

43^e Edition



SUNDAY 07 APRIL 2019

Press Release: March 30 – for immediate release

International reception for overseas drivers on Friday night ahead of Rose Hotel Circuit of Kerry – All Welcome

Kerry Motor Club will host an international drivers' reception on Friday ahead of Sunday's Rose Hotel Circuit of Kerry.

The club's flagship event has been attracting overseas drivers since 1979 when Welsh driver John Price brought his Porsche to Ballybunnion where the rally was based that year and finished a creditable third overall.

He went on to win the rally in 1988 but the first overseas winner was Macclesfield-based crew Mike Pattison driving an Escort G3, who took victory in 1987 and again in 1989.

The rally has been won by Welsh drivers on several occasions, including victories for Melvyn Evans (2010) and Gwyndaf Evans (1994).

To mark the 40th anniversary of overseas participation in the club's flagship event Kerry Motor Club members will host a reception at the Rose Hotel at 9pm on Friday night to welcome international contestants to Tralee.

Camp native Kenneth Quirke surprised his family by coming home from New York unannounced over the weekend and has decided to place a late entry for the rally in his father Martin's Talbot Sunbeam.

Kenneth has a few New Yorkers with him for his visit home, many of whom are experiencing Kerry and rallying for the first time.

"It is wonderful to have him home," said Martin "He has not been home in three years and it was a great surprise for me and his mom Breeda. But it is even a bigger surprise that he is now competing on the rally."



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One of the leading Welsh entries is Dai Roberts.

The Carmarthenshire-based competitor is no stranger to Ireland having contested many of the country's rallies as a co-driver including the recent West Cork International Rally.

He also competes as a driver, in a Peugeot 205 GTi, mainly in club events in Wales, England and the Isle of Man but has chosen the Rose Hotel Circuit of Kerry to make his Irish driving debut.

"I am buzzing, I can't wait," he said. "I am coming purely for the craic and all going well I will be back in Kerry for the Killarney historic rally in November."

Scottish driver Billy Cowe makes the long trip from Cockburnspath, Berwickshire, Scotland, to Tralee, a journey of over 800kms not including ferry crossings. He has competed in Mayo and Clare in the past, but this is his first trip to Kerry.

London Irish Motor Club will be well represented on the entry list which is due to be published before the end of the week

Galway man John Reddington is the current Flanders International Rally Challenge champion. He is chasing his third Belgian title in a row this year and is using the Circuit of Kerry as a shakedown event ahead of round one of the FIRC in late April.

Tomas Davis is another Welsh driver on the 100-strong entry-list and he will debut a newly built Ford Escort Mk2 on the event.

Shane Buckley originally from Listry but currently based in London will co-drive for the Welsh man.

Hertfordshire-based Listowel man Ray Hilliard is the owner of Mick Quinn's Subaru and will be at the event to oversee his new car's maiden outing in Kerry. Ray and his brother John are long-time supporters of the Circuit of Kerry.

London Irish Motor Club will put up a trophy for the best overseas competitor on the event.



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Local man Sean Moriarty is a founding member of LIMC and a long-time member of Kerry Motor Club.

“One of the reasons London Irish exists is to encourage UK-based competitors to come to Ireland,” he said. “This new annual trophy will give them something to race for. “

The London Irish Motor Club trophy will be presented to the first competitor with an overseas address (either driver or co-driver and not necessarily a London Irish MC member) to cross the finish line at the Rose Hotel on April 7.

Killarneyman and London Irish Motor Club chairman Mick Smith will be one of the guests of honour at the reception.

Kerry Motor Club members will provide garages and workshops in the Tralee locality so visitors can work on their cars before the event in secure and comfortable surroundings.

Entries remain open for the rally which is a counting round of both the Top Part West Coast Rally Championship and the Moriarty's Centra Kingdom of Kerry Rally Championship

Prospective competitors can find more details here: www.kerrymotorclub.com



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