



# MOTORSPORT WALES

## Has Wales Finally Found A New F1 Star?

It's more than 35 years since a Welsh driver last lined up on a Grand Prix grid. Now some pundits are suggesting that we may finally have a worthy successor in the making to Ruthin's Tom Pryce.

At just 19 years of age, Matt Parry from Cardiff recently became the 25<sup>th</sup> recipient of the prestigious McLaren Autosport BRDC award. Previous winners include Jenson Button, David Coulthard and three time IndyCar champion Dario Franchitti.



The achievement is all the more remarkable when you consider that, as Matt himself points out, he was relatively late coming to four wheeled racing, having first opted for the two wheeled variety. Matt says he inherited an interest in fast road machinery from his father, Simon, but the racing came about almost by accident. "My dad was living in Cardiff and I was living with my mum in Essex so it was a hobby me and my dad used to do when he used to travel all the way down. It was something for us to do." That something was Motocross at his then local Wildtracks venue.

The motorcycle competition began to lose its allure when he first saw kart racing, as he explains, "I thought what am I doing with Motocross getting muddy and hurting myself all the time? Let's go and do some four wheel stuff." With many young racers taking up the sport around the age of 8, Matt had a little catching up to do but that didn't stop him winning the Formula Kart Star Championship in 2009 and the Super One British Championship in 2010. From there, he became vice-champion in the World Finals, rating him the second best racer in the world at his age and in his category of kart,

Those achievements attracted the attention of the Caterham Formula One team and he has been a member of the Caterham Race Academy ever since. The benefits that come from that are substantial, as Matt explains, "They give me financial support which is the big thing and they give me

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Welcome to the first edition of "Motorsport Wales", the WAMC newsletter, for 2014. Along with the latest news for each of the association's championships we meet a young race driver who some experts are comparing to Tom Pryce, find out how you might become a Touring Car driver and, hopefully, get you scratching your heads with our prize quiz. Enjoy reading it and good luck for the new motorsport season.

As ever, we want your motorsport news to include in future editions. Just e-mail it to [peter@peterhughesmedia.com](mailto:peter@peterhughesmedia.com).

Don't forget you can see the latest Championship standings and lots more at [www.wamc.org.uk](http://www.wamc.org.uk)

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### ***In this issue:***

*We meet rising Welsh race star, Matt Parry.*

*Find out how Formula Dragon aims to put a Welsh Driver in the BTCC.*

*Give you the chance to win a very special book all about the Pirelli Calendar*

*All the latest WAMC Championship news*

### ***Upcoming Events:***

*WAMC Awards Evening Jan 25th*

*Winter Challenge Jan 25/26th North Wales CC*

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*Pirelli MSA Welsh Forest Rally  
Championship*

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Pirelli have confirmed that they will continue their sponsorship of the Championship in 2014. The qualifying rounds of the Championship remain unchanged from 2013 except for the addition of the Neath Valley Stages as a reserve event. That means that the eight round series will start with the Wyedean Rally in February and conclude with October's Cambrian Rally. Reigning champions Connor McCloskey and Francis Regan have already indicated that they hope to defend their title.

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*In Car Services Welsh  
Clubman's 2WD Forest Rally  
Championship*

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This year we welcome Evans Motorsport Tyres as a Co-Sponsor with In Car Services. This is the fifth consecutive year that In Car Services have sponsored the Championship.

The championship this year consists of 7 rounds with the best 5 scores to count. The events are fairly evenly spread from February to October with a minimum of 4 weeks between each round.

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media training and they also help me with my fitness and they help me with preparing for Formula One so I get to go to Formula One events. Without them I don't think I'd be as prepared as I am now and I don't think I'd be getting the same results."

The move into single seater racing saw Matt competing in Formula Ford and what he describes as "a difficult season". As he explains, "every driver was a third or fourth year driver and this was my first year in a single seater. But then we went on to Formula BMW which was known as Intersteps and managed to win the title with Fortec who have been absolutely fantastic with me since then."

From Intersteps he moved, with Fortec, to the Formula Renault Northern European Cup (NEC) for the 2013 season. The championship ran over seven weekends, taking in some of the classic European race circuits and Matt quickly got to grips with the 210bhp 2 litre slicks and wings machines and could easily have been sewn up at the penultimate weekend but,



having never finished lower than fifth place all season, a succession of problems saw

him leave the Most circuit near Prague in the Czech Republic without adding to his score.

He went on to clinch his title at the Zandvoort in Holland in the first race of the final weekend of the Championship. In contrast to his nightmare at Most, Matt says the high spot of the season came in the second weekend at Germany's Nurburgring. "The more experienced competitors from the Eurocup do the first three rounds of the NEC", he explains, "A lot of the Eurocup racers already had experience of the circuit but I qualified P3 for both races and from there I won both races. My closest NEC rival finished behind the Eurocup runners so that was a big boost for me."

With the Cup clinched, Matt faced the biggest challenge of his career to date, the selection process for the McLaren Autosport Award. Taking six days in total, the first two days saw the six finalists assessed for their fitness and their performance on a driving simulator. From there they moved onto the Silverstone race track for two days, "Our sighting car was a McLaren MP4 road car, which was really cool." Matt explains, "Then we

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*Brian Dennis Motorsport  
Welsh Historic Rally  
Championship*

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For 2014 the Brian Dennis Welsh Historic Rally Championship will be a 9 round championship with the best 6 rounds to count. The 9 rounds will have a mix of 7 forest and 2 tarmac events. New for 2014 will be the inclusion of Category 4 for cars built between 1-1-1982 and 31-12-1985

The 2014 championship starts with the Wydean Forest Stages on 15<sup>th</sup> February and the second round being the Mid Wales Historic Stages on 2<sup>nd</sup> March

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*Steve Harkness Competition  
Tyres Welsh Tarmacadam  
Rally Championship*

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The Championship has a new coordinator this year, Fran Davies.

We must thank Steve Harkness for his continued support in sponsoring the championship this year again.

We have 11 rounds in the championship with The Toyota Harlech Stages being a new round. The first round will be Rali Cwm Gwendraeth on the 9th of February at Pembrey.

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moved on to a single seater car which was a Formula Two car. It's got 500bhp on the overboost button, then we moved on to a DTM car which is like the Formula One of saloon cars. That was an amazing car to drive, it was like driving a PlayStation. It was so smooth. It was a joy to drive really and then we got to drive a McLaren GT3 car which was a fantastic experience."

Following the final interview stage, Matt was announced as the winner, receiving £100,000 towards his racing programme, a test in a McLaren F1 car and an Arai carbon helmet valued at £3,500. Matt says, however, that the most important part of winning the award is not the money. "The biggest thing is the prestige of winning the award, all the media coverage you get from it is fantastic to boost my profile." He's also looking forward to his forthcoming F1 test drive, "When I started racing one of the goals I set myself was to drive an F1 car and in October I will be able to say I am an F1 driver."

Before that, Matt will contest the Formula Renault Eurocup and he is anticipating a tough challenge. "I have already got a taste of what to expect this year, my engineer has already prepared me for this through the NEC year. Detail is the key thing. If you are a thousandth of a second out with the throttle you have lost two tenths. Everything has to be perfect. The drivers who are in it are making the car go as quick as possible. There is no one who could drive the car quicker. You've got to make sure you are on top every lap."

He has also set himself a high bar to clear if his racing career is to remain on course, "We have to set an objective of winning the title. I need to come into the top 3 to continue racing, I think. To make it to Formula One I need to win the championship."

If all goes well in 2014 Matt also has a clear vision of how he would like to see his career progress beyond that, "I want to win the championship to get a drive in World Series Formula Renault 3.5. Have a two year campaign in that, maybe in the first year become a Formula One test driver and then in 2016, if my maths is correct, win the 3.5 championship and in 2017 be a Formula One driver."

In addition to the McLaren Autosport Award and being part of the Caterham Racing Academy, Matt has also enjoyed support from closer to home as part of Sport Wales's Elite Cymru squad, which is administered as far as motorsport is concerned by the WAMC. Matt says the value of that scheme shouldn't be underestimated. "It has been fantastic", he says, "in terms of facilities as well as the financial support. A good thing is seeing the commitment in other sports and learning from people in other sports. To be helped by Wales is great."

Whatever support a driver is given, however, the success ultimately must come from within. Matt's philosophy on how to achieve your best is summed up in the advice he offers to budding young Welsh race drivers.

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### *King of Epynt*

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The championship is currently without a sponsor for this year but will be coordinated by Fran Davies

The first round will be The Tour of Epynt on the 9th of March.

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### *Road Rally Championship supported by the Basic Roamer Company*

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The 2014 WAMC Road Rally Championship is again supported by The Basic Roamer Co and will consist of 13 rounds with the best 8 scores to count.

The first round of the Championship is the Mike Darowen Rally organised by Dovey Valley Motor Club to be held on 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Feb.

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### *WAMC Junior Challenge*

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The final round of the 2013 WAMC Junior Challenge, the Mel Harries Memorial Rally, took place on Saturday the 7th December.

Congratulations go to Charlotte Phelps for winning the Challenge Overall in 2013 and to all the award winners Thanks too to all the competitors who have registered and taken part in the challenge rounds this year, we hope to see many of them back in 2014.



“The biggest advice is preparation is key. If I was doing any driver coaching that’s what I would always be saying. You wouldn’t go to a

meeting or do a presentation unprepared so why would you go to a race track unprepared?” Those who were fortunate enough to meet Tom Pryce describe him as an unassuming person with a big talent. A brief talk with Matt along with a look at his record to date suggests they may have a lot in common. Perhaps we too should be prepared; prepared to finally see another Welsh race driver reach the top.

### **Have You Got Tin Top Talent?**

A new competition is being launched to identify motor racing talent in Wales with the ultimate aim of taking a Welsh driver through to compete in the British Touring Car Championship.

Formula Dragon has been launched by Tim Matthews of Swansea based SVG Promotions. Tim was previously behind the TV series, “So

you want to be an F1 Driver”.



The competition is open to men and women resident in Wales. The initial

phases will involve driving on an indoor kart track followed by a fitness assessment.

Speaking at the launch of the event, Tim Matthews said, “, “I produced our first event in 2003 after spending a season racing a Tyrrell F1 car in the World Thoroughbred Grand Prix Championship. I realised at that point that you couldn’t race without support and set up our first event, shown by Channel 5, to provide that chance. Winner Swansea student Mark Johnston has gone on to become a well-respected driver and instructor. Gary Simms entered our third

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The final results for 2013 are available on the web site.

The Regulations and Calendar for 2014 are finalised, and the Permit for 2014 has been received.

For 2014 points will be awarded for both days of the double header events at the Epynt Hillclimbs and Ty Croes Sprints.

A team award has been introduced for 2014, for teams car-sharing on events. At least one team member must be entered for the challenge

The entry fee for the challenge, which was not charged in 2013, has again been dropped for 2014, and also the minimum number of events contenders need to enter to be eligible for awards in the dinner has been dropped for 2014. The calendar for 2014 is as follows:

1. May 11th  
Llys-y-Fran Hill Climb
  2. May 31<sup>st</sup>/ June 1st  
Eagle Road Rally
  3. June 14th & 15th  
Epynt Hill Climb  
(2 Days)
  4. July 19th  
Llandow Sprint
  5. August 9<sup>th</sup>  
Castle Combe  
Autosolo
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event in 2007 and finished in the top six. Now he races around the World, instructs for us, and is one of our judges for this event.”

“SVG want to bring motorsport to the general public in Wales. The long term goal is to run a British Touring Car team run by Welsh mechanics and technicians, driven by Welsh drivers and supported by Welsh business. It’s the first initiative of its kind anywhere and The SVG Motorsport Centre of Excellence in Swansea will provide a venue for people to visit to see genuine race cars they can get the chance to drive and to watch. Formula Dragon will be shown on our own YouTube Channel along with features on all the other projects we are running.”

You can find out more about the competition at [www.formuladragon.co.uk](http://www.formuladragon.co.uk).

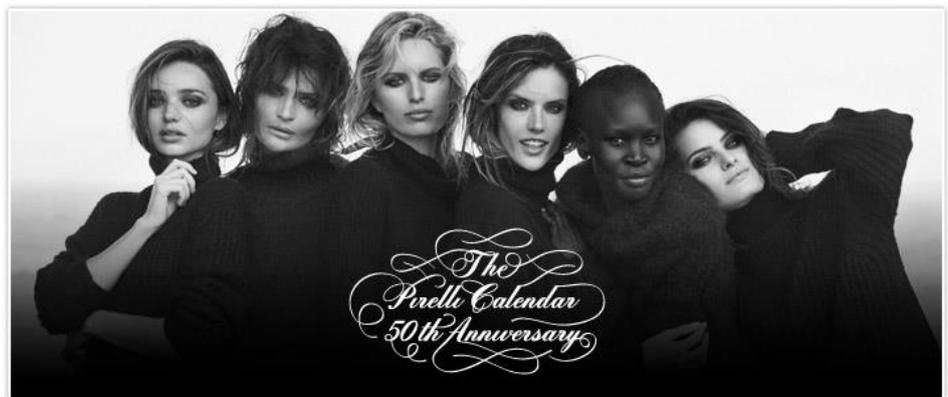
### **It's Party Time**

January 25<sup>th</sup> is the date of the Association’s annual awards evening and the venue is once again the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells.

To check on late availability of tickets contact Jimmy Jones at [wamc.clubmans@wamc.org.uk](mailto:wamc.clubmans@wamc.org.uk).

### **Are You Our Very Own MotorMind?**

To get your brains back into gear we have a New Year’s Quiz for you with a very special prize for the winner. Courtesy of Jimmy and Heather Jones we have one copy of “Pirelli Back Stage 1964 – 2005” to give away. This stunning coffee table book tells the story of the famous Pirelli calendar and for that reason the competition is only open to those over 18.



Send your entries to [peter@peterhughesmedia.com](mailto:peter@peterhughesmedia.com) and all the correct ones will go into a hat with one lucky prize winner being drawn out.

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6. September 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>  
Ty-Croes Sprint (2  
Days)
  7. Sept 21<sup>st</sup>  
Credenhill Autotest
  8. Dec 6<sup>th</sup>/ 7<sup>th</sup>  
Mel Harries Road  
Rally

So get your thinking caps on and here we go:

1. The Welsh Forest Rally Championship was first contested in 1975. Who was the winning driver?
2. Moving right up to date, who took the 2013 Trident Engineering Welsh Sprint and Hill Climb title?
3. What is the name of the Welsh Road Rally Championship round run by Aberystwyth and District Motor Club?
4. Moving further afield, in what make and model car did Bjorn Waldegard win the 1970 Monte Carlo Rally?
5. Which rally driver's nickname means "on the roof" in English?
6. In what year was James Hunt Formula One World Champion?
7. Who was the last Welsh competitor to win the British Rally Championship and in what year?
8. Who is the current British Touring Car Champion?
9. Whose autobiography is entitled "Only Here for the Beer"?
10. The Wydean Stages first ran in 1975. Who was the winning driver that year?
11. How many Grands Prix did Sebastian Vettel win in 2013?
12. Who took the overall drivers title in the 2013 British Historic Rally Championship?
13. Who co-drove Tom Pryce on the 1976 Tour of Epynt?
14. Name the three courses in the 2013 British Hillclimb Championship that were not in mainland Britain.
15. What make and model of car won the 2013 Steve Harkness Competition Tyres Welsh Tarmac Rally Championship?

Closing date for entries is January 31st. The competition is not open to elected officials of the Association (or the editor, unfortunately!) Best of luck!