart Committee Chairman, Rob Jones, said: "The main concern arising from the consultation process was 'too many classes'. These proposals seek to address this and therefore provide stability and confidence for competitors in at least one area of karting for the future."

The Green Paper will be considered further at the next meeting of the Kart Committee on 2 November 2011, when championship structures, and the findings of a sub-group that has reviewed cost-cutting measures, will be discussed.

MSA invites nominations for club and marshal awards

Clubs wishing to be considered for the MSA Club of the Year Award should register their interest with their Regional Associations, which must submit nominations by 1 October.

The Award – currently sponsored by MSA insurance broker JLT – has been presented annually since 1993 and carries a prize of £1000, together with a prestigious JLT Trophy. There are second and third place prizes of £500 and £250 respectively, along with commemorative awards.

Clubs are further asked to submit nominations for the MSA Marshal of the Year Award to their Regional Association as soon as possible. MSA Regional Committee Chairman Nicky Moffitt, who sits on the Awards judging panel, said: “These prestigious awards acknowledge both the contribution that many Clubs make to their local communities, as well as the vital support that marshals offer those clubs by giving their time freely so that others can enjoy our sport.”

Both Awards will be presented at the MSA's Night of Champions ceremony at the Royal Automobile Club in January 2012.



Warwick appointed new BRDC president

Derek Warwick has been named as the successor to Damon Hill as president of the British Racing Drivers' Club (BRDC).

Having won the British Formula 3 title in 1978, Warwick graduated to grand prix racing with the Toleman team in '81; the 162-race Formula 1 career that followed included stints with Renault, Brabham, Arrows, Lotus and Footwork. He was also a World Sportscar Champion, Le Mans 24 Hours winner, and MSA British Touring Car Championship race winner.

Henry Surtees Trophy open to all-comers

The second Henry Surtees Trophy charity karting event takes place at Buckmore Park on 20 October, and is open to competitors aged 16 or over from any motor sport discipline.

The all-comers event is being organised by 1964 F1 world champion John Surtees in memory of his son Henry, who tragically lost his life in 2009. The entry fee is £500, and competitors must hold an MSA Competition Licence or be a member of Club 100.

“Our event is there to give racers at varying levels of their development the chance to come together on similar karts at one of the most testing and exciting kart circuits in the country,” said Surtees.

Prizes on offer include a run in the Mercedes GP simulator and lunch with Ross Brawn, Formula 2 and Formula Renault tests, the chance to be a guest of Shell at a Ferrari experience day in Italy, and VIP tickets to next year's British Grand Prix.

Anybody wishing to take part should visit www.buckmore.co.uk or call 01634 201562. More information on the Henry Surtees Foundation, to which all proceeds will be donated, can be found at www.henrysurteesfoundation.com



Pensioner realises dream at Brands

A pensioner realised her lifelong dream of lapping Brands Hatch when she took to the Kent circuit in her mobility scooter.

Rita Turner, 79, joined cyclists from Swanley and North Downs Lions Club on their annual Bike around Brands sponsored ride. Together they raised £4000 for EllenorLions Hospices and other causes.

“It's quite a thrill!” said Turner. “The scooter handles well and it's everything I hoped it would be, the weather's fine and I can't believe I'm finally on Brands Hatch. It's given me a wonderful feeling of belonging.”



Lawn way down

MSA licence holder Darren Whitehead and Tony Dwight of Stoke-on-Trent drove a pair of lawn mowers from John O'Groats to Land's End last month in support of Help for Heroes and Cancer Research UK. The pair drove 12 hours a day for five days, and completed the 1071-mile journey without using maps or GPS.



Ben Gautrey, 1992-2011

The MSA is saddened to report that promising young motorcycle racer and MSA Apprentice Ben Gautrey died last month during the British Superbike meeting at Cadwell Park. He was 18.

"I will remember Ben with great fondness as somebody who always had a chirpy smile and lots of cheeky banter," said MSA Academy Coordinator Greg Symes. "The way that he fitted into a classroom full of race and rally drivers on the AASE programme was great. He was a real asset to the Loughborough AASE programme and will be sorely missed by all, on and off the track."

Loughborough College Programme Leader Tom Gayle added: "On behalf of Loughborough College I would like to express our sadness and shock upon the tragic loss of Ben Gautrey. He was an extremely likeable young man due to his confidence, quick wit, easygoing nature and cheeky grin. It was clear from the evidence provided in Ben's AASE portfolio that he was an exceptionally dedicated and hardworking athlete who was extremely grateful for his place on the programme. I certainly was left in no doubt that he was destined for the very top in motor sport."

The MSA sends its condolences to Ben's family and friends.



Jakob Ebrey Photography

Performance update

Lewis Williamson is sixth in the GP3 standings ahead of the season finale at Monza this weekend (9-11 September). The McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner has won one race so far this season.

Following an impressive third-place finish in his Firestone Indy Lights Championship debut at Edmonton, **Oli Webb** (pictured above left) was re-signed to drive for Jensen MotorSport for the recent Baltimore Grand Prix, where he retired after qualifying third, and the Las Vegas season finale in October.

Alex Lynn continued his dominance in Formula Renault UK with his tenth win of the season at Silverstone. With three meetings to go, Lynn looks set to break James Matthews' record of eleven wins in a season, set in 1994.

Elfyn Evans and co-driver **Andrew Edwards** kept their Dulux Trade MSA British Rally Championship title hopes alive by finishing fifth on the International Rally of Northern Ireland, despite losing two and a half minutes to a puncture on the opening stage.

Will Buller (pictured above right) is third in the Cooper Tires British F3 International Series standings with two meetings to go. The Northern Ireland driver took a podium finish last time out at Rockingham, as did his national squad team-mate **Jack Harvey**.

Team UK on film with Skoda UK

Former MSA Rally Elite member Nicholas Rowland has produced a short film of Team UK's three rally drivers – Elfyn Evans; John MacCrone; Harry Hunt – testing Skoda UK's



Malcolm Griffiths

Fabia S2000 on the Goodwood Forest Rally stage (see *MSA News*, July 2011 and *MSA magazine*, autumn 2011).

To view the film, visit here: http://youtu.be/dFe7K_JEHNM



Widening participation and raising awareness of motor sport around the country, particularly among young people

Join the Go Motorsport campaign

There are many ways for you to play your part in encouraging more newcomers into all areas of motor sport:

- Direct anyone interested in competing, volunteering or visiting a live motor sport event to the 'Go Drive', 'Go Help' and 'Go See' sections of the Go Motorsport website, www.GoMotorsport.net
- Help us to set up a visit to your local school by emailing the relevant contact details to info@GoMotorsport.net
- Promote the initiative by running Go Motorsport decals on your competition car. A selection of free decals is available from info@GoMotorsport.net
- Include Go Motorsport advertisements in your event programmes. Artwork is available from the 'downloads' section of www.GoMotorsport.net
- Establish web links to the Go Motorsport website where relevant or possible.
- Distribute Go Motorsport and Let's Go Karting promotional materials. Flyers, pencils, DVDs and other materials are available from info@GoMotorsport.net

Go Motorsport at the National Motorsport Show

This year's National Motorsport Show – Motorsport UK – at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry on 5-6 November is being run in association with Go Motorsport. East Midlands Regional Development Officer (RDO) Richard Egger will be manning the Go Motorsport stand at the show, and all clubs, societies, and associations are being offered free floor space. For more information visit www.motorsportshow.co.uk or email info@motorsportshow.co.uk

Gomotorsport.net reports growth in traffic

The Go Motorsport website is enjoying record numbers of visitors. In the first eight months of this year GoMotorsport.net recorded in excess of 100,000 visits, an increase of nearly 100 per cent when compared to the same period in 2010.

More encouragingly visitors are spending more time on the site and have accessed more than double the number of pages this year than last. The number of enquiries to motor clubs has risen significantly too.

The numbers were boosted significantly by the F1 factory visits initiative hosted on the site during National Motorsport Week but even without this special promotion the figures have been noticeably higher.

On average the site attracts around 250 unique visitors every day, each viewing between three and four pages. The 'GoDrive' navigation on the site proves the busiest, with the circuit racing and karting sections generating most interest. The next most popular areas are rallying, road car sport and hill climb.

More than 6500 unique visitors have logged onto 'GoHelp' in 2011 – all eager to find out more about volunteering in motor sport.

"The huge increase in the number of visitors to the site is further evidence of the initiative's on-going success," said Go Motorsport coordinator Jonathan Gill. "GoMotorsport.net is now firmly established as the 'go to' website for anyone wanting to get more involved in the sport whether as a competitor, volunteer or spectator."

TECHNICAL / REGULATIONS



Forged homologation labels

Pictured is an example of a forged FIA seat homologation label, which the purported manufacturer, Corbeau, has confirmed to be non-genuine. At the bottom of the label, next to 'SERIAL NUMBER' is a handwritten expiry

date; FIA homologation regulations do not permit the expiry date to be handwritten, and manufacturers generally use a printed dot or a hole punched through the relevant month and year.

Seat mounts

The image shows a vehicle that rolled at a recent Autocross event. The seat mounts sheared during



the incident because rust had compromised the structural integrity of the vehicle structure. In this case, suitable spreader plates would have reduced the possibility of this occurring.

Window decals and tints

The image shows a vehicle's rear window, which has a decal with micro-holes so that the driver can see out but nobody can see in. This contravenes MSA General Regulation (J)5.2.10, which states that 'Tinted glass in



any window which can significantly affect through vision (in or out) or distort the colours of signal flags or lights, is prohibited.'

JUDICIAL

Morgan Sports Car Club 2010 Power Torque Morgan Challenge

A 2010 Race Championship Notice of Intent was lodged with the MSA on 30th June 2009 and a letter was sent by the Race, Speed & Kart Executive to the Morgan Sports Car Club Race Series Co-ordinator providing outline approval.

On 23rd October 2009 a completed 2010 Championship Permit Application Form was received by the MSA and duly acknowledged.

On 1st March 2010 an e-mail was sent to the Morgan Sports Car Club Race Series Co-ordinator expressing concern that no draft regulations had been received by the MSA. Subsequently, on 16th March 2010 a final e-mail was sent to the Morgan Sports Car Club Race Series Co-ordinator advising that the MSA considered the 2010 application had lapsed. Despite the absence of a Permit or any final approval from the MSA, the Morgan Sports Car Club went ahead and ran the 2010 Power Torque Morgan Challenge.

In June 2011 the MSA referred the apparent breach of the General Regulations to a National Court Investigatory Tribunal for an inquiry, providing the Morgan Sports Car Club with the opportunity to be heard.

The Tribunal concluded that admissions had been made but was impressed that the Morgan Challenge Race Series had been run very successfully for 25 years, and upon discovering that no Permits/permissions for the Championship Series had been obtained, immediate and effective steps had been taken by the Morgan Sports Car Club to prevent the possibility of any further lapses.

The National Court therefore considered that a contribution of £500 towards the costs of the hearing should be imposed, the results of the 2010 Championship should stand, and any outstanding fees must be paid forthwith.

David Jacobs

The National Court considered the matter of David Jacobs, which was referred by the Stewards of the Meeting at Brands Hatch on 16th and 17th July 2011 under General Regulation C2.6.3. Mr Jacobs had been convicted of an offence under General Regulations C1.1.5 in that he drove in a manner incompatible with general safety.

The Court viewed video footage and considered Mr Jacobs' account of events. The Court notes that in his evidence Mr Jacobs acknowledged that he disregarded the yellow flags despite being aware of the stranded car and knowing that he himself had grip problems. Nonetheless he had failed to reduce his speed and was attempting to maintain his position of third in the race.

In the circumstances Mr Jacobs' licence is suspended for 12 months and thereafter his licence status is reduced to National B. Mr Jacobs is ordered to pay £1500 costs.

These are summaries of the decisions of the National Court. Full findings will be published in MSA magazine.

MEET...

MSA Regional Committee chairman **Nicky Moffitt**

This month we introduce the chairman of the Regional Committee and vice chairman of the Motor Sports Council, Nicky Moffitt, who discusses motor sport in Northern Ireland and the importance of there being UK competitors on the world stage



Where does your love of motor sport come from?

It was in the blood right from the start. My father was a competitor long before the days of stage rallying and he competed regularly throughout Ireland with my uncle and friends from Enniskillen, where I'm originally from.

My first recollection of competition is sitting in the back seat of the car when I was probably six or seven during a navigational rally, which in those days incorporated what are now known as Autotests. You would navigate to a particular road junction, perhaps just wee crossroads in the middle of nowhere, the driver would do the test utilising each of the roads and then you'd navigate to the next one. There was no reason why somebody couldn't sit in the back seat, and so as a young lad I'd go out on events with my dad.

How has your involvement in the sport developed over the years?

I joined Enniskillen Motor Club as soon as I was able, at about 14 or 15 years of age. I then got my first car, a Mini, aged 17 and my first navigational rally soon followed. I drove on the first one but I became known more as a co-driver and navigator, and I actually won the Northern Ireland Stage Rally Championship title in 1979 as a co-driver, with Ernest Kidney at the wheel.

I was working as a bank clerk at Northern bank – in fact I retired on 1 August this year after almost 41 years – which actually had a motor club, Northern Bank MC, so I joined and became a representative to the Association of Northern Ireland Car Clubs, which was formed in the early 1960s. Shortly after joining I was appointed auditor of the ANICC, then the next year I became the treasurer, and in 1981 I was made secretary – a post that I still hold today.

I've also been an MSA Steward since the 1970s, officiating at 12 to 15 events per

year, and I've been deputy clerk of the course on the Ulster Rally since 1980.

What is the government's attitude towards motor sport in Northern Ireland?

It's very positive now, which I think had a lot to do with the death of Joey Dunlop in a motorcycle road race 10 years ago. The funeral was the biggest you could imagine, which made politicians realise how important the sport is in Northern Ireland. But the government wanted a single body to communicate with, so in 2003 I became a director of a brand new company called 2 & 4 Wheel Motorsport Steering Group Limited, an umbrella organisation – set up with the support of the MSA and Sport Northern Ireland – comprising the Motorcycle Union of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Karting Association and the ANICC.

2 & 4 Wheels recently received £2m of government funding through Sport Northern Ireland, most of which was spent on improving our three permanent venues: Kirkistown, Bishopscourt and Nutts Corner kart circuit. We were also able to buy a pair of brand new rescue vehicles (see *MSA News*, June 2011).

Why do you think motor sport has always been so popular in Northern Ireland?

There are only 1.6 million people living here, but over the years we've produced competitors such as Paddy Hopkirk, John Watson, Martin Donnelly, Eddie Irvine and now Kris Meeke, so we've over-delivered in terms of top motor sport talent reaching the highest levels, which I think inspires the wider public. It's for the same reason that we're very supportive of the MSA Academy and Team UK. It's vital to have drivers competing at the highest level in order to generate media coverage and ignite public interest, which draws more people into the sport and creates a virtuous circle.

How did you come to be chairman of the Regional Committee and what does the role involve?

Getting married meant that I couldn't take weekends off as often as I did, so I decided to hang up my helmet – the 1985 Circuit of Ireland Rally was my last big event – and concentrate on my administrative roles. I've been a member of the Regional Committee since '81, when I became ANICC secretary. I became Vice Chairman in the mid-'90s, and 12 years later I was voted in as chairman when Bill Troughear retired.

As chairman I'm the direct link between the MSA Board, of which I'm a member, and the hundreds of MSA-registered motor clubs and the 13 Regional Associations. Perhaps the most important role of the Regional Committee is to represent the interests of club motor sport, so we monitor the regulation changes coming from the other Specialist Committees very closely to make sure that they won't have any unforeseen negative impact on the grassroots. If any of my delegates – all nominated to the Committee by the Regional Associations – highlight any potential issues I take them either directly to the chairman of the relevant Specialist Committee or to the Motor Sports Council, of which I'm Vice Chairman.

How does it feel to be Vice Chairman of the MSC?

I feel privileged to hold the position, and I'm very pleased to be the voice of the clubs at such a high level. It's a role that requires thorough preparation because there are so many regulation changes to consider, and I need full awareness and understanding of them so that I can fulfil my duty of supporting the chairman. A good Council meeting is one where we have a healthy debate, which is part of the democratic process, and then pass sound regulations for the good of the sport.