



Bird Flies South...

Paul Bird is heading to Sol Rally Barbados, which takes place on 4/5 June, with just one aim in mind...to win the event! Entries are coming in thick and fast for the Caribbean's biggest annual motor sport international event, writes Mark Wheeler.

As online entries for Sol Rally Barbados 2011 passed the half-way point towards the new target of 100 crews – and with the closing date still three months away – more than one-third were from overseas.

Not all have been disclosed by the Barbados Rally Club, but there are already some familiar names

on the list, alongside some exciting newcomers.

Just as this issue of Pacenotes was going to press, former UK National Rally Champion Paul Bird signalled his intention to return, with victory in the Caribbean's biggest annual motor sport international the target. He will again campaign his Ford Focus

WRC08.

On his first two visits to the island in 2008 & 2009, he finished second to Kris Meeke, and then placed third last year, behind local aces Roger Skeete and Paul Bourne.

"I've said it more than once," Bird exclaimed, "Rally Barbados really is the best rally in the world with the crowds, the enthusiasm

and the people."

"There's no shame in being beaten by excellent drivers, but I have learned some useful lessons since my first visit. Last year, driving against Roger (Skeete) on top form in the Impreza and Paul (Bourne) in my old Focus, was the best rally battle that I've ever been involved in."

"I always enjoy Barbados, whether for the rally or family holidays, but it might be just that bit more fun if I finally ticked the box and won!"

Another returnee is popular

RB2011, Alex already has one title to his name, having won the Border Ecosse Car Club's 2009 Junior Autocross Championship in his first season of competition with a standard 1400cc Vauxhall Corsa. He even beat Kenny (in the rally Corsa) at a charity event!

Hall senior says: "The incident at the autocross is embarrassing. To be thrashed by your son is bad enough, but with 100bhp less is shocking! I did give him a thrashing when



Rally.

Regarding the Mk I that he is taking to Barbados, Corkill said: "Both my dad and I have been rallying this car for the past three years, and I used it to win the 2010 Manx Rally Championship. When we bought it, it had a 240bhp 2-litre Zetec engine, but that wasn't enough, so we put in a 270bhp 'red top'."

"That still wasn't enough power! So we put a fire-breathing 340bhp Duratec in it, making it one of the most powerful rear-wheel-drive rally cars in Britain, and a bit of a handful!"

Despite having three months until the entry closing date, already the places are filling up fast. So if you would like to sample some fun in the sun, either as a spectator or competitor, make sure you enter the exclusive Sol Rally Barbados competition. Details can be found on page 75!

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Scot Kenny Hall. In his eight visits, he secured victory in the Modified 5 class on no less than three occasions, with all those successes sealed behind the wheel of an Opel Corsa.

In 2010, he was just a few hundred yards away from a fourth class win (this time in M6) with an ex-works Super 1600 Ford Puma, until a wrong slot two stages from home.

The big news from north of the border, however, is the debut of Hall's son Alex, who takes over the Corsa to become the first 'second generation' overseas driver to compete on the event.

Although he doesn't turn 18 until the Thursday before Sol

the track dried out, but I am not allowed to forget that day."

Also new to the event – and another rising young star – is reigning Manx Rally Champion, 21-year-old Connor Corkill, and his family's "fire-breathing" Ford Escort Mk I.

Corkill was also the British Historic Rally Championship's Under-25 Champion in 2010. He started rallying in 2006 in an Escort Mexico and rose to prominence in the BHRC last year in a Mk II Escort, with his crowning achievement victory in the Ulster Historic



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 TO ENTER!

