

# The Rally Review Report



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In the autumn of 2010 with entries, competition licences and events themselves declining the MSA commissioned a Review of Stage Rallying. The brief given to the Review is reproduced in Appendix 1. The selection of the members of the Review Panel required careful consideration and it would have been easy to assemble a panel of rallying celebrities from the top echelons of the sport but in order to achieve as deep and wide a review as possible it was decided to invite members with experience from all levels of the sport and as wide a geographical spread as possible because at club level rallying there are marked regional differences. Having assembled those core members it was decided to invite guests to meetings to bring yet further additional knowledge and input tailored to the specific topics being discussed on that particular agenda. Added to that the Review received many written contributions which were circulated and discussed by the Panel. Finally at the MSA Seminars in early 2011 time was set aside for discussions on the state of rallying and summaries of those discussions were prepared by Nigel Drayton and fed back to the Panel and are reproduced in the Appendices. To all those enthusiasts who took the time and trouble to contribute in whatever way, thank you.

As the Panel met and reached consensus on various points, rather than leave action until the conclusion and publication of this report, the Panel made recommendations and where possible these were acted upon. The Panel worked hand in hand with the Rallies Committee which took many of the recommendations, discussed them further and made proposals for regulatory change to the Motor Sports Council. Some of those recommendations will happen in the second half of this year, many others will be in place for 2012. Such a positive and proactive approach will bring the sport many benefits. In other areas a consensus was not found and so progressing such points will not happen, at least not without further discussion and deliberation.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Members and Guests of the Panel	3
The Recommendations	4
Conclusion	13
Appendix 1 : Terms of Reference	16
Appendix 2 : Competition Licence and Event Analysis	17
Appendix 3 : Feedback from 2011 Officials Seminars	18

# The Rally Review Report

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## Rally Review Panel - Members

### **Chairman**

Steve Stringwell

David Bogie, (replaced by Andy Kelly)

Tristan Dodd

Andy Gilmore

Ryland James

Andrew Kellitt

Steve Perez

Jason Pritchard

Howard Wilcock

### **Guests**

#### **January**

Mark Taylor, John Richardson, Steve Smith, Martin Shaw, Paul Slingsby, Simon Marks and Gordon Waddington

#### **March**

Cameron Davies, Bill Gwynne, Andy Johnson

#### **April**

Tim Ashton, John Hopwood, Gareth Lloyd, Paul Loveridge, Rod Parkin, Richard Tuthill

# The Rally Review Report

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## The Recommendations

### General Matters

#### Communication between MSA and Competitors

This topic was discussed at length at the first two meetings, there remains an opinion that regulations are still introduced without a full impact assessment and that reasons published are not always adequate to explain the reasoning without having been able to read the relevant Committee Minutes. Whilst this issue would appear in detail later on in the Panel's Review it is also worthy of note that 2010 saw a significant change in the way in which the Motor Sports Council, its Specialist Committees and Advisory Panels publish and consult on newly proposed regulations. 2011 is the first full year of this new process and at the time of the Panel's discussion, December 2010/January 2011, it remains early days. However the level of response to consultations, particularly for the Rallies Committee, has seen an increased response from clubs and licence holders to proposals and the refinement of proposals before approval by the Council. Nevertheless a reminder to ensure that proposals are fully and properly explained should be restated to Chairmen and Secretariat together with full consideration of the consequences of new regulations.

**Action**

***MSA Specialist Committees: Advisory Panels and Secretariat: New Regulations must be properly explained, both in their intent and consequences. This explanation must include the financial implications and consequences.***

Following on from that topic it was also suggested that members of the various Advisory Panels might be invited to Regional Association meetings where practicable. This would afford members of Advisory Panels direct access to issues raised by competitors and clubs and equally provide a forum where full discussion and explanations could take place.

**Action**

***Regional Associations: Invite members of Advisory Panels to Regional Association meetings to improve two way communication and understanding.***

Highlighted by the ROPS front leg issue that emerged during Easter 2010 and which rattled on during the summer until a solution and clarification was found, the Panel considered that the publication of Scrutineers News to competitors would be of great benefit. Whether a specific problem or matters more general, presenting a car for scrutineering is for many competitors an extremely anxious experience. There was a consensus that if competitors knew not only what, but how, a scrutineer would look at an issue, the competitor could be better prepared and present his car with more confidence. It is understood that Scrutineers News is published in the Restricted Area of the MSA Website and that it contains some sensitive issues that the MSA need to communicate to the Scrutineers. Whilst it is accessible to anyone registered to use the website as an official, this availability should be made more prominent. The Panel suggested that the Stewards and Clerks Bulletin should be similarly available and certainly at the time of compiling this report that Bulletin is published in the Public Area of the website.

**Action:**

***MSA to explore wider release/publication of Scrutineers News or something similar, to the benefit of Officials and Competitors, that provides the necessary detail not communicated in Press Releases.***

# The Rally Review Report

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The Panel discussed Motor Clubs' promotion and general PR abilities. It was felt that this was as ever a weakness for many clubs and events, both promoting events to competitors and to the wider community. A low profile within the wider community reduces opportunities for support be it access, sponsorship and attendance, together with the loss of potential members. Some Club's have such a low profile that potential members in an area are unaware of the existence of a local motor club. It is noted that Chapter 11 of the Motor Club Manual addressed many of these points but it was plainly evident that few Panel Members or Guests were aware of it. Consequently the recommendation is that the MSA review Chapter 11 of the Motor Club Manual, up dating the contents as necessary and reissue it with some extra promotional effort. The Regional Committee would be a great asset promoting this to clubs.

**Action:**

***MSA - The panel requested that there should be guidance from the MSA on how to improve publicity and press relations, by way of up dating Chapter 11 of the Motor Club Manual and promoting it to clubs with the assistance of the Regional Associations.***

The Panel discussed the nature and presentation of the Yearbook and concluded that there are simply too many regulations and, having been offered a sound reason for the MSA not presenting regulations specific to a discipline, it was suggested that the hyperlinking of regulations in the electronic versions of the Yearbook would of benefit. There was also a suggestion which favoured separating the regulations for road and stage rallies into separate Sections. It was considered that this would simplify the regulations.

**Action:**

***MSA - As a first step towards simplification of the Yearbook look at adding relevant "hyperlinks" for specific points in the various electronic versions.***  
***Rallies Committee – To review Section R with consideration towards completely separating road and navigation rallies from stage rallies.***

The Panel discussed the manner in which the Rally Championship Control Panel announced the decisions of its annual meeting. The approval of championships is keenly anticipated by prospective competitors, event organisers and naturally the championships themselves. It was understood that any championship which was unsuccessful or which was required to undertake amendments should hear such decisions directly from the Secretariat rather than read about it in the public arena; nevertheless this information seems to sometimes reach the public domain. Therefore the Panel recommends that the MSA review the processes of the RCCP with a view to the announcement of its decisions by way of publishing a list of the successful applicants. There was no desire that this should be a publication of RCCP Minutes, interesting as they might be.

**Action:**

***MSA to consider reviewing the way the Rally Championship Control Panel publishes its decisions. Specifically as soon as is practical after the decisions have been communicated to the applicants, a confirmed list of successful applicants should be published.***

# The Rally Review Report

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## The Structure of Stage Rallying

The Panel discussed at length the structure of stage rallying, which whilst inescapably including championships also included events themselves. The proliferation of championships was in part addressed by the Pyramid that was published after the Broad Report in 2003 and the instigation of the Rally Championship Review Panel; yet within the sport there is a general lack of structure and a desire to accommodate various desires of competitors. The resulting fragmentation and attempts to accommodate various and sometimes disparate wishes makes regulating a sport from top to bottom with one size fits all solutions difficult. Fragmentation and a complexity of regulations, those of the MSA but also SRs, confuses and ultimately undermines the sport. This is particularly difficult to address at a time when events are so desperate for entries but the result is that events have so many permits and separate rallies within rallies that the overall winner is somewhat undermined. Some rallies have upwards of 5 permits, each with individual results and winners such that there appear to be 5 winners and the prominence of the overall winner is devalued. This makes it difficult to sell the sport to the wider public who will not easily understand the result.

There are of course a number of influencing factors and some rallies have merged with one another just to remain viable. The combination of events makes access easier, improves viability and reduces potential congestion in the calendar. The MSA in part facilitated this trend when it changed the way in which permits were issued and charged, and it must be noted that this change was intended to make the charging system fairer. Nevertheless the number of rallies within rallies has passed the point of good practice, where some of the rallies should return to being a class within a rally. To that end the Panel asks that the MSA review the fragmentation and the permit fee structure to reduce this.

**Action:**

*The MSA are requested to review the issue of permit fees and fragmentation.*

The British Rally Championship, as the pinnacle of British stage rallying was inevitably discussed and in particular the nature of the championship and the level of events that comprise it. It was explained the MSA set the parameters of the championship, but there was a view that setting the championship to operate at domestic International rallies contributed significantly to the level of competitor's participation. The costs of competing at International level, a currently homologated car, and International licences are significant. It was noted that the medical required for an International Rally Licence is more arduous, and consequently expensive, than that required for a Private Pilot's Licence; organisers also incur significant additional costs such as the inscription to the International Calendar. Equally it is understood that a number of those rallies enjoy regional support because they are Internationals. That said comparison with the British Historic Rally Championship which operates at National A status events and enjoys more support by way of entries. Consequently the Panel recommends that the MSA review this aspect for the future, understanding that changes can only be made at a convenient time within the contract cycle and equally only after careful consideration of the consequences.

**Action:**

*The MSA to review the criteria and aims for the BRC for the next contract period, vis the appropriateness of International vs National events and regulations.*

The potential to obtain Closed Roads for motorsport was discussed, the Panel welcoming the opportunities but not without some caution. With the cost per mile of forests there is a feeling amongst some competitors and organisers that Closed Roads will be the answer to all the sports prayers but, as any existing practitioner of Closed Road Rallies will testify, the organisation is more onerous and overall not necessarily cheaper; liaison with the myriad of public bodies and utilities is considerable. Nevertheless Closed Roads offer a significant potential for benefit; the better use of

## The Rally Review Report

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forests bisected by various highways, together with existing rallies being able to run super special stages in or around towns and cities near their start and finish would be very helpful. The Panel expressed the view that events completely reliant on Closed Roads for the special stages should be limited to those parts of the country where there are not the forests available to run a viable stage rally. During the duration of the Review this view has become quite poignant given the ongoing situation with the forests within England.

**Action:**

*Support the Closed Road Rally petition and encourage competitors et al to sign it as soon as possible, and support the subsequent development of events.*

The Panel discussed championships with particular regard to those of Regional Associations and the number of qualifying rounds. It was considered that there should be a maximum number of qualifying rounds; either 8 or 9 seemed about right. Championships with 10 or 12 rounds put an excessive burden on competitors and contribute to events which run late in the calendar year suffering reduced entries.

**Action:**

*Regional Committee requested to review Regional Association Rally Championships with a view to limiting the number of qualifying rounds to 8 and a standardised 6 from 8 scoring system.*

# The Rally Review Report

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## Stage Rallying Regulations

One of the consequences of the Stage Rally Safety Review over a decade ago was the introduction of the BARS Test for all new stage rally drivers. This led to the introduction of the Stage Rally National B competition licence which enables the number of new drivers to the discipline to be identified; prior to this competitors would have applied for the multi purpose Non Race National B licence. The number of new drivers per year is now known and is a distressingly low figure. There has long been promulgated the view that the cost of the BARS Pack, the cost of the BARS Test and then the cost of that first competition licence are a significant discouragement to new applicants; certainly the barriers, cost wise, to having a go are now significant.

The BARS Test itself came in for criticism, although a number of popular anecdotes about the Test's shortcomings did not stand up to cross examination, either during the meeting or subsequently. Nevertheless there remained a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the BARS Test, either that it was too expensive for what it is or that it should be revised and made better value. The BARS representative explained that the MSA set the specification of the Test and worked closely with BARS. There being no conclusion I feel that the only recommendation is that the MSA review the BARS Test and its contents.

### **Action:**

***MSA to review the BARS Test for New Stage Rally Drivers; is it achieving the Stage Rally Safety Review's intentions and is it current and relevant? The Theory Test could be administered online or through the Regional Associations, whilst the "practical" such as it is should be replaced by the successful completion of a number of clubman events such as Autotests, AutoSolos, Car Trials and Road/Navigation Rallies.***

One of the evergreen issues is that of costs and nothing antagonises competitors more than those forced upon them by regulation change. It is equally true that competitors will often find funds for other improvements where there is a clearly perceived benefit, performance or perhaps reliability. Over the last decade a number of specification changes for safety equipment have been made and, whilst these have for the most part been applicable to newly CCLB'd cars since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, those rally cars with a CCLB before that date have had a stay until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 for those regulations to apply. The principle concern is the need for items such as seats and seat belts to be FIA Homologated and in date (no more than 5 years old). Leaving aside the detail and various arguments for and against lifing of these items, the cost of complying with this rule change next January is estimated to approach £1000 per car. At a time of economic hardship and with entries and licence numbers dropping, the imposition of these standards was felt to be too much.

From that expanded a long discussion regarding lifing itself. It was noted that the FIA lifing was based upon age rather than use and for the clubman, who doesn't do a championship season only half a dozen events a year at most, this makes the regular replacement of seats and seat belts a major cost, with low used and perfectly good equipment discarded. Within the sport there is a sense of injustice about the nature of lifing and particularly that of the FIA which is tailored to their remit which concerns International events and competitors.

The debate has developed further since the Panel made its original recommendation to review the lifing of the seats and seat belts, asking for evidence that the lifing is necessary of either component whilst noting particularly that neither product is lifed in road use. The Rallies Committee discussed both issues at length and I as Chairman of the Review Panel took the matter to the Safety Advisory Panel, from where it was referred to the Technical Advisory Panel.

# The Rally Review Report

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**Action:**

*From the meeting The Review Panel raised the matter with Safety Advisory Panel which referred the matter on to the Technical Advisory Panel. Rallies Committee subsequently discussed both issues and made a proposal regarding seat belts which was consulted on during Spring 2011.*

The Panel reviewed the requirement for Stage Rally Cars to be fitted with an FIA dry break coupling for fuel sampling. This had been introduced at the time of the K37 (as it was then) Review of Technical Regulations for Stage Rally Cars and there was an acceptance that it be a requirement for all newly CCLB cars post 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, the date when the new regulations came into force, and for all cars contesting British and MSA titled Championships. It was not, however, originally intended to apply to older rally cars at lesser events and this intention had been lost in the transitional arrangements for such cars that are due to take effect in 2012. The Panel thus made a recommendation to the Rallies Committee to review this.

**Action:**

*Rallies Committee - To review the requirement for FIA Dry Break Couplings to J5.13.7. for cars issued with a CCLB prior to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 that are not contesting British or MSA Titled Championships. Note, at the time of writing, Rallies Committee have a proposal which will address this issue if approved by Motor Sports Council.*

The Panel noted that the new FIA Category for R/GT cars was not permitted by current stage rally technical regulations, a situation considered anomalous. There was some confusion within the Panel as to what exactly was being proposed, with an assumption that a proposal to amend the technical regulations would permit GT cars per se, many European neighbour countries are currently permitting GT cars in stage rallies. However the proposal was to amend the technical regulations only for R/GT cars being those specifically homologated for Rallying. It was also noted that as yet no cars have been homologated into this category.

**Action:**

*Rallies Committee - That homologated FIA R/GT cars be permitted on National Rallies. Note, at the time of writing, Rallies Committee have a proposal which will permit FIA R/GT cars from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 if approved by Motor Sports Council.*

A further anomaly from the K37 Review was that a Historic rally car issued with a CCLB after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 was required to comply with current engine capacity limits when taking part in a normal stage rally but was not if the event held an Historic Rally permit. This is a good example of over complicated regulations and unnecessary barriers to competition, the Panel had no hesitation in recommending that Rallies Committee address the matter.

**Action:**

*Rallies Committee - Presently a Historic Rally Car CCLB'd post 1/1/09 is subject to the same capacity limits as all other rally cars when running in a modern event. Propose that if a modern event runs a class for proper Historics then they be permitted. . Note, at the time of writing, Rallies Committee have a proposal which will permit Historic Rally Cars issued with a CCLB after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 to compete in modern stage rallies provided that they remain fully compliant with the Historic Regulations if approved by Motor Sports Council.*

Evolving from the discussions concerning fragmentation and the complexity of regulations the Panel discussed the consequences of competitors retiring during an event, issues such as the point at which insurance cover ceased and that events which did not provide in their SRS for Trophy or Practice rallies appeared to be poorer value for money over those events that were able to provide further running

## The Rally Review Report

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for retirees from the main event. It was noted that when stage rallies could use Scheduled Timing this was not an issue because that timing system allows for competitors to miss stages and rejoin further on in the schedule. The Panel considers that Target Timing ought to provide for a similar process to allow competitors to stay in the rally even if they miss a number of stages and controls.

**Action:**

***Rallies Committee - To review Target Timing penalties for missing a stage or control, and to align the penalty process with that of Scheduled Timing.***

The cost of vehicle preparation was discussed. Very few vehicles are homologated into Group N and R1 at the moment and so there is a lack of direction concerning vehicle choice for competitors who are not able to buy current Group A machinery. It was felt that a set of standard domestic classes where vehicle preparation was strictly controlled, particularly with regard to engines and gearboxes would provide a good foundation for the sport at club level. It was noted that BTRDA's Rally First and F1000 had a 90% finishing rate. Engine capacities of 1000/1400/1600 & 2000cc seemed the appropriate and all limited to 2WD.

**Action:**

***Rallies Committee - To consider a national specification of vehicle preparation and classes, to limit costs and create a more level playing field for clubmen.***

There was a proposal to replace the current system of Scrutineering with a detailed annual inspection and then a less arduous pre event session. The current system involves a detailed check when first inspected for the issue of a CCLB, and then quite involved inspections at each event in part because after the initial inspection for the CCLB a car may under go considerable structural alteration, repair or rebuilding, none of which is picked up until pre event scrutiny.

**Action:**

***MSA - To consider a detailed annual inspection of all stage rally cars at a time and place where there aren't the pressures of pre-event scrutiny to allow for a regular and thorough checking of compliance and condition and which would allow for less onerous and quicker pre-event scrutiny.***

The issue of Bogey times being beaten was discussed following a number of instances on National B event during the course of the Panels deliberations. Particularly the fact that on unsealed surfaces there exists differing average speeds from which to calculate the Bogey, whilst a single average speed is specified for sealed surfaces. Within England and Wales there are specific reasons why Rallies have to be restrained to being a test of maintaining an average speed rather than simply being a trial of speed.

**Action:**

***Rallies Committee to review the average speeds for special stage rallies, particularly with regard to the differences between unsealed and sealed surface events.***

# The Rally Review Report

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## Historic Stage Rallies

At the second meeting there was a lengthy discussion about Historic stage rallies, their enduring popularity is highlighted at a time when other stage rallies are suffering more obviously in the prevailing economic climate. It is more than mere nostalgia; some competitors cited the frozen specifications of the cars as a very considerable factor. With a modern car, be it homologated or National specification, every year a competitor must spend a fortune just to update the car, whilst an historic car might have an initial high outlay but thereafter, barring accidents, costs could be more accurately forecast. Despite the consensus that Historic Stage Rallying was healthy, popular and had much to offer the Panel dedicated its meeting to this topic in April, assembling a large number of guests from the Historic Committee and vehicle preparers and competitors.

It was interesting to note that the guests appeared to fall into two distinct positions and initially there appeared to be a “them and us” situation, with the Panel in between. However discussions were free and fast flowing at times and, as discussions developed, perceived barriers were broken down and some real progress was facilitated. For example the vehicle preparers were bemoaning the prohibition of certain structural modifications that are commonplace on later generation rally cars. When it was explained that such modifications were inappropriate to the nature of design and construction of the generation of cars covered by the Historic regulations a better understanding developed.

The disparity between domestic Historic regulations and those of the FIA contained in their Appendix K has long been an issue for competitors seeking to cross the English Channel in either direction. The disparity exists in part because the MSA wrote its regulations first and did so to reflect the nature of the cars that would have competed domestically in period. However the FIA have recently up dated the safety regulations in Appendix K significantly such that the only significant difference was the MSA’s requirement for all stage rally cars, modern or historic to have plumbed in fire extinguishers. Previously the Appendix K ROPS requirement was considerably less than that of the MSA.

The other outstanding bone of contention concerned tyre regulations. The FIA permit 65% aspect ratio tyres whilst the MSA retains a requirement for a profile of at least 70%. Competitors argue that there is more tyre choice within the FIA Regulations whilst the counter argument is that 70% tyres are more in period and appropriate for the cars. This might be true for our Category 1 and 2 cars, i.e. pre 1975, and on either sealed or unsealed surfaces but rally cars in subsequent periods did use lower profile tyres in period, notably on sealed surfaces. It is however strongly advocated that 70% profile tyres are a little slower and caps performance, an issue that raises its head elsewhere with cars beating Stage Bogey times. Further discussion suggested a compromise in the form of creating a class within the MSA regulations for cars running fully to Appendix K with MSA safety, plumbed in fire extinguishers, and MSA CCLB’s, with such a class not eligible for overall awards. This seemed to find favour with a further suggestion that Historic Committee might ask Motor Sports Council to try an experiment on three historic stage rallies later this year which attract foreign entrants with Appendix K cars. This would provide the Historic Committee with practical feedback to assist with the formulation of regulations for a more permanent accommodation.

### **Action:**

**Historic Committee to consider creating a Class for Appendix K specific cars and amend FIA paperwork to include a supplementary British sheet. Note, The Historic Committee asked Motor Sports Council to run a trial on three specified Historic Stage Rallies, The Ulster, Rally Yorkshire and the Roger Albert Clark Rally in 2011 to run a class for Appendix K cars with an MSA CCLB and plumbed in fire extinguishers and that this was granted by the Council at its June meeting.**

## The Rally Review Report

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Discussion also noted the disparity on period cut off dates, another legacy of the MSA developing its regulations first and tailored around the introduction of that most influential car, at least within the British Isles, the Escort, both Mk 1 and 2. Indeed herein lies part of the issue with fragmentation and a lack of structure and progression. The Escort was totally dominant for over two decades and even today there remain non Historic specification Escorts which remain dominant over modern rally cars 3 generations younger on asphalt rallies. These modern Escorts are so developed that they could not readily be returned to Historic specification and it is notable that a Mk 2 Escort remains the public's favourite. Nevertheless writing technical regulations to accommodate such vastly different cars in technology and construction presents a particular challenge.

It was noted that future categories would align directly with those of the FIA with the MSA following the FIA's lead. To that end the Panel urged the Historic Committee to facilitate Category 4 as soon as possible.

**Action:**

**Historic Committee to consider cars of period Category 4. With Historic Committee 18<sup>th</sup> May**

# The Rally Review Report

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## Conclusions

When I was asked to Chair this Review I did not expect to find a magic solution nor any quick fixes. Rallying has evolved over the decades and continues to do so. Influences outside of the domestic scene have a major affect on national events. International vehicle regulations for example set the direction for the top end of our sport, and until Group B was replaced, each generation of International car had a greater performance than its predecessor and the national scene naturally evolved and followed. With Group A and those FIA formula that have followed, current International cars have become proportionally more expensive without always providing a clear increase in performance and so natural progression and replacement of cars at the top end of the sport is not as strong as it was. This of course contributes to the lack of cars eligible to run on domestic International rallies. That said the only way to address this stagnation would be to progressively make earlier generations of rally cars obsolete, a process which the MSA has never sought to adopt. Indeed the difficulties of the drawn out affair that was the review of stage rally technical regulations, or K37 as it was at the time, was to balance capping ultimate performance with accommodating existing cars as much as was possible, and there is quite a variety in the “national stock”.

Indeed the circumstances that initiated that review of the technical regulations were in part the high cost and limited choices of currently homologated cars with the fact that modern cars are by and large not attractive as a basis of a stage rally car without substantial structural modification, the extent of which was increasingly causing concern.

This change in the balance of cars eligible for International rallies influenced the proliferation and complexity of events, and rallies within rallies, as the Panel identified early on in the review. Whilst it was not possible to identify a process which would increase International entries, forced obsolescence would not see older non homologated cars replaced with Internationally eligible cars, just a drastic reduction in rally cars and entries to all events; the Panel does conclude that the proliferation of rallies within rallies has a negative and devaluing effect on the overall winner of the primary event. Organisers, especially at this time are desperate for entries and understandably if they perceive that such a solution increases the overall entries and viability of an event, will continue to pursue this. But having four of five winners devalues the senior winner with the consequence that those outside the sport find it difficult to understand the process. With that the attraction and relevance of the sport has decreased leading to fewer competitors entering the sport and, even more critically, less attraction to potential sponsors.

Stage rallying has always been an expensive sport, but proportionally this expense has increased and continues to do so. Reducing its attractiveness and relevance to the wider public just reduces the opportunities to subsidise the overall costs from sponsorship, primarily of events but ultimately the competitors themselves.

Whilst there is no obvious or sustainable fix in respect of International entries, for the National rallies, and those within International rallies, a reduction in permits and rallies within rallies would make results simpler to understand and more relevant. This may be achieved in many cases by those rallies within rallies returning to being classes within the event but this will require a cultural change amongst competitors and organisers; the MSA should encourage this change.

Cost is often cited as a major influence in the reducing numbers of entries, and these costs may be broken down into different areas. The cost of vehicle preparation; we have already discussed this in respect of currently homologated cars, but national specification cars are not immune from development and increasing safety requirements. The Panel identified the issuing of lifing, notably that of seat belts and seats as a major cost and imposition on clubmen who do not or cannot afford to

## The Rally Review Report

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enter many events and for whom the lifing of such expensive items offers poor value to those who can least afford it. The Panel did not delay addressing these two important issues and the Rallies Committee has tried to progress this, albeit at the time of writing without conclusion.

Indeed this cost of vehicle continued development was strongly cited as one of the reasons for the success of Historic rallying where technical specifications are frozen and competitors know that this year's car will be competitive next year without expensive upgrades. It is also of note that Historic rally cars are predominantly rear wheel drive, the format which remains attractive to both drivers and spectators.

The cost of using the forests has risen considerably in the last two decades and this in the main part is influenced by the amount of damage that has to be reinstated. The MSA and the Forestry Commission are working together to study ways to reduce and manage this through controlling tyre design and as this project was initiated separately and before this Review the Panel hopes that this is successful.

Organisational costs have also escalated over the last decade or so, particularly in respect of the adequate provision of safety cover. These are unavoidable, in part societies expectations in general are greater than before, the costs of the cover have increased and regrettably, despite the proliferation of "safety notes" since the early 90's rallying's accidents have not reduced. All of which translates to increased entry fees.

The Panel discussed event timetabling as an area where changes might reduce competitor's costs. It was suggested that starting on a Saturday afternoon and running through the night would allow competitors to reduce accommodation costs for themselves and their service crews. Apart from PR consequences this reduction in accommodation costs would also reduce one of the strongest arguments in favour of stage rallies which is the wealth that such events bring into local communities, especially off season. Alternatively there was much favour in returning to rallies on Sundays in part because so many people have to work Saturdays and a Rally scheduled for that day often meant 2 days leave.

Servicing costs are another area where savings could be made, and whilst there is a strong argument that going along as a service crew member is for many an introduction to the sport, and that organisers subsidise overall costs by selling service packs and passes, reducing servicing would save competitors money. As technology for the monitoring of tyre usage becomes more affordable and accessible to organisers so the opportunities to restrict the number of tyres used during an event becomes practical. Tyres would have to be more durable, and may be slower, but they may also do less damage to unsealed surfaces, competitors would need to carry fewer and purchase less spare wheels. Less for the service crews to carry too. Granted the individual cost of tyres would increase and the tyre manufacturers would sell fewer per competitor but the reducing number of competitors is having that effect already.

Start up costs were unsurprisingly identified by the Panel as a barrier to entry to the sport. The Panel discussed the BARS Test and recommend that the MSA reviews the content and nature of this to ensure that it is providing value for money and is still addressing the concerns that led to its introduction. The Panel accepted that the process could not be rescinded but remained concerned as to whether it was fit for purpose.

The Panel also recommends the introduction of a national clubman specification of rally car to limit development and costs. As well as the experience in the Historics, a number of successful existing formula already prove that this is the way to go for controlling costs and, whilst affordability is a relative term, this could assist many competitors. In considering this solution such a formula should

## The Rally Review Report

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also make the cars suitable for other disciplines to allow the clubman as wide an opportunity as possible, noting that the number of stage rallies in the south and south east are few and far between.

There might also be room for a feeder format of event. Road rallies were used to provide the entry point for generations of competitors, but in many parts of the country they are non-existent in their traditional format. Endurance road rallies which arose out of a desire for road rallies with competitive sections off the highway have proven to be too specialist for many competitors by the inclusion of plot and bash navigation and regularity sections which discourage beginners. There is a dearth of competent navigators at all levels, a reflection perhaps upon a wider problem in today's society of a desire for instant and easy gratification. Endurance road rallies have not been the cheap stage rallies that some feared but equally have not provided an introductory type of event to feed stage rallies. It is noted that there are an increasing number of events variously permitted as road and navigation rallies and multi venue autotests which suggests that a multi venue daytime driving test format without competitive sections on the highway would provide a real solution. Without the nocturnal element the valid technical restrictions on matters such as liveries and advertising could be removed and competitors in road cars as well as those in say the aforementioned clubmans stage rally formula could be accommodated. True costs would be greater than a pure road event, because there are venue costs, but retaining the ban on servicing and limiting tyres and other related matters would provide the competitors with a stepping stone in many areas of the country.

The MSA efforts to achieve closed roads are commended and we look forward to the fruition of the lobbying that the MSA has undertaken on motor sports behalf. Competitors and organisers should not underestimate the costs of closed roads; Policing and safety cover will displace the perceived savings in the cost of venue hire but the opportunities to, either make better use of existing resources and that of running show stages in or near population centres are great. Indeed taking rallying back to the people and raising its profile will increase the sports relevance to a wider audience with all the aforementioned potential benefits.

Those potential benefits include the promotion, marketing and obtaining of sponsorship. The sport isn't good at marketing and presenting itself and is consequently less attractive to sponsors and the media. Engaging a marketing expert would provide a perspective from those outside the sport.

On other matters the Review Panel has fed many detailed proposals to the Rallies and Historic Committees and these have already been acted upon, or are in the process of being addressed. There remains no single quick solution, were there one it would not have required a Review Panel to identify it. I am however grateful that the MSA set up the Review Panel and asked me to Chair it; the opportunity it gave to the many people, guests to meetings and my fellow Panel members to contribute has afforded a number of regulation changes and ideas to progress and develop our sport into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Steve Stringwell J.P.**  
**August 2011**

# The Rally Review Report

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## APPENDIX 1



**MSA**  
**STAGE RALLY REVIEW**  
**DRAFT**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The MSA Executive and MSC Rallies Committee have identified a significant decline in both number of competitor and event entries over the past five years and have independently decided that a review of the sport should be completed as soon as possible.

**Objectives:**

Any review of a Motorsport discipline will quickly identify key issues which will be attributed to the decline in that sport. However it is the solutions to reverse their decline which are key not the issues themselves.

**Brief:**

The Review should consult broadly within the sport to gain ownership of the issues and produce an interim report to both the MSA Executive (CEO) and Chairman of the Rallies Committee.

Subject to this report a number of key objectives of change should be proposed to reverse both the decline in competitors and event/championship entries.

**Scope:**

The review should restrict it's scope of work to the key issue of decline and not be diverted into peripheral issues of the sport.

**Proposed key areas of review:**

- Cost of entry to events and championships
- Cost of vehicle preparation and maintenance
- Structure and cost of events
- Structure and cost of championships
- Cost and complexity of entry to the sport of stage rally
- Skill and ability of organisations in marketing and customer care
- Opportunity of closed road events, sporting and financial benefits?
- Opportunity for Arrive and Drive championships
- BARS - doing a good job of introducing competitors?
- Championships - too many?
- The pyramid - has it gone?
- How to 'integrate' championships
- Should WRGB be a round of BRC?

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# The Rally Review Report

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## APPENDIX 2

### Competition Licence Figures

	2009		2010	%	2011	%
Rally International	356		304	-15	272	-11
Rally International Historic	14		18	+28.6	13	-28
Rally National 'A' Stage	1981		1958	-1.2	1880	-4
Rally National 'A' Navigator	1199		1059	-11.7	936	-12
Rally National 'B' Stage	3882		3633	-6.4	3473	-4.4
Rally National 'B' Junior	13		27	+107.7	29	+7.4
<b>Total Rally</b>	<b>7445</b>		<b>6999</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>6603</b>	<b>-5.7</b>

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> November -31<sup>st</sup> May each year. 1<sup>st</sup> November being the commencement of the issuing of Licenses for the following year.

The Non Race National B Competition Licence which although valid for National B Navigating has such a wider application that it might distort the Stage Rally only trends shown above and is therefore not included.

### Permit and Entries Figures

	2009			2010			2011		
	Permits	Entries	Average Entry	Permits	Entries	Average Entry	Permits	Entries	Average Entry
Stage up to 45	23	1921	83	20	1636	82	20	1609	80
Stage 45 & Over	22	908	41	24	1019	42	18	835	46
Stage Single Venue	49	2940	60	56	2977	53	51	2584	51
Stage Historic	11	373	34	8	268	33	10	357	38
<b>Totals</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>6142</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>5900</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>5385</b>	<b>54</b>

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> June respectively.

# The Rally Review Report

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## APPENDIX 3

### Feedback from Licensed Officials Seminars

Listed below are the comments received at each seminar venue. They are not sanitised and are offered only as bullet points as stated at the time. Dave Lucas and myself would be happy to attend a meeting to elaborate further if required. At each seminar at least one hour was given over to this discussion, and at all locations there was mostly positive input from all parties.

#### Northern Ireland

- There are problems. Reducing numbers, some events not running at because of lack of entries, lack of money and sponsorship.
- Problems with 'pirate events'. Do these events have insurance? Very low entry fee taking away clubman entries from MSA events.
- Too many events, very late entries, people enter last minute, sometimes even on the day of an event. Organisers can't plan for this. All events don't keep to the same regulations.
- Was safety regulation a problem? Did it need more regulation? Can't 'go back' on safety.
- Too many events, allocate events to clubs, sometimes several events on one weekend, but clubs are focussed on their event, and historic dates. Clubs will fold if no events.
- Regional Association does not have power to regulate events. Clubs do not have to be a member and can go their own way.
- Regulations – people don't read them or understand them. There was a thought that maybe some kind of theory test on aspects of the Blue Book would be good thing.
- BARS test is a very big put off to first time entries. Should be dropped for clubman events. Single venue events should not need BARS.
- Difficulty with co-drivers and training. Co-drivers do not understand their role.
- Closed roads events not the answer. Massive amount of work with PR and cost.

#### Preston

- Established events do not give new events much room in championships.
- Championships are very important to events as source of entries
- Market forces at work. Good events will get entries, poor events will fail
- Problems at club level with venues.
- MSA needs to be more flexible with regulations to encourage new events and venues
- Single venue forest events, insurance rates a problem
- MSA rule changes on technical stuff, belts, helmets etc should have more thought
- BARS test too expensive and does not train co-drivers
- Drivers should do club level events, auto solo's etc
- Need a level below Nat B at low cost
- Need something basic with basic safety levels like road cars
- Closed roads not the answer, too expensive and difficult.
- Championships have too much power and exert too much influence

# The Rally Review Report

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## Walsall

- Some events are healthy, particularly if they have a unique venue.
- Dates can be important – early season events have more support than later ones
- Too many events, so some events will not run. Clubs are identified with events, so if event fails, club also at risk
- Difficulty with venues, old airfields in decline, under pressure from housing, industry etc.
- Organising events is very expensive, big financial risk to clubs
- Closed roads not the answer, too expensive
- Forestry has great pressure from other users
- Formula 1000 Juniors works well.
- Safety very difficult to go back on
- Go Motorsport too racing focused – all areas should be updated
- Clubs are in decline, club structure is under pressure

## Stirling, Scotland

- Event date clashes difficult to resolve
- Event clashes make provision of safety cover, marshals, officials more difficult, let alone competitors
- Too many events
- Events now coming in to Scotland from England (NHMC), without consultation
- BARS test expensive waste of time
- Both crew members should be observed or tested
- Newcomers should have experience of lower events such as autotests, road rallies etc. This would also strengthen clubs.
- Closed roads don't work – far too disruptive and expensive and need too much man power
- Far too many regulations, changing continually, particularly for occasionally used cars
- Gravel sprints should be a new type of event, with simple safety rules and insurance needs.
- Should do more to encourage youngsters
- Go Motorsport very big on racing and karting, focus should be more Clubsport, with reference to Club membership
- We should bring Blue Book more into line with Yellow Book, with less regulations.

## York

- Not enough Single Venues – Several venues under threat so those left are over used
- Lack of Single Venue venues and events mean people pack up and sell their car
- Cost
- Track Days over subscribed one weekend compared to rally undersubscribed with small entry the previous weekend
- Dates Clash – too many events
- Need championship to attract competitors. Need to make events special for customers
- Drivers go to “user friendly” events
- Late entries are a problem
- All about value for money. Competitors seek events were Clerks don't penalise

# The Rally Review Report

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Rally cars are expensive and certain people spend the money for high profile WRC cars pushing up the profile thus excluding the ordinary guy – should be restrictions

- Proportional costs need to be brought in with cost banding for Forestry usage
- Damage to stages due to Tyres and technology/ Land owners would open up more roads if cars were less aggressive.
- New one make events are only going to established championships and not to clubs
- Championships have too much power and are greedy
- Historic Rally is healthy and attractive to Club people
- Motor groups successful by getting clubs together
- Cost of equipment – “lifing” is a problem – old equipment still valid and usable, but can’t be used because out of date
- People would like to use ordinary simple cars to do 12 cars etc
- Non MSA events prosper – simple with less rules
- “Greenaway” low impact tyres not available
- Mud flaps help keep in the forest – Glass film helps contain broken glass
- BARS test a waste of time & cost  
BARS does not give standard of competency  
BARS throws competitor out of one discipline into another  
There should be an alternative training – the test does not teach
- Free licence for first timers in 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Blue Book and most SR’s far too complicated
- Closed roads is not the answer, but has possibilities

## Peterborough

- East Anglia is Stage Rally black hole – entries are very difficult to get
- Big issue is late entries. The situation is getting worse. This has been on the increase over the last 2 or 3 years which is probably due to the economy
- It was suggested that clubs should contact their regional associations for them to coordinate and help with promotion
- Market forces are main contributing factor to entries – there is a need to plan events that are wanted
- Cost is forcing championship standard drivers down to club events resulting in club drivers losing heart that they are no longer competitive and give up
- “Lifing” makes perfectly good equipment obsolete i.e. seat belts, seats etc
- People are moving to enduro rallying as it is cheaper to start
- BARS test is a waste of time
- Grass roots entries are not happening – nowhere for youngster to go
- Road Rallying should be the way “in”
- East Anglia have success with 12 car events
- Many clubs are not making rallying attractive due to rule constraints
- There has been success in running special days where a venue is hired for cars to do “shake downs” and at the same time give last year’s marshals a passenger ride as a thank you. Also available to sponsors and could extend to “joe public”
- The next generation of motorsport people will probably have more debt problems (university etc) and therefore will not have disposable income for motorsport
- Far too many rules sending people off to track days e.g. fuel sampling not really relevant at club events
- Need to keep existing customers by just simplifying everything
- Adoption of non aggressive tyres

# The Rally Review Report

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## Isle of Man 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011

### State of rallying

- Rallying is healthy in the Isle of Man, but there is reduced interest in forestry events, as people are preparing their cars for tarmac events, which are predominant because of current availability of closed roads.
- Up to 40% of competitors are from the mainland, and therefore good for Tourism (and hence IoM Government grants), but this reflects fewer island competitors. On Historic events there can be as much as 80% from mainland UK.
- Club events remain strong on the island, and there is no evidence that competitors are dropping down a level. Either they compete as before, or they cease competing.
- Road closures near to conurbations are seen as a nightmare. There are no complaints (comparatively) about the Isle of Man Forestry charge of £11 per car per event!

### Championships

- Being included in Championships is seen as demonstrating quality events. The influence of championships on the island is low.
- Event promotion is key to its success (the Sunseeker Rally was mentioned as an example of good practice). It was considered that a well publicised event would be successful, even if the quality of stages was comparatively poor.
- Financial viability of events is often questionable. Businesslike decisions must be taken as to run or not. Club or event reserves don't last forever if they are continually being dipped into.
- Young people
- Youngsters on the IoM are choosing 2 wheel motor sport rather than 4 wheel – seen as cheaper, less 'clique'ey, and not run by old farts. 2 wheeled sport had a more sexy image.
- The lack of top names attending island events any more tends to disengage interest from the youngsters. If the big names still came, they would be more interest.
- Karters do not convert to Rallying as they get older because of costs. Lifting of belts, personal protection equipment etc was mentioned as off-putters.
- Corporate sponsorship has all but disappeared in the current economic climate.
- Hybrid events were felt to provide more interest (e.g. Cars+Motorcycles ; Cars + Grass Track), and matching the performance of cars to a given venue was seen as being something that would improve safety. Dangers to mixing low and high powered vehicles on same event. Separate Novice classes should be considered.
- BARS/ARKS numbers low, but efficient, and some local Sports Council grants were available to assist.

### Regulations

- There were no issues with regulations. The practice of organisers sometimes copying large chunks of regulations from the Year Book into their SR's was explained as sometimes being because of specific problems encountered on a previous event, and highlighted the relevant points as well as covering the organiser's backs.