



**It has been a season-long roller-coaster ride at HRP Lochgelly Raceway in 2015!!!** In fact, that roller-coaster began late in 2014 when HRP announced that they would be moving their regular race day from Sunday afternoons to Saturday nights – a move that was not universally acclaimed but has proven to be the right decision for drivers, teams, fans and staff as well as HRP as a business. Many fans have come to accept the many reasons behind the decision that have been repeated and repeated throughout the year and, even if they are not overly amused by it, are able to understand that there are some very good reasons behind it. The move to Saturdays has been an unequivocal success with more spectators coming through the gates to watch some great formulas which have also seen an increase in most formulas on 2014 – I guess the doubters were wrong!!!

There have been so many great moments and so many highs that they should really outweigh the lows of 2015 but, frankly, everything changed the day that we heard of the passing of Keir Millar in May following an accident during a Ministox race. While it was a very dark time for many in the sport; that feeling pales into insignificance compared to the ordeal that Keir's family have, and continue to go through, we can only hope that the messages of condolence and the incredible outpouring of emotion following this tragic accident have offered some comfort to the family. The way the entire sport, and many around the world, rallied around was a truly amazing thing to behold and I would like to thank each and every person involved in showing their support for the Millar family at that time and also on an ongoing basis. Keir was destined for greatness in whatever he chose to do and his cheeky smile is still missed on race days – RIP little man.

The season got underway on February 28<sup>th</sup> and there were some great early meetings with healthy crowds and large turnouts on track. The first Speed Weekend of 2015 saw the National Hot Rods contesting their European Championship for the third year in a row – given that this meeting came about following a very brief conversation it has really become a hopefully permanent fixture on the

HRP calendar. Adam Hylands underlined his liking for the HRP Lochgelly Raceway track as he claimed his first (of many I expect) big wins in the Elite non-contact class. The Superstox were also in major championship action and the now-retired Steven Jackson was the main man on that Saturday back in April as he managed to keep ahead of Barry Stephen to take the British Championship.



The Stock Rods were also the subject of much discussion last winter and with good reason as the decision was taken elsewhere to split the formula (for whatever reasons) in Scotland during 2015. In fact, two “World Finals” were held in Scotland this year – not great for the drivers and fans of the formula at all and a very sad situation indeed. Dean O’Dell managed to beat the likes of Andy Sturt, Stuart Smyth, Jack Grandon, Siobhan Martin, Chris Lattka, Jonathan Lattka, Brett Sneddon, Johnny Cardwell and Gary Butler – a star studded field and a great win for Dean who had already enjoyed watching younger brother Adam claim the 1300 Stock Car British Championship earlier that evening following the very unlucky Lee McGill’s disqualification for failing post-race checks.

August brought the 2.0 Hot Rod World Championship to HRP Lochgelly Raceway as well as the return of the UK Oval Track Legends who had enjoyed a successful debut the year before for their European Championship. Once again, nobody had an answer for Adam Hylands as, despite the attempts of Mark Madill, managed to take a dominant win in the big one in his final race in the formula. Billy Bonnar is now the proud owner of this car and, given Billy’s vast experience, he will be looking to make big waves in the formula after his eagerly-anticipated return to action!!! Sean Smith was the man who took the win in the Legends European which also featured THAT crash right on the start line which featured Scot Russell Adam in a spectacular piece of auto-sculpture!!!

The October Speed Weekend meant only one thing – the National Micro Banger World Cup!!! One disappointment was the driver booking list – HRP take driver bookings in good faith and publish them to help inform the paying public but clearly some just enjoy seeing their name on a list – things WILL be changing for next year!!! The Dreamers made the long trip north from Sussex and were rewarded in spades as they dominated the weekend with Ed Kennett taking the gold roof and Darren Terry-Brand claiming the Open Scottish title. While the Dreamers dominated the Bangers, it was the Northern Irish drivers who dominated the ProStocks with Greg McMullan claiming his first major title in the shape of the European Championship.



While the Speed Weekends have featured some great action, many of our domestic events have seen some great moments throughout the year. Adding “novelty” events such as Caravan Carnage and the Ramp Rollover event have attracted new spectators to the sport and hopefully some of them will return regularly in 2016 and beyond.

Looking at the formulas individually there can be no doubt that the 1300 Stock Cars have once again been THE success story in Scotland in 2015 – fantastic action with huge turnouts and stealing the show on a regular basis – proper old school stock car racing!!! The Superstox have seen an upsurge in numbers and the action has been better for it while we have seen Barry Stephen and David Frame rise to the top of the formula on a domestic and international stage to join Stuart Gilchrist as genuine title contenders. The Ministox have seen some great action but there can be no doubt that Euan Millar and Steven Burgoyne have been the class of the pack in 2015 but the likes of Michael Mitchell, John Crawford, Gary Paterson and Danny Whyte have risen to the fore. The ProStocks have had an up and down season with turnouts fluctuating and some “over the top” incidents for what is a limited contact formula – Tam Melrose has been truly dominant domestically and can look back on his season with pride.



As far as the non-contact formulas are concerned, it has been a case of “as you were” in National hot Rods with turnouts remaining stagnant but several drivers have recently purchased cars so hopefully we will see an upturn in 2016. The 2.0 Hot Rods saw some good racing in 2015 with more and more drivers joining the formula – the future looks bright for the tin tops! The Stock Rods (as previously mentioned) have certainly not enjoyed a classic season but the rise of Siobhan Martin to the top echelon of the sport has been a joy to watch. One formula that doesn’t seem to get the credit it deserves is the CC Rods – the low budget non-contact class have enjoyed a breakout year with international recognition and some great battles between the likes of Ian Taylor, Johnny Bell and Ian Donaldson. That just leaves the Ninja Karts – the way the 6-11 year olds race and carry themselves off track is a shining example of all that is good in our sport and I salute them all!!!

So.....what’s to come in 2016? If only I had a crystal ball to know then I would be a rich man but I can tell you that fixture planning for 2016 is well underway and **(SPOILER ALERT)** some of the highlights of the HRP 2016 calendar include:

- The Ninja Karts European Championship!!!
- The National Hot Rod European Championship which will co-headline our April Speed Weekend on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> along with the competitive debut of the Classic Hot Rods in Scotland!!!
- The Rebel Racers will make their Scottish debut on the weekend of June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> as they form part of a great weekend.
- THE THUNDER IS BACK as the mighty BriSCA F1 Stock Cars roll back into town on the last weekend of June.
- Three-wheeled mayhem returns to Scotland as the RELIANT ROBIN SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP rolls (quite possibly literally) into town in August!!!

- Our August Speed Weekend is usually a big one and this year will certainly be no exception as SEVERAL championships are decided over August 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>!!!
- The fourth and final Speed Weekend of the year features the National Micro Banger World Cup as well as, for the first time ever, the Stock Rod Best in Britain – this event should see the great and the good from Stock Rods descending on HRP Lochgelly Raceway for the right to wear the Union Jack on their roof!!!

Add to that list even more international events that will be revealed in due course plus Caravan Carnage, the Ramp Rollover, Banger Ramp Races and the usual plethora of domestic formulas and championships and it is bubbling away nicely to be the biggest and best season at HRP Lochgelly Raceway to date and you can ALL be a part of that.

Whether on track or simply standing on the terracing, the one constant aspect of OUR sport is the passion of the people involved. We all have our opinions on how things should be done and what changes may make the sport better but we are definitely united in hoping for the best for stock car racing and short oval motorsport. It is fine to disagree with another person's opinion but PLEASE show each and every person the same RESPECT you would expect. At the end of the day, the sport is reliant on drivers, fans and promoter pulling in the same direction and we can truly achieve something special if we do this.

I cannot let this 2015 review without mentioning a couple of things. Firstly, I would like to thank our dedicated team of track day staff who work, in all weather conditions, to ensure that we are able to host stock car meetings for those on both sides of the fence – thank you so much. 2016 will be very strange as Johnny "Half lap" McArthur (our pit marshal) has intimated his intention to move on at the end of tonight's meeting – Johnny has been a part of the furniture here since the very beginning and will be missed by all in the pits and all of us at HRP. The second person who is thoroughly deserving of a mention is the man, the myth, the legend that is Eddie Paterson. Eddie has recorded videos and then DVDs of stock car events across the country for over twenty years now and, following a health scare a few months ago, has decided to hang up his camera after tonight's event – Eddie, we salute you and thank you for all you have done for the sport!!!

Next week's article will include a full preview of all four of HRP's Speed Weekends in 2016 as well as news on other special events planned for Scotland's most-modern and friendliest short oval motorsports facility!!!





