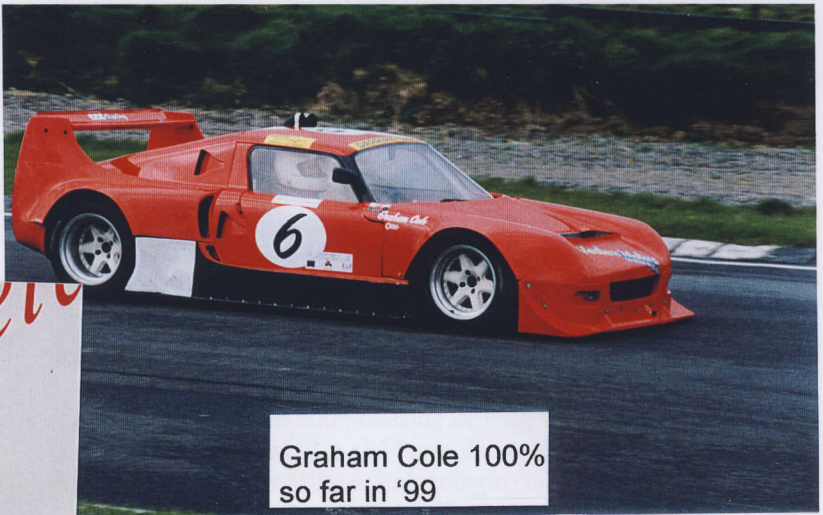


plus What do they say on the rostrum?



Graham Cole 100%  
so far in '99



Hi Graham, what was the result?

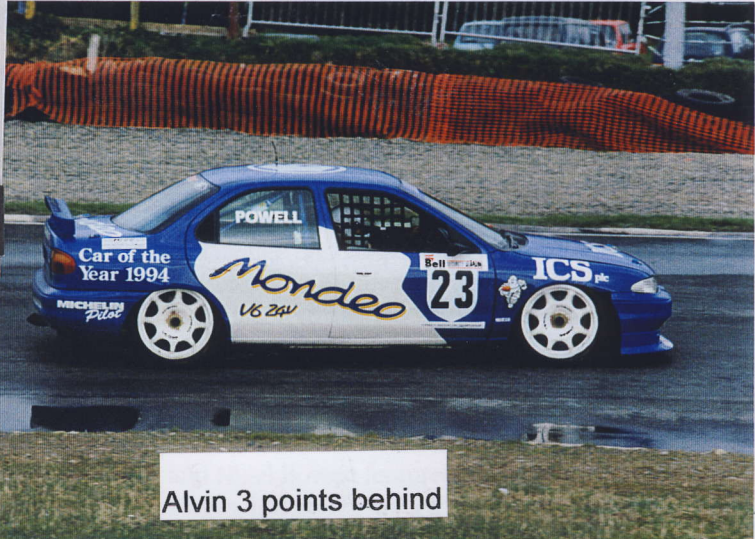
I won but you set the fastest lap.



Dam! I bet Martin a fiver  
that I'd win AND  
set fastest lap!

So did!! So I guess  
we owe him a  
fiver each!

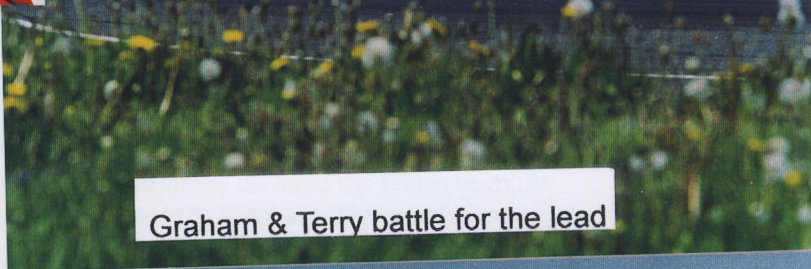
So thats a tenner  
coming my way!  
That's what I call  
a result!



Alvin 3 points behind



Close action in April



Graham & Terry battle for the lead



Terry Brown leads in May

## The Welsh Racing Drivers Association

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### **Race reports**

#### **Welsh Championship round 2 Mondello Park**

Graham Cole driving his Darrian T90 sportscar won the second round of the 1999 Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship at Mondello Park on Easter Monday, in similar fashion to his win at Silverstone. Round 2 was held as a warm up for the Wales v Ireland team challenge, and practice started on a damp, but drying track. Cole took pole, but second was Martin Davies' 4wd Sapphire. 3rd was Alvin Powell, with Gareth Davies and his Darrian T9, which emits a banshee like wail these days in 4th. Mike Shaw was next in front of Terry Brown. Clive Hayes had his crisp sounding Rover GTi in 7th place, with Peter Dark languishing in 8th place after blowing his turbo and running the car as a non turbo. Granville Williams was 7th ahead of Nigel James who was making a welcome return with his Mk2 Escort which he flung around in his usual sideways style. Sean Jones and Nigel Bowen filled the final row. Nigel just doing 3 laps on slick tyres to get on the grid, not having had the time to change over to wets. By the time the race came the track was almost dry, but with the clouds looking threatening, tyre choice was a matter of individual choice. In the end everyone went for slicks except Nigel Bowen, Nigel James & Sean Jones who choose wets and Alvin Powell who choose Intermediates. As the lights changed both Graham and Martin appeared to get good starts, but coming out of the first corner Graham had the lead which he held all the way to the flag. Martin briefly held up Alvin, but after a brief struggle Alvin was past and although he chased Graham as hard as he could and was only 2.76 sec's behind at the end, in truth as the track dried Alvin's tyres became less than ideal. However he did manage to set the fastest lap of the race at 1.30.64 secs. Martin was safe and untroubled in 3rd place, but initially Gareth Davies was the leader of a Darrian trio, with Terry Brown and Mike Shaw in his wake. Nigel Bowen left the scene on the first lap; fortunately his trip into the gravel trap did not result in any

half a ton of stones to pick out of his undertray before the team race! In the early stages Clive Hayes has holding Peter Dark at bay, until Peter went through, but then had Clive shadowing him until the end. Lap 2 saw a change for 4th place and Terry came around well clear of Mike Shaw with Gareth some way back. This prompted a spirited fight back from Gareth and he put the pressure on Mike and retook 5th place with a daring dive up the inside on the entry to the last corner (Motafit turn). However Mike wasn't going to take this lying down and he put pressure on Gareth who held on to the place on the line, with Mike less than .5 of a second behind. After the race Graham said "This is the hardest circuit I've driven on. There are so many corners, my arms are aching!"

#### **Celtic Team Challenge - Mondello Park**

The Welsh team took a narrow win in the 1999 Celtic Team Challenge handicap race which was held at Mondello on Easter Monday. The 12 Welsh drivers faced strong opposition from 2 Irish Teams and with over 30 cars on the track the action was fast & furious as the Welsh cars fought to overcome the advantage the handicapper had given the slower Irish cars. Sean Jones and Nigel Bowen featured strongly in the early stages, but with the race featuring a novel pit stop at half distance, it was Alvin Powell who was making good progress in the later stages and he set a new outright saloon car record on the 7th lap with a time of 1 min 27.74 sec.; 70.98 mph. However Alvin was blackflagged for passing a car under a yellow flag, and it was left to the Darrian trio of Terry Brown, Gareth Davies and Graham Cole who finished as the highest Welsh runners. However despite setting their fastest lap on the last lap they were unable to catch the leading Irish drivers. However with Sean Jones, Clive Hayes, Nigel James, Martin Davies & Mike Shaw all finishing well inside the top 20 the handicapper declared the Welsh team the winners by 9 points. (The margin could have been bigger but Granville ran out of petrol and Peter Dark could not get his non turbo car to the line. Afterwards the drivers were enthusiastic about the new Mondello track layout and the new format of the race with pitstops a new feature, and all expressed a desire to do it again next year.

### **Round 3 - Pembrey April 17/18th Western Mail Eurocar & Trucks, Tom Pryce Trophy meeting**

#### **Practice & Race report**

#### **New cars debut, but Graham Cole becomes the first driver to go under 60 seconds!**

The first Pembrey meeting of the year, held as the Western Mail Eurocar & Trucks, Tom Pryce Trophy meeting, saw the paddock occupied by the Eurocars, but this time the Welsh runners had a nice spot on the pit lane road, with the trucks consigned to paddock 2. 15 cars lined up for practice, but whilst Alvin had a scramble to get to the holding paddock after mislaying his license; Terry Brown was making the reverse trip after his oil cooler split. Although Terry would miss practice, at least he was able to save the engine. A memorable fight through the field would be in prospect on race day. However heading the times was Graham Cole, who was really flying. With the benefit of some sticky tyres, Graham got down to 59.79 on his 4th lap, and became the first Welsh driver to break the 60 second barrier. Also well up was Mike Shaw who found a gap in the traffic to get down to 60.99; Mike put his improved pace down to some pre-race testing "I got the chance to try to get the lines and gears right and it's paid off". By contrast Alvin Powell and Peter Dark looked positively pedestrian with 61.39 & 62.66. Keith Butcher gave his Cavalier its' Pembrey debut on the 3rd row with Mike Manning, who was also giving his Eurocar Mondeo its' Welsh Championship debut. Martin Davies didn't really get his Sapphire going after losing boost pressure and drove the doors off his car to take 7th place on the grid, as did Nigel Jones who looked quick down the straights, but couldn't get a time to match due to continuing fuel pressure problems. Granville Williams was the first Class C runner in 9th place, and a good fight for the class looked in prospect with Rhodri Jenkins, who was another driver giving a new car its' debut with his smart new ex works Group N Honda Civic. The Rover duo of Clive Hayes and Bill Whyte were next, ahead of Sean Jones and finally new boy Felix Feurbach and his MG Maestro. Felix, who comes from Munich but is doing the Swansea Institutes' motorsport degree course, was having his first ever race, and did quite well in the circumstances.

#### **The race - 10 laps**

The weather in the week leading up to the event was a reminder of winter, with a good covering of snow in some places! However when it started to rain in the morning, Martin

Davies might have been forgiven for chuckling as conditions might have given him a chance to use his new 4wd to maximum advantage. Unfortunately for him (fortunately for everyone else) there was no real joy as the race which was originally scheduled for the morning was put back to mid afternoon, by which time the track would be bone dry and the sun was trying to break through. However the delay came as a godsend to Nigel Jones and almost the whole paddock set about trying to help him cure his fuel pressure problem. In the end a solution seemed to have been found and Nigel just got his car prepared in time to take the grid with just a little time to spare. However he never got the chance to give his new fuel system a test after going straight on at Hatchets after locking up his brakes. A trip across grass ended with the car in a ditch, but Nigel emerged muddied but unbowed. Graham Cole had no such problems and lead from start in a fashion that is becoming very familiar. Mike Shaw slotted into second place but came under heavy pressure from Peter Dark. With Martin & Alvin in close company to Peter & Mike this looked like being a hell of a scrap, but just before it could turn into an interesting battle, Peter spun at Honda and joined Terry Brown in having to mount a fight back. This allowed Mike Shaw to escape and he then tried to reel back Grahams' lead. Terry in the meantime had shot up to 7th at the end of the first lap, and got up to 4th place, before a misfire brought him into the pits. He got going again but finished in last place. Up at the front Graham continued on his way, whilst Mike seemed to be under threat from Alvin's Mondeo. However another "rubbish" start from Alvin had left him with too much to do. However Alvin was now well clear of Martin Davies who had Mike Manning and Keith Butcher for company early on. Mikes' Eurocar Mondeo failed to last and he pulled off on lap 7 after a dropped valve ended his fun. Martin then had to fend off Keith Butcher and less than 2/10ths separated them at the end. Peter Dark eventually worked his way up to finish 6th a couple of seconds behind Martin & Keith. Next up and first Class C car was Granville Williams, who was closely shadowed throughout by Rhodri Jenkins. Afterwards Granville said "Rhodri's got a quick car, and he pushed me hard all the way. I didn't have a chance to relax for a minute." Unfortunately Clive Hayes wasn't able to get on terms and make it a 3 way fight. However Sean Jones and Bill Whyte were having a real ding-dong

but Bills' pressure paid off and he was able to slip by when Sean ran wide and got in a tangle at Brooklands. In the closing stages Grahams' car began to sound a bit rough and his pace seemed to drop, just a Mike Shaw was beginning to increase his! Mike set the fastest lap in Class D and was less than ½ a second behind Graham at the end. Afterwards Graham commented "It was perfect conditions for the car, but I'm sweating a bit! I had a good start but in the later stages I was concentrating on defending the line."

#### **Round 4 - Pembrey May2nd**

##### **Anglo Irish meeting**

**Cole takes his 4th in a row**

Practice & Race report

Graham Cole continues to mark himself out as the driver to beat as he won the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the Welsh Sports & Saloon Car Championship, but this time he had to work hard for it! In practice Graham used his best set of tyres to further reduce the pole winning time to 58.85 seconds! Terry Brown was next, but although he was 1.42 secs slower than Graham and excellent race was in prospect because a further .58 of a second covered the cars of Terry, Peter Dark, Alvin Powell & Mike Shaw. (Alvin & Keith looked like the saloon car interlopers to a Darrian social club meeting) Keith Butcher was 6<sup>th</sup> fastest, followed by Gareth Davies, Martin Davies and Nigel Jones. In 10<sup>th</sup> place Clive Hayes was the fastest Class C car, .16 of a second faster than Rhodri Jenkins. Nigel Bowen gave his Sapphire a run out, but mangled his diff, and missed the start. On the 7<sup>th</sup> row were Sean Jones & Peter Mainwaring (returning to give his Ford Fiesta a run out); and the final qualifiers were Felix Fuerbach, who was getting down to some good times, and Colin, son of Granville Williams, who was having his first ever race in Granvilles' Toyota MR2.

##### **The race - 12 laps**

The weather, in contrast to the last race was dry, hot and very sunny, and the biggest grid of the season got going on the warm up lap. Gareth Davies missed the start by diving into the pits, and although he rejoined he eventually stopped after 9 laps, having had a spin on the way. At the front Graham Cole judged the start perfectly and established himself in the

lead from Terry Brown who had a small gap over Peter Dark & Mike Shaw with Alvin Powell looking to get on terms.

There was another small gap to Keith Butcher, Martin Davies and Nigel Jones who disputed 6<sup>th</sup> place early on. In Class C Rhodri Jenkins got the drop on Clive Hayes and although Clive closed up in the middle of the race Rhodri managed to hold on, until Clive began to lose his gears and cruised to the flag. Things were coming to the boil as far as the lead was concerned as Terry began to put the pressure on Graham. Backmarkers were to play their part in the race and Terry used the opportunity to close up and take the lead which he held until lap 12 when Graham retook the lead as he came up to lap Colin & Felix on the approach to Brooklands. By this time Alvin was up to 4<sup>th</sup> behind Peter who was 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mike Shaw had dropped back following a spin at Diben. Entering the final stages Terry tried to get the drop on Graham as they lapped the backmarkers for the last time. Unfortunately it did not work this time and Graham was left to run out the winner as Terry spun down the order to finish 5<sup>th</sup>, and collect some small reward for such a valiant and entertaining effort. Peter Dark finished 2<sup>nd</sup> having seen off Alvin's challenge, with Mike Shaw 4<sup>th</sup>. In Class B Sean Jones mopped up the class again, ahead of the final finishers who were Peter Mainwaring, Felix and Colin. Afterwards Graham commented. "It was quite a race, I half spun at Brooklands, Terry missed a gear, we touched and we both ended up on the grass". There is now a 6 weeks break until the next round on June 13<sup>th</sup> and we can hope we can look forward to another entertaining race. Graham Coles' run of victories must come to an end sometime and Terry Brown for one will be looking to end that run as soon as possible.

Irish Stykers, the new RT2000s and Irish Zetec Formula Fords joined us as well as some Irish drivers in the revived Opel/Vauxhall Europa series. Unfortunately the BARC couldn't fit in a return of the Wales & Ireland Team Challenge, which is good reason to try to run our own meeting in future.