

## News In Brief

**The new organisers of the Neste Rally Finland** (see last week's *Special Stage*), the Finnish ASN, say that they have now bought the rights to the name 1000 Lakes Rally and so may decide to link the new name with the older and better known one when the rally comes round this August.

**This month's Catalunya Rally** will show one stage live on each of the first day to pay-as-you-view subscribers to Canal + and a 30 minute round up to all viewers. The event's Internet web site is already up and running with stage details on [www.racc.es](http://www.racc.es).

**Masao Kamioka** notched up another top finish with sixth in Portugal. The man who took second on last year's RAC Rally will next tackle the Acropolis Rally and meanwhile his Subaru will go back to Prodrive at Banbury for preparation.

**Young French driver Pierre Colard** began a six round programme of World Championship events in Portugal, aiming to expand his French gravel championship experience onto the World scene. The former kart and ice-racer failed to finish in Portugal but will now set off for Spain, Corsica, Finland, San Remo and the RAC Rally.

**Trevor Godwin and Ian Harrop** retired their Mini from Portugal after accidents on both stages 19 and 20. Aside from F2 winner Alister McRae, only Stuart Coupe survived the event from the British contingent, Coupe's Ford Escort Cosworth finishing 20th overall.

**Jorge Bescham was an easy winner** of the opening round of the Argentine Championship, the Rally Villa Dolores. Jorge Recalde retired his Mitsubishi on the first stage, Marco Galanti's Toyota went on the next and Bescham was able to cruise home in his Toyota ahead of the Group N Mitsubishi of Daniel Preto and F2 winner Walter Suriani. F2 champion Gabriel Raies was excluded for illegal service. The next event should take place on April 18-19 but it has yet to be confirmed...

**Former co-driver Tiziano Siviero** is helping to plan a raid event in Argentina with a start and finish in Buenos Aires. The Argentina Automobile Club is hoping to get the event onto the FIA Cross Country World Cup calendar for next season.

**Walter Rohrl is to contest** this month's Targa Tasmania in a Porsche 911SC RS from the Porsche museum in Stuttgart. The 50-year old twice World Champion will be partnered by 54-year old motorsport engineer Roland Kussmaul who tackled the Paris-Dakar three times. The five day event starts in Launceston on April 15 and ends on April 20 in Hobart.

## Gearshift error stops Subaru

The double engine failure that wiped out Subaru's challenge in Portugal was apparently due to damage caused by over-revving on downchanges by both drivers.

Colin McRae and Kenneth Eriksson were halted (while each was leading) by the problem which still needs investigation before Prodrive is sure it is coincidental rather than something deeper.

'We are stripping Kenneth's engine now,' said engineering director David Lapworth on Tuesday. 'Colin's car will be retimed and sent to MIRA for tests before we take the engine apart. Both cars stopped because the cam belt had skipped a tooth and



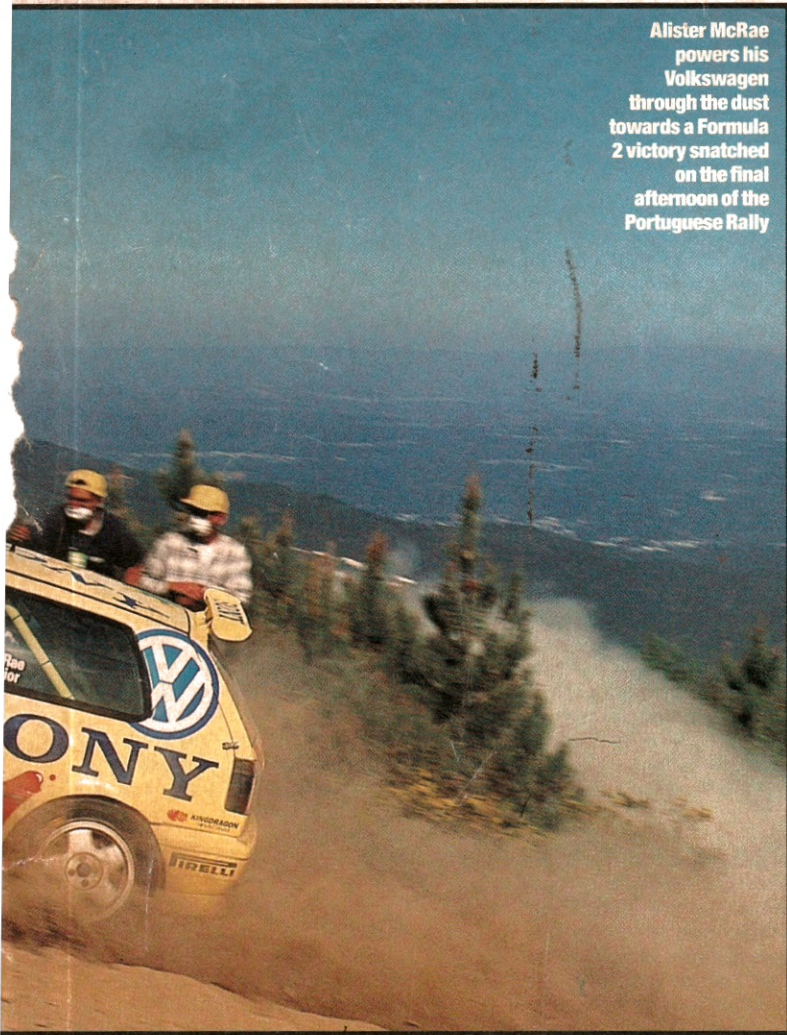
Eriksson: engine

the data shows that both engines were buzzed on a downchange. It's not normally a problem and our engine record is exemplary.

'What we need to establish is whether the jumped belt was an effect or a cause of the problem but we are not worried enough to be losing sleep over it. The failures were disappointing rather than annoying,' he concluded.

**Colin McRae column**  
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Alister McRae powers his Volkswagen through the dust towards a Formula 2 victory snatched on the final afternoon of the Portuguese Rally



## Spectator saves Fisher's Circuit

Subaru driver Bertie Fisher owes victory on the weekend's Circuit of Ireland to a keen-eared spectator, coincidentally a business colleague of the Ballinamallard engineer, who spotted a puncture on his Impreza in the closing hours of the event.

'There was a bit of a delay at the start of the stage and this guy came over and tapped the window to tell me there was a hissing noise from the back of the car,' said Fisher. 'When I got out to investigate I found that there was a puncture so we were able to quickly change it.

The stage was over 12 miles long so I'd never have got through without changing the wheel...'

However Fisher made it and claimed his second win on the AA-backed event, a record 18th win on the Irish Tarmac Championship.

The Subaru driver had led the event from start to finish and beat Austin McHale's Toyota by a shade over three minutes, a margin that would have disappeared had he had to change a wheel.

McHale had a dreadful start to his event on Good Friday when the

throttle jammed partly open and he dropped to seventh. He began a remarkable comeback on his local stages during the second day but had to wait until the final Easter Monday dash before he could get past James Cullen's Ford Escort Cosworth into runner's-up slot.

Cullen looked set to fend off the Dubliner until his steering rack began to stiffen and threatened to drop him into the clutches of Liam O'Callaghan in fourth place.

Stephen Murphy survived a couple of late excursions to take fifth from Eamonn Boland and Peadar Hurson.

Ninth placed Tony Kearns won Group N in his Subaru Impreza from the Escort Cosworth of Donal Bowens while Neil Wearden rounded off the top 10 in the Asquith Autosport Honda Civic to claim the Formula 2 prize.

Andrew Nesbitt was an early retirement, a sudden shower catching him out and pitching the Toyota Celica GT-Four off the road on the second stage.

Geoff Crabtree (Porsche 911) was a comfortable winner of the historic event from Sean Tracey's Lancia and the Ford Lotus Cortina of Alan Courtney.

There is now a month's break before the third round of the six-event Irish Tarmac Championship, the Ballinacorney Lakes on May 24.



Michael Chester