

ENDURANCE TRIAL NEWSLETTER, OCTOBER 2018.

So we reach the end of the Endurance season for this year, the eighth year of Endurance Trials in this country and the fourth year of the championship, with the fourth winner in as many years. (All points and class winners in the points standings attached). Congratulations to Peter Barrable on a job well done. His two wins on the trot at the start of the year gave him a great headstart. With strong finishes in the other three events, he truly deserved the title.

Karl O'Donoghue gave chase, but wasn't able to close the gap, especially after problems in Monaghan.

Derek Butler was third, having harvested a bunch of points over the last few rounds.

And so to that great bunch of men and, increasingly, women. Having sat in the left hand seat for years, I know the pressures that the navigators are under. They put up with a lot; drivers' errors frequently happen on some remote part of a selective, away from the public eye but navigational errors rapidly become public and tend to be penalised to a much greater extent. Remember the old rally saying – drivers win rallies, navigators lose them!

Evin Hughes took the title again, helped by sticking to the same driver all year. Having already won the Navigation Trial championship, all he needs now is the Special Stage championship – I'm sure Karl wouldn't like that! Second went to Alan Dolan, while third place was taken by Claire Murtagh, despite missing two rounds.

Nicole Drought was navigated to first place in Class A1 (Endurance cars up to 1.0 L) by the combined efforts of Ruth Nugent and Aaron McElroy. A great performance, as it was her first full year in Endurance Trials. A similar performance came from Peter and Aaron Cummins, the father and son combination joining the series only after the first round. Aaron took the class championship, while Peter came in second to Nicole in the drivers, with Brian Kirwan third; Elsie Kirwan (any relation?) was third placed navigator.

The top three drivers were given points throughout the year, but were not eligible for class awards in computing the final class championship positions. The same rules apply to the top three navigators.

The A2 class (Endurance specification cars from 1.0 to 1.4 L) was taken by last year's champion, Kevin O'Rourke. Glyn Gaffney would have been closer, except for missing a couple of rounds. Despite missing three rounds, Patrick Corcoran slotted in third. Come on lads – do all the rounds and make the fight closer!

These drivers had a mix of navigators. Gary Egan scored 13 points, so he took the class championship. Four navigators achieved 10 points, so a countback had to be made to break the tie. By virtue of his performance on the first round, Gary McElhinney took the class championship, with Robert Barrable putting some navigators to shame by coming in third on the basis of his win with Peter in Tipperary.

Class B, the class for cars 'not to Endurance Specification' (formerly called Navigation cars) up to 1.4 L was taken by Colin Sheridan, after the closest battle of the championship, until Mark Reilly failed to start in the last two rounds. Colin won the class, despite having the back of his car savaged by Karl O'Donoghue in the ALMC round! Owen Sheridan took the navigators title. David Forde took third, having competed in four rounds. Darren Buttle had two perfect tens in the earlier rounds, good enough to scoop second navigator, with Dylan Farrell third.

Class C (cars 'not to Endurance specification 1.4 to 2.0 L) had a wide variety of cars. Championship sponsor and coffee guru Sean McEnroe gave it full beans to win the class, with Samuel Patterson second and Dermot McCafferty third. Some famous names popped up in the class, with Josh Moffett and the even more famous (!) Joe Murray displaying their skills.

Again, chopping and changing of navigators meant that it wasn't always the same team that won the class. Three navigators scored ten points; count-back had to be used to separate them, with Paddy McCrudden, Martin Quinn and Ryan Brennan filling the top three positions.

There were no entries in class D1 (FWD Historic cars)

Class D2 (RWD Historics) was won by Martin Nugent and Paul Tierney in their Mk. 1 Escort. Declan Burke, in the fantastic VW Beetle, was second, with no other entries. They had a variety of navigators, so that Pdraig Forde was second and Simon Echlin third, just pipping that jack of all trades, Eoin Longworth.

Class E had only one entry, Niall Murray and Sam Dolan, so the class went to them. As they competed on just one round, it raises questions as to whether the class should be merged with another.

A special mention has to be made of Paddy Fay – at 80 years of age, he must take the honours for the oldest competitor, although Eddie Colton must be hot on his heels! Eoin Longworth was mad enough to loan Paddy his car, while he navigated. I understand that the craic in that car was something else.

Well done to all.

An interesting aspect of this year's events was the number of women competitors. The Garahey ladies headed the list, with several family members out to support the male members of the clan. With all these Garaheys, doing the results became a bit of a nightmare. Other women navigators covered themselves in glory, while in the drivers, Nicole Drought was keeping some of the men drivers at bay. Let's not forget Claire Murtagh, who took third overall navigator.

What of 2019? Well, there are a few significant changes. The most important one is that the Navigation S/C has nominated the Starmaxx Ice Gripper W810 as the control tyre **for the driven wheel in the Endurance Classes only**. Negotiations are ongoing to secure a favourable price for Endurance competitors and to make sure they are widely available.

Also, moves are afoot to break up the Endurance Class A2 into Expert, Semi-expert and Novice, with possibly a Masters class as well. At present, a newcomer to the A2 class has little chance of success against the established experts. We want to encourage newcomers and hope that this development will achieve this.

More and more clubs are interested in running Endurance events, to such an extent that next year, the championship will increase to 8 events, with the best 7 scores to count. This will broaden the type of tests competitors have the opportunity to drive on. Already, we go from the wooded roads of Luttrellstown to the mountain bog of the Birr round via the tarmac tests of Wexford. On that point, my two lads say that the Birr round was one of the best in the championship (obviously no loyalty to their father, who was the course organiser for the ALMC event!!).

The club (ALMC) are looking at having the prize-giving during a 'Night of Champions' which is being organised by Leo Nulty in Finnstown House, in Lucan, on 30/11/18. More details later.

Although I'm stepping down as Course Organiser for the ALMC event in February, doubtless it will be as good an event as ever and something to look forward to over the next few months.

Frank O'Donoghue.

CARS FOR SALE:

Ted Gaffney knows of 2 Starlets and 2 Micras for sale.

Graham O'Donoghue is selling his full-spec Rover 200. Details attached – call Frank on 087-6737074