

And so all the hard work having been completed, with most of the “i”s dotted and “t”s crossed, TDC’s Irish Classic Retro emerged from its chrysalis stage into the splendid butterfly that Frank Fennell and his team had hoped for.

A photograph showing a group of people in a meeting room. In the foreground, a man with white hair and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt, sits at a long wooden table, writing on a document with a red pen. On the table are various items: a calculator, a stapler, several sheets of paper, and a small black bag. Standing behind him, another man in a green sweater holds up a large sheet of paper. To the right, a man in a dark blue button-down shirt looks down at something in his hands. Further back, other individuals are visible, some looking at papers. A whiteboard on a stand is positioned against the wall in the background. The room has a modern feel with recessed ceiling lights.

A photograph of a smiling woman with short blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a graphic design. She has red-rimmed glasses on her head and is seated at a table.

A photograph of a man with grey hair, wearing a dark sweater and olive green trousers, walking towards the camera. He is smiling slightly. To his right is a line of red cars, including a red Mini Cooper with a yellow 'MINI' sign on the roof and a blue car with a yellow 'MINI' sign and license plate 'OZR - 411'. In the background, there is a large, modern building with a glass facade and a tall, cylindrical tower. The sky is overcast.

[illegible]

However, the appearance of their matching yellow examples on Sunday was sufficient to secure the win. Probably more pertinent was their cleaning of the conventional navigation sections of the Saturday night leg – this section alone was arguably “worth the price of admission”. Their scariest moment was in Holfeld 1. Geoff refused to be intimidated by a ramp to the extent that the Mini’s airborne aerodynamics came into play. The wind tunnel work must have been skimped on because they suffered a heavy landing on the offside rear wheel. This broke and a brake pipe suffered collateral damage which made their subsequent passage



to the end of the test even more entertaining than usual. Speaking of entertainment, Geoff's "enthusiastic" driving style enthralled the spectators at the first test. After the Saturday supper halt until the final pylon which, thanks to his approach speed of about 60 mph, saw them scatter in all directions. They followed up their broken wheel with a puncture on the first test on Sunday and then drama on the very last test when the diff. began to malfunction. Fortunately, they made it to the end of the test, after which the diff. disintegrated completely. What a difference a year makes.

In an unaccustomed second place (at least he didn't have to make a speech) was Eamonn Byrne accompanied by Anthony Preston.



*Eamonn's fan club*

Eamonn actually failed a test and Anthony had to make three attempts at the Camolin Park regularity – hence their lowly finishing position.

Incidentally, the winners and runners-up penalties of 447 and 473 respectively suggest that the event was rather demanding. It was. When guys as competent as Paul and

Anthony are accruing totals of this magnitude and when everyone from tenth place downwards is in the thousands, it would suggest that a more relaxed schedule be employed in future. It would be more encouraging for everyone, particularly those with limited experience.

In third place with the nicest car, a gorgeous Alfa Romeo Guilietta Sprint, were Dermot Carnegie & Kevin Savage.



It seemed a shame to be subjecting such a beautiful machine to some of the less than billiard-table smooth surfaces encountered en route. Robert Bolton (Midget) and Joe Reynolds (BGT) had been looking forward to a tight battle for the combined Classes 4/6 until the powers-that-be decided that Dermot's Alfa was a sports car and so should join them in the class.



With his Hornet still in hospital, Rob had been looking forward to a weekend away from a multiple Hewison Champion, only to be landed with another virtuoso of the pylons! Dermot & Kevin had a more or less

drama-free weekend, though the left-hand drive made the tests more of a challenge for Dermot.



*Iris Carnegie and sundry grandchildren offer moral support*

Unfortunately for his rivals, it seemed to make little difference.

Steve Griffin & Alan Dorman in the Kadett were a fine fourth.



*Alan*



*Steve*



Such is the taciturnity of both of these gentlemen that, apart from one attempt by Steve to demolish a ban during an unscheduled reversing manoeuvre, their weekend proceeded relatively uneventfully.

Fifth were veterans Robert Ganly & Rory Dooley. Robert does have a bit of a reputation for failing a test from time to time but on this occasion he felt his couple of "fails" were undeserved.



Their diff. was making funny noises after Saturday's night leg but intervention from Kevin Savage, theoretical and applied, and Steve Griffin, theoretical on Sunday morning, allowed them to continue to the finish with no further mechanical drama.



Rory did not confess to any navigational transgressions but then I didn't actually ask him if he had slipped up at all!

Frank Lenahan & Cath Woodman were next, in the Cherry. Frank's body was in full working order (shoulder and back) for the weekend (Trish was to report to me on Monday if he had a relapse post-event - she didn't!). Cath got off to an unfortunate start. She inadvertently called the Test 6 directions on Test 5 - easily done as they were on the same page and were very similar. In the overall scheme of things this lapse became an ever-

decreasing percentage error as the event unfolded.



*The fingers are pointed at Cath - one is Frank's but whose is the other?*

Cath didn't enjoy the mixture of jogularity and normal regularity on the first run through Castle Howard. She had to resort to tables. This meant abandoning the cylindrical abacus-like device she normally uses to keep on schedule - this upset her. Frank doesn't normally need much encouragement to go quickly but from time to time Cath is moved to urge him with her catchphrase, "Move it on here, Frank".

In seventh in his father's immaculate Escort was Christopher Evans. While claiming to be a novice (I suppose he is at retros) he did manage to have the best aggregate on both "normal" tests and special tests.



Navigated by the competent Kathryn Millington he (and she) enjoyed their weekend. Kathryn's brother, Gavin,

was sitting with Mark Doran in another immaculate Escort, this one freshly rebuilt. They suffered no major incidents on their way to eighth and, most importantly, the car was unscathed.

Joe Reynolds & Vincent Fagan got around unremarkably. Joe is now driving the BGT more aggressively (I suppose some of Rocket Ron's genes became incorporated, inadvertently or otherwise, when the car was being built) and consequently it is behaving more impressively and efficaciously.



*Joe relaxes before the start*

Fortunately, the navigator's seat is well reclined. This allows Vincent to be as laid back physically as he is mentally! I did seek a quote from Vincent and he had this to say: "My driver was brilliant all weekend. Yes, I do hope to sit with him again. We were followed during the whole event by a little white Midget, but we managed to get rid of it on Sunday by loosening a couple of bolts."

Rounding off the top ten were Ernie Campbell & Davy Johnston in Ernie's very original Cooper S. They have been staunch supporters of retros since their inception so it was great to see them get into the top ten. A former smoker (the most odious), I feel it is my duty to urge one, or indeed the two, of them to attend to their nicotine addiction as they constitute the only crew both of whom are fully committed to smoking - not an image



In the Starlet class, John & JJ Farrell came out on top. They cleverly utilise their respective driving skills, John going forward over longer distances and JJ forwards and backwards over shorter distances to maximise their performance. This tactic is of little use, of course, if JJ, who does all the navigating, gets lost.



This weekend he kept pretty much to the specified route and their total was one of the minority three digit ones. Judging from the numbers and reactions of those who appeared by the side of the road, the PR crews had done Trojan work. Despite their endeavours, almost inevitably there were a couple of disgruntled residents along the way. One of these blocked the designated route in the vicinity of

*TTCCTGTTTGGATGAGCGAATTGACGC*

Robert Bolton & Ian McCulloch were cruising to a comfortable second-in-class position after coffee on Sunday when a nut fell off and the bolt to which it was previously fell out of the top shock absorber and something else (whose function is a mystery to me) mount on the offside front. This had a deleterious effect on Rob's ability to steer, so, having managed to cobble together a temporary repair, they decided that discretion was in order and they trundled home to prepare mentally for the prize-giving dinner.



Ian had found the navigation very hard at times (brain cells start dying in your teens and are not replaced). Also, he called the “other right” on a few occasions which hampered headway. Rob was also being very kind to the car (Ian’s) on the bumpier sections. And so the penalties accumulated.

(left-hand drive, poor handbrake, big machine) though it was good that most of the tests were quite open.



Eddie Peterson & Sam Johnston provided what was probably the story of the event. Their gearbox started misbehaving on Saturday morning and they began losing gears. They managed to acquire one for €100 in Felix Byrne's breakers in Arklow during the lunch halt.



They managed to make it to the supper halt where, having jacked the car up, Eddie acted as the mechanical equivalent of commis chef while Eamonn and Daniel Byrne effected the transplant successfully – amazing really. I am told that the most difficult part of the procedure was removing the sump-guard.

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malfunctioned. A fuel leak in the vicinity of the exhaust manifold was potentially more disruptive, so they decided to retire and conserve their energy for their next outing.

Warren & Jean Chmura did their exotically pink Citroen a mischief on Holfeld 2. Warren just clipped a sapling in a cautioned section. This caused the wing to attack the front wheel which in turn restricted forward motion and steering. Warren unbolted the wing but, despite some judicious application of a lump hammer, a sufficiently effective repair could not be made and they had to head for home.

Owen Whelan & Joanna Doran were discommoded by Joanna's bout of mal-de-navi which resulted in "breakfast, dinner, tea / road interfacing".



Joanna was sporting a very attractive new look at the weekend in the form of a remodelled hair configuration, complemented by a slight change in colour – she, and indeed Nikki, are fortunate to have inherited their mother's good looks. Nikki was sitting with Joe and they were delighted with their 13<sup>th</sup> overall, especially as Owen and Joanna were only 14<sup>th</sup>.

Another Starlet man, Liam Cashman, had come up from Cork to team up with Eoin O'Curry. Eoin had more or

less relinquished the organisational duties he has been responsible for since the event's inception and was navigating for the first time. He admitted to some mistakes but the main thing was that he got Liam around to all of the tests. There was some talk of a seat in the back on subsequent events for an interpreter but as this suggestion, or something similar, has been made many, many times in the past, please feel free to ignore it.

Noel Broderick and Mark McGuire offered some diversity in the Starlet class with their Golf. Unfortunately, the exhaust system suffered such derangement - a combination of noise and fumes - that they were forced to retire. (Noel's derangement is the way he always is and did not contribute at all to their demise.)

Colin Dwyer was at a conference in Galway so Blessington Tyre supremo, Martin Nugent, had Karen Gaffney on the maps in another nice Mk1 Escort. I didn't hear of anything strange or startling about their progress – they did make it to the finish.

Andy Hennessy and Peter Murphy were in Andy's purposeful looking Anglia. I sometimes wonder how Peter gets an opportunity to give directions, given Andy's non-stop garrulity. He must do, though, as they made it to the end. Andy told me that Peter was the best partner he has ever had. He was very impressed that he had found his way around despite a misbehaving Brantz. He admitted that he, himself, needed to improve, particularly by acquainting himself better with the effective deployment of his hydraulic handbrake. Incidentally, Andy is in ALMC and is involved in a membership recruitment drive. The club is putting on a Rally and Performance Car Show at The City North Hotel on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April. If you get this before then you might like to go along to see the more than 100 cars. They hope to persuade locals to

join ALMC which now holds monthly meetings in The City North Hotel.

Richard Pain & Richard Jackson were out in Richard P's recently deceased granny's 1980 Triumph Dolomite, adorned with original Maxwell Motors stickers and just "run in" on 25 000 miles.



*Richards, Jackson & Pain*

It did need some attention at the lunch halt on Saturday after a water pipe blew – the repair rendered the heater inoperable thereafter so they had to rely on each other's hot air to keep them warm for the remainder of the weekend. Having used the Dolomite to get out of the extremely competitive Starlet class they found themselves up against equally formidable Sunbeam/Manta/Escort etc. opposition. Richard J reckoned he deserved an award for the greatest number of penalties ever recorded on one time card. He managed to clock up 3250 on Card 7! What made this even more noteworthy was that it constituted only about half an hour of "action". Frank Fennell was sufficiently taken with the history of the car to present them with the Spirit of the Rally award.

John Byrne in the Sunbeam demonstrated his customary magic on the tests. He also worked some magic in his native Wexford with test venues and marshals. He was accompanied by John Ellison from Rathdrum. It was just John E's third outing. He reckons he is starting to get the hang of it. John B's moment of glory came in Castle Howard on Saturday night when a tulip diagram suggested that the road turned sharply right after passing through a gate. In reality it wasn't



John McAssey's Mini's brakes gave up the ghost on Saturday and he and Ben Deithrick had to throw in the towel.

The MacWilliam brothers in their Onyx green Mk1 Escort went well with Craig at the wheel. Their event featured nothing spectacular. This might have had something to do with Craig's comment afterwards where he suggested that if Ian had wanted him to go more quickly, "why didn't he said so!"

Keith Slowey & Conor Battigan were in yet another Starlet. Despite Keith being more customarily known as Keith Slowly they did well and won the Novice award.

Daniel Byrne who had Eoin Longworth sitting with him responded with a curt “No comment” when asked how things had gone. Reserve is obviously part of the Byrne genetic make-up. Eoin had already gone home at this stage but I have a feeling that he may have had a little more to say.

David Ronaldson and Cliff Auld were in David's lovely little turquoise Mini Cooper. On Saturday night they were delayed by locals who took umbrage at the passage of the event. Could the memory of an earlier turquoise Mini have had anything to do with their displeasure?!

Ronnie and Aaron Mitchell were giving their recently restored (it had been in a barn for 20 years) Gilbern Invader its maiden outing. With its 3-litre Ford V6 engine it had plenty of power but the interesting angles it assumed during the tests suggest that the suspension needs some stiffening up. They found the event tough but were pleased to have finished. I felt they

deserved an award for being among the few northerners to stay for the prizegiving.

John Maher & Alan Coyle entered at the eleventh hour in yet another Starlet. Alan, who is a competent autotester, was in the hot seat for the first time. He knew it was not going to be easy but was surprised at how difficult it turned out to be. Despite this, they did well enough to win the Beginners' award.

[illegible]

So that's everybody accounted for, I hope. I have already mentioned a couple of the officials but at the risk of repetition Frank Fennell deserves great credit for his control of all the elements which go to make up an event like this - a big dining room table helps!

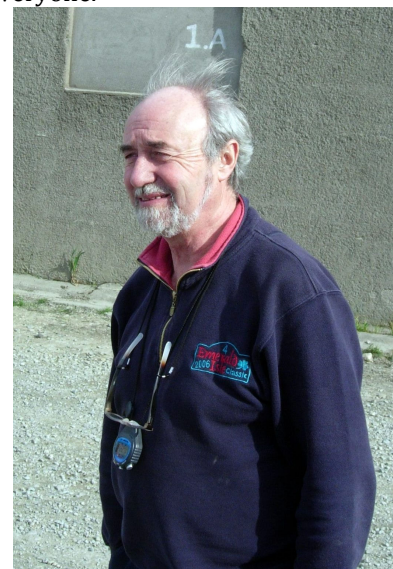


Mickey Gabbett organised the tests well though I would suggest some fluorescent pylons are secured before the next running. Michael Jackson co-ordinated the marshals superbly. From a competitor's point of view everything that ought to have been manned seemed to be manned. Not only that, the marshals all gave the impression that they knew what they were doing. Both Michael and the marshals deserve praise. For his ubiquity and quiet efficiency Malcolm Clark received the Marshals' award. Eamonn King was his customarily administratively efficient self. Noel Devlin generated results quickly and,

despite some last minute amendments, accurately for the most part. MI steward Michael Daly manned a couple of points, as well as attending to his primary duties. Club President, Joe Doran, also deserves a mention for taking on all of the printing associated with the event.



Rocket Ronnie Griffin was the quickest club steward in Leinster. Last, but certainly not least, is Fred Bent, whose fabulous route had something for everyone.



*Fred's remaining hair refuses to let go*



A portrait of a man with short dark hair, wearing glasses and a dark blue polo shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is wearing a gold ring on his left ring finger. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

- o Dermot Carnegie shared the driving with Iris on Sunday night. He drove to the prizegiving and she drove home.
- o Ronnie was going off in Joe Reynolds's jeep after the final test. Joe offered him a spare set of keys. Ronnie looked a little puzzled and wondered why – before the penny dropped. [Ronnie had locked a set of keys into the same jeep on a previous occasion and had to break a window to retrieve them].
- o Both Joe and Mark Doran were quicker than Ronnie in Joe Reynold's BGT on Test 20 despite Ronnie having a few "go"s.
- o Kathleen Reynolds was absent from the prizegiving as she was already busy, baking for next year.
- o Mickey Gabbett describes himself as an occasional member of TDC – he pays his membership subscription sporadically.
- o Ronnie Griffin had a special Brantz in the route setting BMW. This featured mileage on the top line and time on the bottom line. At least this is what FF took it to be when complaining that

- o Despite attending to their needs outside, the fumes from the cigars of Gabbett and Savage managed to diffuse a considerable distance into the hotel at regular intervals during the prizegiving.
- o Somebody pointed out that Steve Griffin was Ronnie's uncle but that it wasn't Steve's fault.

*Some of the pictures I took didn't really fit into the text above so I have included them below.*



A photograph showing a white Lotus Elise and a red Lotus Elise driving on a paved road. The white car is on the left, and the red car is on the right. They are both driving towards the right. In the background, there is a large, dense bush of pink flowers. The scene is outdoors, with trees and a grassy area visible in the background.

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*Eoin O'Curry and Karen Gaffney compare notes*



*Doesn't Iris shop well for Dermot?*



*Doug Richardson officiating at Charlesland*



*Ernie and Joe chinwag*



*Laura Fagan gazes fondly*



*There were a few drops of rain on Friday evening*



*Fred Lewis at work*



*Loadsacars in Holfelds*