

SMRC Dinner and Awards Ceremony December 2nd Sheraton Hotel, Edinburgh

Duncan Vincent and Robert Johnston were again hosting the gala evening. We started with a video from Club President Allan McNish & Dario Franchitti, who were both working in Hong Kong at the 1st Formula E race meeting of their new season. Allan said he couldn't be with us as he was in Hong Kong and offered his congratulations to everyone in the club, and commented on how SMRC was successful in 2017. He also congratulated all the trophy winners who have pushed hard. Dario congratulated all the SMRC winners. Jonny Adam for his Sportscar wins, and thanked Heather Brunton for organising the dinner. Allan ended by saying there had been some great performances this year.

We then had Club Chairman Sandy Denham on stage to give the Chairman's speech at the start of the evening.

"Good evening ladies and gentleman and thanks for your warm welcome. Now on to the Scottish Motor Racing Club Annual Dinner and Awards Evening. 2017 as a season is behind us, we are here to celebrate the winners and achievers, and acknowledge the volunteers, and all who have contributed in whatever way in allowing our wonderful activities to take place, also my fellow directors, and Heather. It is very important to mention our relationship with Knockhill. On behalf of you all I would like to say a big thanks to Jillian and her team at Knockhill for all they do for us every season, thank you so much.

I would also like to thank Duncan and Robert for presenting the event again, in what I am sure will be of the highest quality, and to all who make this event possible, it does not just happen.

It is fantastic to have 350 people in attendance here at the Sheraton Hotel in our capital city

My first duty is to extend a welcome to our honorary members and our guests, also to convey apologies from all who are unable to be with us this evening.

Welcome Bernard Buss, as you see on the screen we have the following apologies from honorary members

Also, sadly it falls on me to inform you that one of the major building blocks of the SMRC, in the shape of Hugh McCaig, is not with us this evening. Hugh was sadly diagnosed with a form of cancer a few weeks ago, but has returned home this morning from his surgery last Saturday. I am sure you will all join me in wishing him a speedy and full recovery. Good luck to our friend.

Sadly we also have to pay our respects to those who have left us in the past 12 months, firstly Formula Ford racer for many years Geordie Taylor, fondly remembered in his Reynard, also Doris Romanes wife of long time participant and Chairman and benefactor of SMRC and one of the creators of Ingliston, John Romanes. Also we note the passing of former BRM Team Manager Tim Parnell whose father racer Reg Parnell was the first Chairman of our Club, they will all be missed.

I am delighted on behalf of the SMRC to welcome our guests this evening, CEO of the SMTA Sandy Burgess, Sandy is responsible for the resurrection of this august body and has chosen to gain brand awareness for his business by joining forces with us, stating we provide an exciting product which allows great engagement, also links well with his industry and backing a winner with great value for money. Therefore I am delighted to tell you the SMTA will be backing our 2018 Hot Hatch Championship, Sandy thank you.

Also with us Sandy Bloomer, Sandy is the MD of Gift Experience and also

Club Chairman,
Sandy Denham



the Promoter of the bi annual Ingliston Revival, Sandy engaged the services SMRC to run the competitive element of the event in 2017, it was great for SMRC to be back at one of our spiritual homes, Sandy we thank for the opportunity, as does Scottish Motor Sport.

Time to mention Brand Events and the Ignition event, 2nd year and again a great success for SMRC, and also a wonderful opportunity for our marshal force to demonstrate their skills in front of 30,000 people.

Also with us is Rory Bryant, National Development Manager of SMS, a joint venture project with the MSA and the Scottish Auto Cycle Union, with for a first in Scottish Motor Sport financial support from Sports Scotland, Rory is joined by Major Sandy Mac, Chairman SACU also Pete Weall Chairman of SACC, also World Rally Champion Robert Reid a major contributor to the motor sport scene all over the world, alongside them are stakeholders from MSA, SPORTS SCOTLAND, EVENTS SCOTLAND and THE ENERGY SKILLS PARTNERSHIP.

Joining us tonight for the first time is Marjory Crooks and her team from the Edinburgh College, our new filming providers. They are conducting their first assignment tonight by filming this event, they will also be filming all our events this coming year to include some new and exciting ideas to increase engagement for everyone.

We again have leading motor sport journalist David Tremayne with us this evening. I would like to personally thank all our commercial partners. Celtic Speed, Yokohama Tyres and Wheels Around

As well as his generous corporate partnership with the Celtic Speed Mini Cooper Championship, Tommy (Dreelan) races all over the world with his historic stable of cars, and has recently scored overall victory at Daytona, with 4 wins and a pole and fastest lap in Porsche 962, and also achieving second overall in the European Group C Championship.

I became Chairman again in May of this year, it soon became apparent on appraising the business we were required to make changes to ensure it was run in a more business like fashion. I can also contribute with my continued involvement with the SMS project, also remaining on Race Committee at the MSA, and I am very proud to have been invited to sit on the MSA Council representing Scotland, although I'm not sure they are aware of what they will get!

I am not the manager of the past, more, the designer of the future, and to this end I am

delighted to inform you of the direction we will be taking the SMRC in 2018. We need to see the future, not as something out of our control, but as something we can shape for the better through concerted and collective effort.

Members and guests enjoyed a fantastic evening



Sandy then outlined some of the exciting new projects for 2018

1 New Website. Shown on screen is a draft for display purposes this evening, this will be created and managed by the Covey Agency, and will move the digital side of our business forward substantially, motor sport people dealing with a motor sport project.

2 SMTA Hot Hatch Championship Corporate Partner.

3 Rev Up. The on line entry system used by most clubs, takes us to a more efficient level

4 New Filming. A partnership with the Edinburgh College

5 New Marshal Training programme. To provide greater opportunities for those involved in this vital part of our business, supported by SMS SACC and SMRC investing in our people, 4 individual days to embrace development, leadership, support and to help understand their needs.

6 Develop our SMRC Coaching Programme. Run by Malcolm McNab and supported by MSA and SMS, this will be the largest Coaching Programme in the UK.

7 SMRC Facebook Campaign. To attract new Racing Members

8 Another Go Motorsport Night. Also another new initiative - a taster day prior to the season's first meeting, dates to be confirmed.

9 Joint Commercial Venture. With BRSCC for TCR meeting, and thanks to Finlay Crocker and Andrew Morrison for their cars (on display).

10 SMRC 2018 Dates. Never been launched this early.

Ladies and Gentlemen, change will not come if we wait for some other person, or some other time, we are the ones we have been waiting for. People of the SMRC, THIS IS OUR MOMENT, THIS IS OUR TIME."

Sandy then said grace.

VIDEOS - *There were then videos from stars not able to be present, including David Coulthard* who said well done to all the winners and especially Jonny Adam.

Marino Franchitti also congratulated all the winners, highlighting Jonny Adam and he also said hello to the marshals table.

Gordon Shedden commented how the evening would likely progress with members at the bar and marshals having fun. He also spoke of Gary Stagg and his wife, who have had a terrible motor cycle accident and are recovering in hospital, and wished them all the best.

2017 CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS

Aston Martin GT Champion and Le Mans GT class winner Jonny Adam was on stage to present the Championship awards.

Scottish Fiesta Championship

In association with Yokohama Tyres



Peter Cruickshank took 3rd in the ST Cup



Graeme Cuthbert won the XR2 Championship

Fiesta ST Cup

Winner

2nd

3rd

XR2 Championship

Winner - Hamilton & Inches Quaich

2nd

3rd

XR2 Newcomers Award

Sandy Forrest Trophy

WAYNE MACAULAY
BARRY FARQUHARSON
PETER CRUICKSHANK

GRAEME CUTHBERT
KRISTIAN LEITH
ROB KERR

ROB KERR

Scottish Legend Cars Championship

Legends Cars Quaich

Winner

2nd

3rd

Legends Racing - Team Trophy

Legends Racing - Rookie Award

JOHN PATERSON

DAVID HUNTER

IVOR GREENWOOD

GERARD McCOSH /

BEN MASON

JORDAN HODGSON



Legend Cars Quaich Winner John Paterson with Jonny Adam (right)



Jordan Hodgson, Legends Rookie of The Year

Scottish Saloon & Sportscar Championship

Winner - King Hussein Trophy

2nd - Adam Wylie Trophy

3rd - H. & G. Robinson Trophy

John Nicolson Trophy (Top Sports Car)

Class A2 Winner

Class A3 Winner

MINI COOPER S R53 CUP Winner

WILLIAM ROBSON

ANDREW PATERSON

KENNY McKELL

RON CUMMING

ANDREW MORRISON

RON CUMMING

OLIVER MORTIMER



William Robson won the Saloon & Sportscar Championship



Andrew Morrison won Class A2



Oly Mortimer took the inaugural Mini Cooper R53 Cup

Scottish BMW Championship

Winner	LEE ELRICK
2nd	GARY CLARK
3rd	DAVID McNAUGHTON
BMW NEWCOMERS CUP	JAKE HUTCHISON

Lee Elrick BMW Champion



BMW Newcomers Champion
Jake Hutchison

Scottish Classic Sports and Saloon Car Championships

Winner Doune Cup & Winner Class A	ALASTAIR BAPTIE
2nd Place & Winner Class B	BRUCE MITCHELL
Winner Class D	RAYMOND BOYD
Winner Class E	TOMMY GILMARTIN
Winner Class F	CALUM McRAE
Winner Class G	HARRY SIMPSON
Saloon Car Cup	MARIO FERRARI

Alistair Baptie, Classic S&S Winner



Harry Simpson
Class G winner



Celtic Speed Mini Cooper Cup

In association with Yokohama Tyres & Wheels Around

Winner - Lombard Trophy	MARK GERAGHTY
2nd	MORGAN MURRAY
3rd	ROBBIE DALGLEISH

Hannah Chapman won
the Mini Cooper
Ladies Cup



Ladies Award
HANNAH CHAPMAN
Newcomers Award
MARK GERAGHTY

Scottish Formula Ford Championship

Romanes Quaich & Jock McBain Trophy	ROSS MARTIN
2nd	SEBASTIAN MELROSE
3rd	JORDAN GRONKOWSKI
Newcomers Award	ROSS MARTIN
Mazda Road to Indy	ROSS MARTIN

Ross Martin



Graham Leslie son of the late great David Leslie then came on stage to present two special FF trophies

David Leslie Trophy	SEB MELROSE
Angel Burgeno Trophy (Fastest Lap of the Year)	ROSS MARTIN

Seb Melrose



Ross Martin



SPECIAL AWARDS

SMRC Mechanics Awards

First of these were the Mechanics awards, which were presented by Lewis Hamilton's Pirelli Tyre Technician, to SMRC club member Peter Mayburn. It was noted 25 years ago Peter was runner up in the Scottish FF Junior Championship and was also given a bottle of Champagne.

FF1600	JORDAN GRONKOWSKI
Mini Cooper	DOMINIC WHEATLEY
BMW	JAKE HUTCHISON
Fiestas	NICK FORSYTH
Legends Cars	JORDAN HODGSON
Saloons & Sports	WILL ROBSON
Ollon-Villars Quaich, Best Prepared Classic	MARIO FERRARI

Gronkowski Snr



Dominic Wheatley's mechanic



Audi TT Cup Test

Robert Reid was then on stage. He was co-driver for the late Richard Burns in WRC. He said: "Those days were a bit of a blur." He then spoke about how Allan McNish had announced in 2016, that there would be an Audi TT Cup test in Germany in 2018, for a driver who had shown great performance and great promise. He then announced that the winner was Michael Liddell (Mini Cooper Cup). Robert said: "I think this is a fantastic award and the opportunity for a young driver to work with a manufacturer is priceless."

Michael Liddell



The Walter Robertson Award

This carriage clock is given to the winner to keep and is awarded to someone who puts a huge amount of effort in to the sport, but does it entirely for the fun and enjoyment. This year's recipient of the Walter Robertson Award was Race Photographer, Jim Moir. Walter Robertson, the well known former SMRC committee member, racer, senior Clerk of the Course and Steward came up on stage, and presented the Walter Robertson Clock.

Jim Moir



SMRC Driver of the Year Award



William Robson

Chief Marshal Jim Redpath came up on stage to present the SMRC Driver of the Year Award which the Marshals choose. It went to Saloons and Sportscars William Robson.

Claire and Nicholas Trophy



Karen Ditch accepted the Award for Adam Buttercase

The next awards were presented by Club Chairman Sandy Denham

Awarded to a marshal or official whose work is often unseen but is important to the success of SMRC meetings. Awarded to Adam Buttercase (Chief Observer). Karen Ditch who was retiring after many years as a Marshal, came up on stage.

Marshals' Surprise Award



Duncan Vincent with his photo montage

A Photo Montage was given to Duncan Vincent who said: "We're not supposed to get awards, but I'm very pleased. I feel privileged to do what I do." Duncan also said this was for Gary Stagg (who, with his wife, had recently been in a bad motorcycle accident).

Edinburgh Students Charities Quaich

Heather Brunton SMRC Club Secretary presented this trophy, which is awarded to the top lady driver of the year - Hannah Chapman (Mini Cooper Cup). Hannah said: "I wasn't really keen on the reverse track then it came together on the day (she won two Mini races)," Adding that she'd been in it (Mini Cooper Cup) for a few years, and so fingers crossed for 2018.

Hannah Chapman (right) with Heather Brunton



BMRC Trophy

Chosen this year by the SMRC Committee, awarded to the driver who won most races. Winner - JOHN PATERSON (Legends Cars)

John Paterson, winner of the BMRC Trophy with Sandy Denham



SMRC Special Award



Ronnie Thom accepted the award on behalf of Mark Evans

Awarded to a man who had made a special contribution towards the club. Mark Evans from Yokohama Tyres, who have supported several Championships including the Mini Cooper Cup and Fiestas this season, also Classics in previous years. The award was received on Mark's behalf by Wheels Around's Ronnie Thom.

Duncan Fisher Trophy

This trophy is given in memory of Duncan who competed at Ingliston in the 70s and 80s and is awarded to an enthusiast who is totally committed to his favourite sport of motor racing, and invariably does most of his work behind the scenes. His or her efforts are usually seen by few, but appreciated by many.

This year's recipient was Safety Car driver Alan Baron.



Alan Baron

William Lyons Trophy

This trophy is given for the best performance by a Scottish driver in a Sports Car. Presented by Sandy Denham to Colin Noble Jnr.



Colin Noble Jnr

Rothmans Trophy



(L to R) Alistair McCaig, Sandy Denham and Colin Noble Jnr

This award is presented to top Scottish driver(s) competing in a UK National Championship. Alasdair McCaig and Colin Noble Jnr for their drives in the Ligier LMP3 for Ecurie Ecosse.

Sandy Denham presented the award and said, this award won by Ecurie Ecosse is the heritage of our club, noting it's a different world that they drive in from the 50s.

Alistair McCaig said: "We've had a fantastic year and it's been a breath of fresh air." He thanked Colin Noble Jnr for his work behind the scenes and added that it was a great privilege to drive for Ecurie Ecosse.

He added: "My dad's (Hugh McCaig) had a 5 ½ hour operation and the first thing he said (leaving the hospital) was what pub are we going to. He's doing well and making good progress."

Ecurie Ecosse Hub Cap

Sandy Denham was on stage to present the Ecurie Ecosse Hub Cap to this year's winner. The wheel spinner from the 1956 Le Mans winning Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type, affectionately known as the 'Hub Cap'. This is presented each year to an outstanding young Scottish driver, who has shown enormous potential.

Sandy said: "Looking at who has won this in the past, Norman Dickson, Dario (Franchitti) and David Leslie.

Now Colin Noble jnr who has competed in the British Championship this year with Alistair McCaig, and in Europe (Le Mans Cup with Tony Wells), and will hopefully be in Europe with Alastair next year."

Colin Noble Jnr with the famous 'Hub Cap'



SMRC Award

Sandy Denham presented this to GT Cup winner Graham Davidson.

Sandy said: "You've been racing in the GT Cup single handed."

Graham replied, "It's one of these things, if everyone at Knockhill in Saloons & Sportscars decided to buy a car that had won before, and if I couldn't do it, then it was down to my lack of talent. But 15 wins and two 2nds later, it was a fantastic year."

Graham Davidson



Hartley Whyte & Sheila Whyte Trophies

These two awards prestigious were originally supported by the Whyte & Mackay Trust. On stage were outstanding Scottish young guns who race in the British GT Championship, Sandy Mitchell and Ciaran Haggerty. They presented these awards. Ciaran said, "It's been a while since I've been up here (SMRC stage), it's been a tough year, but we've got a win in GTs. Sandy Mitchell added, "I've really enjoyed going from sprint races to endurances over the past 2 years in British GTs."

The awards go to two outstanding drivers competing in SMRC Championships who have started circuit racing in the last couple of years, shown great talent and ability, and could well move on to greater things within the sport.

The Sheila Whyte Trophy awarded by Sandy Mitchell to a driver who impressed everyone with his driving in The Celtic Speed Mini Cooper Cup in his first full season and won both the Championship and the Newcomers Cup, Mark Geraghty.

Mark Geraghty



Ross Martin



The Hartley Whyte Trophy went to a driver who is a teenager who won the Scottish Formula Ford Championship as well as winning the Newcomers Cup. Awarded by Ciaran Haggerty to FF Champion Ross Martin.

Ross said: "We've got a flight next week to Arizona and I've got to raise the game over there." (Mazda Road to Indy shootout).

Callands Trophy

Presented by Graham Leslie (son of David Leslie and a FF racer himself, as well as a mechanic for Aston Martin). This award goes to the top Scottish Driver who is competing in an International Championship. It was to a man who raced over 24 weekends in 10 countries and won the Blancpain Endurance title and the Le Mans GT class with Aston Martin. He's Aston Martin factory driver and SMRC member, Jonny Adam.

On stage Duncan Vincent interviewed Jonny saying: "What a year you've had." Jonny said: "For us at Aston Martin we've waited 9 years for this (Le Mans win), we've come close, but it was an awesome race, chopping and changing throughout the night. Darren Turner my team mate was in his 15th Le Mans. But the last 46 minutes were the best of my life. The job was to beat the Corvette to put pressure on him, so it's win or bust. It could have gone terribly wrong, but it didn't."

Jonny Adam with Graham Leslie



"As a manufacturer (Aston Martin) the win was huge. I started with this club in 2003, dad bought me a Formula Ford from Louis Di Resta and I enjoyed that year. I've always been a member of this club and you've got to remember where you come from. I've had some great people supporting me along the way, and it's a massive and life changing Le Mans." The audience then saw a video from Prodrive boss Dave Richards congratulating Jonny saying: "It was sensational and take a look at You Tube." The last few laps of the Le Mans GT battle were then shown on screen and the audience applauded loudly as Jonny won. Jonny said: "We always hear stuff in-car, but the crowd noise drowned out a V8 so I used the shift light, and that last lap was a long lap." We then had a video with Jonny's team mates and Darren Turner said: "It's all about the main man Jonny Adam, to watch Jonny at Le Mans in the last hour was amazing. It's been a real privilege to have been your team mate." Jonny then said: "2018 is a big year, new car, the Vantage. We've driven and developed this car for 7 years (current Aston) and it's a big thing for Aston Martin, Le Mans with a new car, and we have a real chance to win the World Championship."

The John Romanes 'Swift' Trophy

This beautiful trophy was donated to the Club some years ago by Doris Romanes in memory of her late husband, John, who was a stalwart of the Club for the best part of 50 years and ran Ingliston in its early days. The trophy is awarded to a Scot for 'Excellence in Motor Racing'. Previous winners include David Leslie, David Coulthard, Gordon Shedden. In 2017 it's Paul Di Resta for his excellent work as a commentator on TV for Grand Prix races and for standing in at Tyrrell at the last minute, and racing in F1 at the Hungarian GP.

Kevin Pick



The Trophies



Our 2017 Winners

2018 SMRC Season - Dates for your diary...

Date	Circuit / Venue	Organising Club
8th April 2018	Knockhill	SMRC
6th May 2018	Knockhill (anti-clockwise)	SMRC
26th/27th May 2018	Anglesey (BMW, Fiesta & Hot-Hatch, Minis, Legends Cars)	BARC
1st July 2018	Knockhill	SMRC
22nd July 2018	Knockhill - Legends Cars only	KMSC
5th August 2018	Knockhill (anti-clockwise)	SMRC
15th/16th Sept. 2018	Knockhill - Triple Header Meeting supporting Super Touring Car Festival	SMRC
7th October 2018	Knockhill	SMRC



Mini Coopers



Formula Fords



Classics



Fiesta XR2s



Fiesta STs



Legends Cars



BMW's



Sports and Saloons

NEW FOR 2018 FIESTA ST AND HOT HATCH CHAMPIONSHIP

We are looking to create another more accessible entry point into Scottish Championship racing for 2018 through the creation of the new **Hot Hatch Trophy** which is supported by SMTA in 2018.

As well as generating interest for existing and new competitors alike, through the rejuvenation of the Scottish Championships. The Hot Hatch Trophy becomes part of a new Championship, incorporating the Fiesta ST cars with anticipated matched pace, this should make for some good close racing.

The Regulations (provisional regs are now on the SMRC web site) have been designed with input from Fiesta ST competitors and regular participants from within the Trackday community. The 2018 Season Calendar is finalised, and the new class should be part of the SMRC's Go Motor Racing initiative which will be kick-started with an Open Evening, planned to be held in Edinburgh in 2018.

Classes

The new Scottish Fiesta & Hot Hatch Championship is for competitors competing in front wheel drive, naturally aspirated hatchback/saloon cars, with a class specifically for Fiesta ST (manufactured 2002- 2008); Class "A" 1801 to 2100cc, Class "B" 1601 to 1800cc, Class "C" 1401 to 1600cc, Class "D" Up to 1400cc, Class "F" Fiesta ST (manufactured 2002-2008).

Scottish XR2s move to race with Classics in 2018

Next season the Fiesta XR2s will have a new home. The XR2 Championship will still be a separate competition, but will race with the Scottish Classics. The XR2s will not be eligible for the Classics championship.

CLASSICS REVISIONS - NEW CLASS AND AGE LIMITS EXPANDED

The Classics age limits are raised by a few years, to allow more cars to enter. They are mainly for cars made pre Dec 31st 1985.

Class F for Future Classics age bracket will go up to allow in cars made until the end of 1990. This allows in cars such as Mk1 Mazda MX5s and Porsche 944S.

New for 2018 is Class C, for historic rally cars and FIA appendix K cars. The Scottish Classic Sports and Saloon Championship is for Competitors participating in production based vehicles manufactured between 1947 and 31st December 1985 in classes A, B, D, E and G; Class F is for cars manufactured between 1st January 1985 and 31st December 1990; Class C is for cars not complying with these technical regulations and is by invitation of the Organisers. Class H is for Ford Fiesta XR2 MK 2 cars complying with specific XR2 technical regs in their own Championship.

Class A Sports and Saloon Cars up to 1500cc engines

Class B Sports and Saloon Cars 1501cc to 2500cc engines

Class C Cars complying with FIA Appendix K and any other cars invited to compete at the discretion of the Organisers, which may include but are not limited to Classic Rally Cars.

Class D Sports and Saloon Cars 2501cc to 3600cc engines

Class E Sports and Saloon Cars over 3601cc engines

Class F Future Classics – Mass production Sports and Saloon Cars, manufactured between January 1st 1985 and December 31st 1990.

Sportscars and Saloons up to 3500cc, all with normally aspirated engines, two wheel drive only. Ford Fiesta XR2 MK2 to Class H specification not permitted, but other variants of the model will be accepted. Standard bodywork, material and dimensions are mandatory.

Class G Limited Production Cars, sports or saloons, specials, kit cars and recreation cars. Only normally aspirated engines, fuel injection not permitted, period transmissions only, 2 wheel drive only.

Class H Ford Fiesta XR2 1.6 XR2 CVH pre lean burn carburettor model.

Jonny Adam signs off successful 2017 season with launch of Aston Martin's new Vantage GTE challenger

Following the final round of the World Endurance Championship in Bahrain, you'd think that Jonny Adam would be winding down after a long 2017 season in which raced in British GT, claimed the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup Pro-Am drivers' title and a class win at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

However Jonny and the rest of the Aston Martin Racing squad flew straight from the Sakhir circuit to London, for the twin launch of the stunning new Vantage road car and their 2018 WEC challenger – the Vantage GTE.

So what is keeping him motivated during what looks to be a very short close season, ahead of the expanded 2018/19 'super-season'?

"It's an incredibly exciting time to be part of Aston Martin Racing with the launch of our new Vantage GTE contender, alongside the new Aston Martin Vantage road car.

"For the last few months we have been putting the miles on the new car across development testing in Europe and America, and not only is the reliability very impressive, the car is performing well.

"The design team and engineers at AMR have looked into every detail from aerodynamics, engine performance to driveability, and have produced something quite special once you experience it on the track. The car is one of the best looking GT cars around, and the worldwide reaction has been very positive.

"The outgoing Vantage was successful throughout its history in the Pro class, and now hopefully this new Vantage GTE will provide us the chance to challenge for more victories at Le Mans 24 Hour, and fight for a World Championship."

Now that it's all done and dusted how would you sum up the 2017 season from a personal point of view?

"It's been very successful with a Le Mans 24 Hours win, finishing second at Spa 24 Hours, and winning the Blancpain Endurance Series. All the championships have been hard fought, but for Aston Martin Racing in customer racing, claiming the Blancpain Series Championship with TF Sport and Ahmad Al Harthy is one of the biggest GT3 victories since the car was introduced in 2012, so that has been important. It's been great working with again Oman Racing, and seeing Ahmad in his 10th year of car racing win a big championship like this."

What was your best moment behind the wheel?

"Has to be the final stint at Le Mans 24 Hours! It meant so much from a personal point of view to achieve that career goal, but for everyone at Aston Martin and Aston Martin Racing, it was the big win we've been chasing for. It's one of the biggest race events in the world, and the way we claimed that win on the final lap of a 24 hour race will probably go down in history as the closest ever finish. A very proud moment."

What was your favourite memory away from the track?

"It was the reaction from everyone within Aston Martin and Aston Martin



Racing after winning Le Mans 24 Hours. You could see and feel how much it meant to each and everyone member of the team and our partners. We put so much into it from car, pit stops, management, strategy etc and to achieve what we set it to do as a team which was to win the Pro class at Le Mans was emotional and rewarding, but very cool."

How is the 2018 season shaping up for you? Do you know what your schedule looks like yet?

"The 2018 season looks like it's going to be busy with further announcements due soon. We've been doing a lot of development testing with the new car behind the scenes throughout 2017 and that will continue ahead of the World Endurance Championship 'super season'. This is an important programme within WEC as now the championship has two editions of Le Mans 24 Hours, so we are preparing as best we can to deliver major results for this stunning-looking new Vantage GTE."

How closely were you involved in the development of the new Vantage GTE?

"All the factory drivers have been involved through the testing of the new car, which is great as we all have different ideas and opinions on improvements which is important at this stage of development with a new GT car. Myself and Darren Turner were the lucky ones to drive the new Aston Martin Vantage GTE earlier in its running and already it's a step up in driveability and performance in all areas which is very promising. So far the car has run well in endurance testing, with 13,000km completed and a 30 hour test already achieved. The engineers seem happy at the moment, we still have areas to improve before our first race but so far very encouraging."

Will you get a break before the 2018 season starts? If so how do you plan to chill out?

"I'll spend some time at Christmas back in Scotland with family and friends which will be nice, but then it's training hard in preparation for the season ahead and we will continue development testing with our new car after the New Year. So not too long to wait until I get back behind the wheel which is great."

What is your New Year resolution going to be?

"Taking up DIY! We've just moved house so my fiancée's to do list isn't getting any smaller..."

Jamie Thorburn's SuperSeries Shootout - Izone Driver Performance Centre

Winning a Champion of Brands round earlier in the year allowed me to qualify for James Becketts Mazda Road to Indy shootout. This shootout took place at Izone, a centre designed to test and evaluate your fitness, media skills and driving ability. I was up against 5 other Formula Ford drivers as we took on specific challenges designed to test our abilities both in and out of the car.

FITNESS

We spent 1 hour each in the specially designed gym at Izone, testing everything from reaction time to strength and concentration levels. These challenges were designed to push us to the limit, in an attempt to see who out of the 6 drivers really had the burning desire inside to pull through and come out on top. I scored top on the reaction board, and more than held my own on the fitness and strength side of the challenge.

MEDIA SKILLS

Up next was an informal interview which was used to learn more about our previous racing experience, ability to work in a team, and also our ability to represent a brand or organisation well. I scored very highly on all three of these aspects, and impressed the panel with my achievements in the sport

given the small amount of time I have been competing.

SIMULATOR WORK

Finally we were put in the Izone simulator, and given 16 laps in a Formula Ford around the Indianapolis Road Course, and then 16 laps in a Formula 3 car around the same circuit. This was designed to test our ability to adapt to a new car. I comfortably set the fastest lap in both cars and also was the most consistent driver over the 16 laps. Alongside driving we were asked questions on certain laps, which were designed to test our spare mental capacity whilst trying to match our quickest time. I also scored highest on this as my lap time hardly dropped away, which impressed the judges.

At the end of the tests it was announced I had won and secured my place in the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout, which takes place in Phoenix Arizona on the 9-10th of December 2017. I am extremely grateful to James Beckett and Mazda Motorsport for this opportunity and will be working non stop to make sure I am as prepared as possible for this shootout.

Jamie Thorburn

Champion of Brands -Brands Hatch 28th - 29th October 2017



With the confidence of last weekend's pace at Brands Hatch, I decided not to take part in testing to save some budget, so I arrived at Brands Hatch Racing Circuit on the Saturday, signed on for the race and went straight out to qualify at 9am.

QUALIFYING

It was a beautiful, cold morning which meant I knew the track would be quick throughout the day. The track was very damp however from the morning dew, which made conditions very difficult - it was like driving on an ice rink. Three laps in there was a red flag, which gave me the chance to return to the pits, where I made a very quick but risky decision to change the setup of the car, to make it softer on full wet settings for the rear. The risk in this decision was that if the track dried up quicker than anticipated, the car would be slower than if it were on full dry settings (stiff). I went back out with the new settings and each lap was getting quicker - with 3 laps to go I put out the quickest time of the session and grabbed pole position for the race.

RACE 1

Starting first on the grid, I knew all I had to do was get a good start, and I would be able to stay in front, but I didn't get off to a good start and Matt Rivett in P2, overtook me going into turn 1. I remained calm and made sure to not get too frustrated as I had the full race to get my position back. I was consistent and was putting out very quick times, beating my personal best, lap after lap. The racing was very close, and the lap times from both Matt and I were fast, as I was right underneath his gearbox all race. I even had a bit of damage on the nose cone from where it had been nudging the back of his car, and getting burnt by his exhaust!

Following so closely behind allowed me to assess where would be best to make my move, so when he left the slightest gap into turn 5 I capitalised on it. Now all I had to do was get my head down, keep my eyes away from the mirrors, and just start putting out my fast laps to pull a gap. Five laps later, the chequered flag came out and I crossed the line P1, becoming the new "Champion of Brands" and achieving the fastest lap which was only a tenth of a second off the fastest lap at the Festival. On top of that, because of my impressive performance and result, I was nominated for a shootout at iZone,



which is a simulator facility at Silverstone for racing drivers.

The winner of the shootout gets a ticket for the Mazda Road to Indy shootout which will be held in Phoenix, Arizona in December.

RACE 2

Starting first on the grid again, I was full of confidence. I was told to just finish the race and bring the car home, as I had already won Champion of Brands and the prize for the shootout at iZone for the Road to Indy. However, it was hard for me to follow those instructions as I wanted to win. I was beaten to turn 1, but this time I held my line and I was able to steal the place back in the next corner. Matt Rivett (in P2) composed himself and started attacking again. He tried to make a lunge down the inside of me at turn 1 on lap 4 but I did not give in. Wheel-to-wheel through turn 1, 2 and 3, eventually he got the better run out of turn 3 and out-dragged me into turn 4 once again.



2 laps later I went for the gap going into the hairpin at turn 2 although the gap was quickly closed and we collided. This caused me to spin although Matt never spun and carried on. I dropped back to P4 but quickly got back to P3 which was back to a podium position. Pushing the car hard trying to chase down P2, I managed to get the fastest lap. The chequered flag came which was frustrating as with 1 more lap I would have caught P2. Despite my disappointment, I got back on to the podium for the champagne celebrations.



I would like to give a special thanks to Graham Brunton who drove for 8 hours to get me to the event in time. The decision to compete was very last minute and I only found out I would be going on Friday afternoon. Also, a special thanks to James Beckett, the organiser of the race and judge for the nominations for the shootout.

Sebastian Melrose

ECURIE ECOSSE SHINE AT SPA FRANCORCHAMPS IN THE LE MANS CUP



Ecurie Ecosse continued their podium streak in the Michelin Le Mans Cup at Spa Francorchamps (22-23 September) as they notched up another second

position, to all but confirm the runner-up position in the championship. Tony Wells and Colin Noble teamed up once again in the #79 Ligier LMP3, recording the third fastest time in both of the free practice sessions. With just 15 minutes of qualification, Wells put in a hot lap good enough for a start on the outside of the front row.

Race day saw Wells make a good start, but found himself pushed wide on exit for the La Source hairpin. With wheels on the astroturf on the outside of the corner, momentum was lost and on the run to Eau Rouge, Wells dropped to sixth position.

Undeterred, Wells pushed on, picking up two positions in his stint before pitting at the end of his 25th lap, and handing over to his teammate.

Noble was immediately right on the pace, closing down a significant margin to move third ahead of the #4 Cool Racing Ligier, and then up to second

passing the RLR MSport entry with 18 laps remaining. With the leading DKR Engineering car leading by a minute by that point, Noble managed the gap to those behind, to record yet another podium position for Ecurie Ecosse.



Colin Noble

"We've got second in the championship with that, so it was a good race in what has been a very good season. The pace from both us was very competitive, so we can only be pleased with that. With the gap to the leader after the stop, I knew I didn't have the two-seconds a lap needed to go for the win, so it was the case a little of a 'safe second' by monitoring the gaps."

PENALTY DENIES ECURIE ECOSSE DREAM LE MANS CUP FINALE



The final round of the Le Mans Cup proved to be bitter-sweet for Ecurie Ecosse as the team travelled to Portimao, Portugal (20-22 October). A strong run in qualifying and then a great first stint from Tony Wells ultimately yielded a fifth-place finish as Colin Noble struggled with the handling of his Ligier.

With second position in the championship all but wrapped up, the Nielsen Racing prepared team were looking to add to their great run of four podiums already secured. The weekend got off to a strong start with both Wells and Noble running in the top four in practice, before a great lap in qualifying from the former gave Ecurie Ecosse a front row start for the season finale. Wells made a great start, briefly taking the lead of the race before settling into second position behind the dominant #3 Norma entry. Under pressure from the Pro-driver in the #14, Wells allowed the car through to claim second position, aware it would come back to Ecurie Ecosse later in the

race. It was a fine stint from Wells, who pitted third having kept the #79 Ligier very much in the hunt for the win.

Noble was immediately on the pace as ever, quickly clearing the #14 to close on the #3 Norma in the race lead. Catching is one thing and passing another, as despite Noble's best efforts, he was unable to make the pass. Later the race winning #3 would be excluded for fuel irregularities adding further frustration to the race weekend.

He continued to push hard to try and gain the lead, but found his tyres going away and as a result, suffered increasingly from understeer which ultimately resulted in two drive-through penalties for track limit infringements. Noble took the chequered flag sixth, later to be promoted to fifth.

The result gives the team 90 points, second in the standings as they now begin preparations for the 2018 challenge ahead.

David 'Sven' Thompson, Team Manager Nielsen Racing

"We're P2 in our first season so there's a lot of positives, many more than there are negatives. Today we should have finished second or third and we were fifth, so that's not a positive. But a great effort from all of the team who have performed flawlessly and now we refocus on our plans for next year and take away the lessons learned."

Tony Wells

"I had a great time, a really good stint. I made a great start. I was told to go to squeeze them into turn one and go around the outside and cut back in for two. That's exactly what I did and it was very satisfying. It was a great run after that and I let the #14 through as I knew that Colin would get it back later on. From there it was a fairly simple."

Colin Noble

"Tony did a really good job, good off the start, good off the safety car restarts too and he handed to me with a good gap. But then I had a lot of understeer that got progressively worse over the rest of the race, and I struggled to keep it on the track. Then I got the drive through penalty. But a good season as a whole with some highs and lows, and it's just a shame we couldn't end the year on a high."

Michael MacPherson Silverstone Update

Mega weekend at Silverstone in November for the Walter Hayes Trophy! Another huge weekend racing down south in big grids. Straight through to the final again.

Mega pace in first few laps of semi final, coming through the field until I lost the brake pedal. Unfortunately lost brake pedal after five laps, managed to nurse it home to qualify straight into final. Had the pace to come through the field in the final. Unfortunately still had brake issues. Only disappointment of another great weekend with Graham Brunton Racing. Been a fantastic first year in cars. Really hoping that it's not going to be my last. Will be pushing hard to get backing to compete on national scene next year.

