

DARK DAYS...

The past few weeks have been a rollercoaster ride for everybody involved in the world of motorsport. Shortly after our June edition went to print, a series of tragic accidents occurred in mainland Europe and closer to home.

On 19 May, a number of competitors, spectators and marshals were fatally injured in separate incidents in Belgium and France.

Competing crew Karl Vissels and Ned Wyniers both passed away after an accident in their first 3 during Belgium's season Rally.

That same day, another tragic accident during the Prix des Milleans Rally in France claimed the lives of a spectator and a marshal.

Meanwhile, tragedy hit closer to home

in Scotland, when road team Black Bullies passed away after a regular while riding his motorcycle during a race at the North West 200, also on 19 May.

Tragedy continued on 27 May at the Canon Design Rally when a competing car hit the road, resulting in a group of spectators.

Ian Lane and Caroline Cleary both passed away at the scene. Ian was a well-known motorsport photographer while Caroline was a regular marshalled and navigator, although she had opted to spectate on that particular day.

A number of others were also injured in the incident, including brothers Mike and John Lambie, who are still recuperating in hospital.

Two weeks later, Mike Quinn and Giacomo McEneaney had a heavy accident during the closing stages of the Linn Fife/Highland Rally. They were both taken to hospital, and although Mike escaped with some bruising, Giacomo is being treated in hospital for serious head trauma.

Then, on 16 June, the rally world was sent into mourning again when Gareth Roberts lost his life after an accident while competing for Craig Benn during the Targa Florio Rally in Sicily.

Their Peugeot 207 left the road and although medical crews were quick on the scene, 24-year-old Gareth tragically passed away.

Such serious accidents in rallying are usually rare and between spectators and competitive safety, particularly in the UK and Ireland, are of the highest standard.

So to have such a quick succession of such serious incidents is truly shocking. Citroën's 'Fatal' accidents? Perhaps, but we need to take the time to analyse safety

and identify what, if anything, can help make our sport even safer.

Yes, we all know that motorsport is dangerous, but we should continuously analyse the risks in an effort to minimise them.

With regards to the Canon incident, Motorsport Ireland and the Garda are reviewing our driver safety instructions. Hopefully their findings will help guide our sport in an even safer direction.

These incidents should serve as a reminder that we must always respect the unexpected. This is our sport and regardless of whether we are spectators, competitors, marshals, officials or members of the media, we all need to look out for each other.

All members of the Pan-European team would like to extend their deepest sympathies to the family and friends of all those who have had their loved ones in recent weeks.

To those who are continuing to recover from injuries sustained, we hope you return to full health in the very near future.



Joe Lane

23/06/1961 – 27/05/2012

Joe Lane was a well-known motorsport photographer from Ireland. Described by his friends and family as a 'low profile' he was normally seen quickly and unobtrusively recording the sights and sounds of the island to capture some stunning images with his camera.

From Kilgarry, Co. Galway, he went to his first rally in 1979 and started using photography during the early '80s. He is survived by his wife, Sharon, and two children, Sean and David.



Caroline Cleary

15/01/1982 – 27/05/2012

Caroline Cleary lived and breathed motorsport. As a member of Wickford Motor Club, she was a dedicated marshalled and navigator. Always an eager to recommend to her who always had a smile on her face, she had recently moved to Enniscorthy, Co. Wick, in order to be closer to her parents but was originally from Drogheda. Wickford, Co. Wick, is served by her mother and father, Patrick and Catherine, as well as her brother, Sean, and her brothers and sisters, John, Jonathan, Paul, Karen and Ian. Richard.



Simon Jones

1967 – 2012

Simon Jones was born in Drogheda, a regular competitor in John O'Connell's Dismantles. Simon had built up a substantial reputation as a regular competitor in a strong and growing customer base at Bellahally. He later was looking for a 24" and old, built for race meeting after a night out in Alburyville on early April. Despite a struggle to find the young Wiggins, he'd received a couple of letters that 'it would be a shame to let the best in state machinery of his whereabouts. Simon was never destined to return home.

Simon is survived by his mother and father, Maureen and Geoffrey; brother Chris and grandparents Edmund, Joseph and Ann.



Gareth Roberts

06/08/1987 – 16/06/2012

Gareth Roberts' rally career was a short but distinguished one. Although trained as an electrician, he only got into driving cars in 2004. It was in 2009 that he purchased his first Peugeot 207 Rally for the first time, and they went on to develop a solid, winning relationship until the end.

During their twelve years together, they claimed the British and Irish Ford Fiesta titles. They also had the great joy to win the International title that same year. The following season, they moved into a Super 2000 car, being their first time in a Citroën and Irish Fiesta Championship. That year's Ulster Rally was among their most memorable results where they were first among the British Championship crew.

2011 was their last year in the WRC. Accident and that season really hung them out the spotlight. They entered the final round of the series with one machine, a deal to drive for the famous Racing Planet in the UK, and were being well served in Italy. However, tragedy struck on the very night of the event when Gareth was found unresponsive.

Remarkably, the crew survived, including the WRC. Accident and that which resulted there took the next step in their career.

The beginning of the 2012 season saw them get off to a strong start with victory at the opening round of the FIA UK, in Mount Carlo, Lotus. They signed a deal to drive for the famous Racing Planet in the UK, and were being well served in Italy. However, tragedy struck on the very night of the event when Gareth was found unresponsive.

Gareth was born in the village of Agha, Drogheda, Wick. He is survived by his mother and father, Karen and Mike; brother and sister, Ean and Kelly and brother-in-law,