

McWilliam Park Hotel Mayo Stages Rally 2011

Sunday, 13 March 2011

Mayo & District Motorsport Club is delighted to officially launch the 2011 McWilliam Park Hotel Mayo Stages Rally which takes place on the week-end of 12/13 March, 2011

Headline features of the McWilliam Park Hotel Mayo Stages Rally 2011

- Rally Returns to Claremorris after very successful 2010 event.
 - The McWilliam Park Hotel is again the Rally Headquarters and title sponsor.
 - Subsidiary event sponsors are Supermacs Ballindine and Claremorris, and Costcutters Ballindine.
- Mayo Stages Rally 2011 to kick-start new Road Safety Authority (RSA) and Motorsport Ireland (MI) Safety Initiative.
 - RSA Interactive Shuttle Returns for rally week-end.
- Experienced Clerk of the Course Sean McHugh takes charge for 2011 event.
- Round 1 of the 2011 Sligo Pallets Border Rally Championship.
- Nine competitive Stages totaling 119 kilometres featuring three Special Stages, each repeated three times.
- A Ceremonial Start will take place on the Saturday evening in Claremorris Town Square.
- Rally set to reach new audiences with innovative use of Local Community Radio and social media tools.
- The Rally Legends Challenge – an opportunity for stars from the past to compete in the cars that made them famous.
- The Honda Challenge – a special competition for competitors in Honda

cars with the top five finishers getting cash prizes.

2011 Mayo Stages Rally back to Claremorris for second year

After a very successful 2011 event, the Mayo Stages Rally is back in Claremorris for a second year. The rally got a great response from local businesses and community, and equally was very highly regarded by visiting competitors and spectators. **The McWilliam Park Hotel Claremorris** is once again Rally Headquarters and title sponsor for the 2011 Mayo Stages Rally and Mayo & District Motorsport Club wishes to thank the hotel's General Manager Fergal Ryan and Marketing Manager David Glynn for their continued support and enthusiasm in ensuring this is an event to remember. The Club also wishes to express thanks to the subsidiary sponsors of the event, Seamus Gallagher of **Supermacs Ballindine & Claremorris** and Danny and Emily McHugh from **Costcutters Ballindine**.

Mayo Stages Rally kick-starts major Road Safety initiative

The 2011 McWilliam Park Hotel Mayo Stages Rally is set to become the first event to feature under a major new partnership initiative between the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and Motorsport Ireland (MI).

The initiative, which was launched last Wednesday in Dublin by the President of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) Jean Todt, is aimed at promoting a message about safe driving, particularly at those aged between 17 and 24 who are most at risk on Irish roads.

Additionally the RSA's Road Safety Interactive Shuttle returns to Claremorris during the town's hosting of the Mayo Stages Rally. The Shuttle proved to be a popular attraction on last year's event with many local schools, clubs and societies visiting the facility which offers state-of-the-art simulators and multi-media experiences, and plays an integral part in the RSA's role in increasing road safety awareness. This year the Shuttle will be located behind the Town Square and once again will be open to the public as well as providing special

interactive sessions to local school-children.

Experienced 'Old Hand' returns to run the 2011 Rally

After an absence of five years since last in charge of a major rally, Began native and Chairman of Mayo & District Motorsport Club Sean McHugh returns as Clerk of the Course of the 2011 Mayo Stages Rally. In his previous years in charge Sean was responsible for making the Mayo Stages Rally one of the best run and most popular national events in the country. A highly regarded figure in Irish motorsport, and a regular competitor on both rally and autocross events, Sean is delighted to be able to take charge of a Mayo Stages Rally running on his home territory – indeed the rally route passes right by his home.

Able supporting Sean in his demanding role are Assistant Clerks of the Course Seamus Coffey and Aaron MacHale and Liam Healy. From Ballyhaunis, Seamus has been co-driving for three years, and was a key member of the organizing committee on Mayo & District Motorsport Club's Autocross events in 2010. Aaron MacHale, from Rathcoole, Co. Dublin but with strong Mayo connections, is one of Ireland's best known rally drivers - a former winner of the Mayo Stages Rally, and a former National Rally Champion - but for 2011 he is putting his expertise from behind the wheel to use in running an event. Liam Healy from Achill is a young Club member who has been competing in Autocross events in the past year but for the Mayo Stages is a valuable member of the organizing team. Kathleen Kennedy from Tubbercurry takes on the mammoth task of Secretary for the Rally for the second year, while a whole army of experienced volunteers have been working for months to ensure a successful event.

Opening round of Sligo Pallets Border Rally Championship

The Mayo Stages Rally is the opening round of the Sligo Pallets Border Rally

2011 McWilliam Park Hotel Mayo Stages Rally

Championship, which is becoming one of Ireland's most popular and closely fought rally series. Its appeal lies in the fact that it is based on class rather than overall results, therefore all competitors, regardless of what car they drive have an equal opportunity to claim the overall title. In 2010 Donegal cousins Declan and Brian Boyle claimed the title after winning their class on the Mayo Stages Rally, while Mayo competitors Fergal Loughney (Class 2) and Ambrose Gaughan / Derek Molloy (Class 9) claimed class wins, with the later paring in contention for the overall award right up to the final round.

A full days action over nine Special Stages

2011 sees competitors return to the south-east of the county following very positive feedback from competitors last year. Nine stages each run three times will provide a stern test on what will be a busy day's rallying. Action gets underway at 9am on Sunday 13 March with the leading cars scheduled to return to rally headquarters by 5 pm that evening. Service, which is sponsored by **Claremorris Credit Union**, will be located adjacent to the McWilliam Park Hotel.

- ⇒ Stages 1, 4 and 7 'Woodstock'. Sponsored by **MW Print & Design Claremorris**, this opening stage is located in the Ballindine / Irishtown area, and is a distance of 17.45 km.
- ⇒ Stages 2, 5 and 8 – 'Logboy'. This is the shortest stage of the rally at 8.45 km. It is located in the Began / Brickens area. Sponsor of the stage is **EPS Ballyhaunis**.
- ⇒ Stages 3, 6 and 9 – 'The Five Crossroads'. Slightly shorter than last year, this 13.7 km test in the Barnacarroll area sponsored by **Hillside Service Station Claremorris** will mean competitors cannot relax until they see the final flying finish.

Ceremonial Start

In 2010 the Mayo Stages Rally broke new ground for a National Rally in

Ireland by hosting a ceremonial start on the Saturday evening prior to the rally itself. It proved to be an enormous success with large crowds gathering in Claremorris Town Centre to see the rally cars and stars up close. For 2011 and in association with the Claremorris Chamber of Commerce and the Welcome Home Committee, Mayo & District Motorsport Club is promising a bigger and better Ceremonial Start. The road through the Town Square will be closed from 6pm to accommodate greater crowd numbers. Sponsored by **West Fest** there will be live music before the rally cars pass through the official start ramp with commentary and interviews with the leading drivers and local crews. At the back of the Square, the RSA Interactive Shuttle will be open to the public promoting the road safety message.

Rally set to reach new audiences

The 2011 Mayo Stages Rally is set to bring new levels of news and information to rally fans. In order to keep competitors and spectators as informed and up-to-date as possible, Mayo & District Motorsport Club is utilizing a range of communication tools in the build up to, and during rally week-end.

The Club is already providing regular updates via its Twitter account MayoMotorClub (<http://twitter.com/MayoMotorClub>) keeping followers informed regarding preparations for the rally. Additionally over the course of the rally week-end selected club officials will be providing instant updates from the stages, service park and rally headquarters including provisional stage times, quotes from competitors and any breaking stories. It means that rally followers should have access to an unprecedented amount of virtually real-time information while the event is in progress.

Followers of the Facebook page Mayo Stages Rally will also receive many of these updates both in the run up to, and over the course of the rally week-end with links to video as well as photos planned over the rally week-end.

Last but no means least, Claremorris Community Radio will be providing extensive radio coverage over the rally week-end including live coverage throughout the Sunday including stage times, news and interviews. All coverage will be streamed live making the Mayo Stages Rally the first Irish rally since Rally Ireland to offer this level of radio coverage. Claremorris Community Radio can be accessed locally on 94.6 FM and online on <http://www.claremorriscommunityradio.ie>

The Rally Legends Challenge

A unique opportunity to see rally cars and stars of days gone by in competitive action once again, the Rally Legends Challenge, a special competition within the 2011 McWilliam Park Hotel Mayo Stages Rally, is open to drivers who have finished in the top three of a national status multi-stage rally between 1 January 1970 and 31 December 2000 and entered in a currently non-homologated car excluding World Rally Cars (WRC) cars.

Among the famous names already confirmed to take part are Mayo native and multiple Tarmac Champion Austin McHale in a BMW M3, possibly in the famous Xtra-vision livery. Welsh star Phil Collins is set to bring his extremely rapid Escort and could well be a contender for outright victory, while another rapid pilot will be Davy Greer who is intending to compete in an Opel Ascona 400. It promises to be a great spectacle.

The Honda Challenge

The Honda Challenge is another special competition within this year's Mayo Stages Rally. Open to all competitors who enter in a Honda, regardless of model or what class it competes in, prizes of €400 will be awarded to each of the top five finishing Honda cars in the overall classification.

With many of the country's most exciting up-and-coming drivers as well as established stars competing in the hugely popular Japanese marque, this

promises to be the challenge to finally establish just who is the fastest Honda driver in the country.

About the Mayo Stages Rally

The Mayo Stages Rally is one of the biggest sporting events to take place in the region every year, and brings significant revenue into the area. In addition to the rally competitors, their service crews, friends and family many thousands of spectators, estimated at least in the tens of thousands will visit Mayo over the week-end. With all these people requiring accommodation as well as food and beverages it has been calculated that the Mayo Stages Rally is worth in excess of €2 million to the local economy.

About Mayo & District Motorsport Club

Mayo & District Motorsport Club, formerly known as Ballina Motor Club, has been in existence since 1976. Affiliated to the national motorsport organisation Motorsport Ireland, the club promotes official motorsport activity in Mayo. Drawing members from all over the county as well as neighbouring regions, Mayo & District Motorsport Club organizes a number of sporting events every year including the Mayo Stages Rally and Loose Surface Autocross events. The club meets on the first Wednesday of every month, new members are always welcome. More details on www.mayomotorsportclub.com.

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