

## **Scottish Motor Racing 2016**

So far this season of racing has been much tougher than recent years mainly due to the knock-on effect of the slowdown in the oil business in the north-east area around Aberdeen. A large percentage of our competitors work in this business and our BMW Compact Cup which had major support in the north-east has seen grids drop from around 34/35 in 2015 to around 22/23 this year. Along with one or two casualties in other classes our overall grids are down by around 15/20%. As a result we have had to adapt our business and trim costs where possible to allow us to run meetings on a cost neutral basis.

The Scottish Formula Ford Championship has attracted some new competitors this year and the winner, Neil MacLennan will go forward to the Mazda 'Road to Indy' Shootout at the end of the year. The program gathers the champion drivers from a number of different championships around the world and hosts a shootout from which a winner will be selected. This shootout will occur in the autumn of 2016 in America and the winner of the shootout will be granted a \$200,000 scholarship into the USF2000 Championship, the first rung on the Mazda Road to Indy development ladder.

Outside of racing there has been the SMRC involvement in the Ignition Festival in Glasgow which had an attendance of around 30,000 people, many of whom were new to the sport. The organisation of the track action and all the marshalling was run by SMRC and this event is likely to become even bigger in the next couple of years. In conjunction with SMS, the SMRC ran a stand in one of the exhibition halls which proved extremely popular with all generations and a whole spectrum of motor sport enthusiasts. The combined stand showed cars from rallying, racing and autotests as well as 2-wheeled bikes from Trials and Historics and was manned by Rory Bryant and Gillian Sefton from SMS with help from a number of SMRC members including the marshalling fraternity who were recruiting on the stand as well. Plans are already afoot for this joint effort to continue in 2017.

There is just one meeting left this year in a couple of weeks and hopefully a few additional regulars can be tempted back to allow the organisers to break even and build for 2017.

Mike How