

ENDURANCE TRIALS NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2017.

We are now heading towards the third event in the Endurance Trial Championship, with the Co. Monaghan Motor Club's Endurance Trial on 13/08/17. (Due to a delay with the permit, regulations were slow to be published but are now on the club's website). This should have been the fourth round but due to the tragic incident in Dundrum two days before the Tipperary event, the organisers had no option but to cancel the event, as it was based in Dundrum, a village deeply shocked by the tragedy. It would have been inappropriate to go ahead with the event, under the circumstances.

There have been some developments since the last Newsletter. The most significant was the meeting of all parties involved in rallying, in Athlone at the end of May. It was refreshing to hear the many constructive proposals put forward at the meeting, with little of the bickering that usually characterises such meetings. While Motorsport Ireland comes in for criticism from time to time, this meeting was an eye-opener for many, particularly when they heard that MI had put up €750,000 in January to allow motorsport continue.

Regarding Endurance Trials, there is no doubt that they are a cheap way to get into the sport and we are seeking suggestions as how to get more competitors involved. One suggestion was to change the name to Targa Rallies, as they are very similar to the Targa events (Lanes Rallies) run in the north. The title 'Endurance Trial' is not very informative to the casual observer; it was a title inherited from the first events run by the late Philip Young, which were long-distance events from, for example, London to Cape Town.

Changing the title might encourage Northern competitors to come south, to what they would see as a familiar format. Also, there are rumours of a change to the regulations for Targa events, which might bring them more into line with our events, particularly our scrutiny requirements.

More entries will have two main outcomes. Firstly, the cost of individual entries will come down and secondly, the insurance 'pot' will grow, also resulting in lower costs to clubs and competitors. With entries falling off dramatically for stage events, with some events being cancelled, the cost for individual competitors will rise inexorably if this trend continues, putting the future of rallying at risk. We must introduce new blood to the sport and our discipline is certainly cost effective.

Finally, we are getting to that time of year when new rules (if any) have to be drafted for the coming year. The rules have been fairly stable over the last while, including the tyre rules. If anyone feels that we need to change anything, please let me have your suggestions and I will take them to the Navigation Sub-committee.

See you in Monaghan.

Frank O'Donoghue.