

Blundell back in McLaren

RACING: Former Formula 1 star Mark Blundell returns to the wheel of a McLaren at Oulton Park this Easter weekend (30 March/1 April) in the Avon Tyres British GT Championship.

He joins a huge field of 33 cars entered for the 2013 season, which opens at the Cheshire circuit.

Mark will be racing for the United Autosports team, which has run an Audi R8 in the championship for the last two seasons, and introduced the McLaren MP4-12C to the series midway through 2012.

The Audi will return, alongside two McLarens, one of which will be driven by the 46 year-old.

Tickets for the Avon Tyres British GT Championship at Oulton Park are available from £18, with free entry for children aged 12 and under.

For more information call 0843 453 9000 or visit www.oultontpark.co.uk

Jubilee Classic

CLASSIC: There's a healthy entry for next month's Ilkley Jubilee Classic, based in Skipton.

Competitors include John Ingham/Paul Ingham (Alfa Romeo), Martin Neal/Richard Dix (Mg Midget), Roger Powley/Leigh Powley (Porsche 911). The rally takes place on Sunday April 21, with the first car starting at 9am from Skipton Auction Mart.

Car Run will visit East Lancs

CAR RUN: The Manchester to Blackpool Car Run will pass through East Lancashire on Sunday, June 9.

The Lancashire Automobile Club is running the event for the 51st time this year and it is open to all cars manufactured before December 31, 1984.

There is a choice of three routes, all starting at Worsley Old Hall and ending in Blackpool.

Entries cost £25 for LAC members and £27.50 for non-members.

Entries are available at lancsautoclub.co.uk.

Annual trial event

TRIAL: Rochdale DMC are holding the annual Sid Humphrys Trial on Sunday at Landgate, Shawforth, Whitworth, starting at 10.30am.

Open to all classes there are three routes. For more information contact Margaret Whitlow on 01706 633977.

Grimehills venue

TRIAL: Grimehills at Darwen is the venue for Bolton MCC's club round on Saturday March 30, starting at 2pm.

There are three routes plus a 50-50 easy/middle option.

Entwistle hampered by problems



DEVIL DISASTER
Steve Entwistle

RALLYMAN Steve Entwistle had a devil's job trying to get to the finish of his first event of the year.

A puncture on the way to the start and then a broken drive coupling conspired to hand Steve a rare non-finish on last weekend's Devils Own Rally.

"I can't believe it, it was only my third retirement in 20 years," said Entwistle, who lives in Rishton.

"I got a puncture on the way to the start at Levens, near Kendal.

"It was made worse as it was on the A590 which was down to one lane so it was over two miles before we could pull off."

The first test saw Entwistle

and mapman Bob Hargreaves in great form, scoring equal fastest time in their ex-Roy Mapple Orangebox Mini.

The following forest tests saw the Mini Sport of Padiham-backed machine up into the top three before trouble struck.

"There was a bad knocking noise from the front of the car and it got steadily worse and worse," said Entwistle.

"By this time we were up in Shap and so decided to call it a day, as we had to drive the car home.

"We discovered the offside rubber drive coupling was breaking up, probably not helped by the puncture."

Place on the podium is the aim for rally pair

Merrills and McTear looking for top three in rally

By **NEIL JOHNSON**
Sports reporter

CLITHEROE DMC pair Phil Merrills and Jason McTear will be aiming for a top three finish on this weekend's SMC Stages Rally.

And Merrills has an added incentive for wanting to do well on the Weeton-based event - he's sponsoring it.

"I wanted to put something back into a sport I've enjoyed for many years" said Phil, who owns Merrills Motor Services in Radcliffe.

"It's a cracking rally at a cracking venue with a cracking entry, and we are determined to get a good result."

Merrills and McTear are contesting the SD34 Stage Championship, the Blyton Challenge and selected events in the Isle of Man in their Honda Civic Type R.

But their opening rally, last week's Jack Neal Memorial, held at Blyton airfield in Lincolnshire, didn't quite go to plan.

"We were going well until we picked up a puncture on the first stage," said McTear.



READY FOR OFF Jason McTear and Phil Merrills

"That dropped us seven minutes, which at a venue like Blyton, is almost impossible to claw back. Once we got a new rim on, the car ran perfectly all day."

McTear, who lives in Darwen, is planning a busy year of motorsport.

In addition to co-driving for

Merrills, he's hoping to contest the SD34 Road Rally Championship driving a Peugeot 309GTi with brother Dominic on the maps.

Events on the agenda include the Illuminations Rally, the Garstang and Preston Memorial, the Clitheronian and the Morecambe road rallies.

Meanwhile, organisers Stockport Motor Club are hoping for a full entry, but places are still available by visiting www.stockport061.co.uk.

East Lancashire entries include John Cope/Aimee Cope in a Subaru Impreza and Steve Johnson/Dave Barratt who will be competing in a Nissan Micra.

Tyre firm gives backing to drivers

FALKEN is backing young talent in motorsport through a new sponsorship and support scheme that will enable drivers access to subsidised and free tyres.

The Japanese tyre manufacturer will be providing tyres for the Association of North Western Car Clubs (ANWCC) K11 Micra Challenge and the Under 17 Motor AutoSOLO Championship for Standard Cars.

Falken will be providing its ZE912 tyres to qualifying

competitors along with offering discounts to all those involved in the championship.

Founded by multiple rally and autotest champion Steve Johnson, from Accrington, the North West K11 Micra Challenge was created to bypass the escalating costs that are normally associated with stage rallying.

In addition to the K11 Micra Challenge, Falken is also supporting the under 17 Motor Club which provides opportunities

for 14 to 17 year olds to gain experience in vehicle handling in a controlled environment away from the public highway.

"The under-17 AutoSOLO championship in partnership with Falken aims to discover and nurture the future stars of UK motorsport," said Johnson.

"We chose Falken Tyres due to the fact they have lasted up to six rallies per set of tyres which is great value for money.

"The Falken tyres have a proven

to be good in a wide range of grip conditions and have a great resistance to punctures.

"They allow all drivers to find the grip limits of the car and tyre allowing the drivers to develop their driving skills."

Falken is also to support a Nissan Micra entry in the under-17 series later in the year which will offer journalists the opportunity to pit their skills against the young drivers already in the championship.