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WILLIAMS: "BUTTON IS OURS"

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TWO RACES TO BE MISSED,
AND THEN THERE'S MY
CONTRACT FOR 2006...

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IN BRIEF

DUEL OF THE B8S

Chevron B8s driven by Briton Chris Chiles and local hero Pierenrico Tonetti were neck-and-neck at the head of the field in Italy's Cento Ore di Modena event as we closed for press. The four-day multi-discipline event was due to finish on Tuesday.

SIXTH FOR SMITH

Historic Formula Ford 2000 and Simtek Euroboss racer Paul Smith finished sixth on his Classic F3 debut at Silverstone, in the Ralt RT1 he recently acquired from Reg James. The one-time Avia La Chatre school car got ex-Lotus Ffordster James's sons Ian and Ross established in the sport.

NEW MORGAN ORDER

At Silverstone on Saturday, behind the wheel of his HSCC '70s Road Sports Morgan +8, Philip McKelvey became the first driver to lead Richard Thorne in a similar car, and set a quicker race lap than the defending champion.

SHRAPNEL SIZZLER

John Hillon beat the Alfa Romeos to land a memorable HSCC '70s Road Sports class win in his Porsche 924 at Silverstone. "It looks like £500 of auction shrapnel, with every panel a different colour, but it goes well," said the Derby man.

HARGRAVE'S FIFTY

Reg Hargrave celebrated 50 years of racing at Silverstone, behind the wheel of his Formula Junior Brabham BT6. Hargrave started in a centre-seat Kieft-MG sportscar, and brought his Don Parker Kieft 500 to the track.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Brabham BT28-mounted Hugh Price pipped John Counsell (March 703) for one-litre F3 honours in Sunday's Classic Racing Cars event at Silverstone. The pair pounced when long-time leader Richard Urwin (BT28) experienced a costly moment.

CROFT CALL-UP

The HSCC has revved up racers to support the club's annual visit to Croft on Saturday May 21. The Derek Bell Trophy and Classic F3 fields have been merged in order to form a single grid on the demanding Darlington circuit.

MAXTED TO PAU

Argo JM6 ace Steve Maxted, who is unbeaten in three Classic F3 races to date this season, will be joined by John Bradshaw, Rob Moores and Paul Smith in a French series event at Pau this weekend. By reciprocal arrangement, six Frenchmen will race on the Brands Hatch GP circuit at the Historic Superprix on July 23/24.

McRae ran his MkII Escort as course car on the Rally of the Lakes



CLUB OUTING FOR McRAE

FORMER WORLD rally champion Colin McRae will be back in action on the Proflex Stages at the end of this month. The Scotsman, who won 25 rounds of the world championship in his 12 years as a works driver, will use his 2.5-litre Ford Escort MkII on the May 28 event. The 36-year-old will not compete at the Leyland Test Track, however, electing to run his Escort as the course car. "Gordon Birtwistle [Proflex boss] has really helped me out with the Escort," said McRae. "He asked me if I would be interested in coming down and having a go at his rally, so I said yes."

McRae used the Escort for the first time on last month's Killarney Rally of the Lakes. It wasn't a trouble-free debut on the Irish Tarmac qualifier, however. The car's gearbox took some getting used to, but once he was up to speed with the transmission, the engine briefly lapsed onto three cylinders. Having heard all about Killarney's legendary stages, McRae was pleased with his trip across the Irish Sea. "Killarney was good," said McRae, "and I'm looking forward to this event. I haven't been to the Leyland Test Track before, but from what I hear there are some pretty challenging places. It's a test track – that's what you would expect."

Running as the course car, McRae said he wouldn't be drawn into competing against the World Rally Cars which are likely to turn out. "At the end of the day, this Escort is still just a rear-wheel-drive rally car," said McRae. "I won't have anywhere near the traction the WRCs will have. This is just a bit of fun and something to help Gordon out – we're not coming to compete." The Proflex Stages is a round of six regional championships, and includes 45 competitive miles in eight stages. All eight stages of the event are staged on asphalt. Further details are available from www.proflexrally.co.uk

HIGGINS TAKES ROUSH MANX WIN

FORMER British champion Mark Higgins dominated last weekend's Manx National Rally, winning the event by almost four minutes in his Ford Focus RS WRC02.

Subaru driver Roger Duckworth was the best of the rest, clinching maximum MSA National Gravel Championship points. Higgins' appearance on the Douglas-based event – which qualifies for both Britain's leading asphalt and gravel series – was a one-off. The Eddie Stobart Motorsport-backed driver was clear favourite, despite having novice co-driver Andy Richardson, who had won the drive courtesy of sponsor WA Developments alongside him. The event brought typically changeable weather conditions, with a wet Friday evening having been swapped for a bright start on Saturday.

Higgins had opened a lead of

about a minute by the close of play on Friday, and had quadrupled that by the finish of the event.

"That's the fastest I've ever been down those stages," said Higgins.



Mark Higgins

"It was fantastic. Andy did a cracking job in the co-driver's seat. He's done a bit before, but I didn't expect him to do it as well as he did. "We only had one minor overshoot, apart from that everything went to plan – although I'm surprised to have won by so much."

Though Saturday's drier stages, Duckworth eased his way clear of a tussle between Paul Bird (Focus RS WRC02) and Scot Barry Johnson (Impreza WRC2003), with Bird's third place enough to land him the lead in the gravel standings. Sixth-placed Tony Davies was top GPR National Asphalt Championship finisher, behind Ford Focus WRC driver Brendan Crealey.

Mark Higgins took time out from his WRC commitments to splash his way to victory on the testing Roush Manx Rally



EVO CHALLENGE FOR CHAMPION

RYAN CHAMPION made a switch to a hired Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VIII in place of his usual Evo VI to win the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evo Challenge on last weekend's Manx National Rally.

Champion came home 50.2sec clear of Philip and Simon Morrow, with Neil McCance and Graham Hopewell a distant third. Champion pulled out a 30-second lead over the opening two

stages, running as high as first overall in the rally. He backed considerably in the closing stages. Stuart Jones and Ross Brough fought back to finish fourth, losing their brakes on Friday