

## A Titanic win for Stewartstown's Steven

The second round of the McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship was hosted by the Ulster Automobile Club in the shadow of the impressive Titanic building on Saturday 25th March. It was the reigning NI Champion Steven Ferguson who was again the man to beat at this event, taking the win by some 33.5 seconds from Peter Grimes. Mark King again settled for third place overall after a troublesome handbrake caused the Newmills man some issues on the second loop of tests.

The ever changing tarmac surface and technical tests proved to be an extreme test of man and machine, forcing even the best drivers to make minor errors which cost them precious time.

In the Advanced category, Ashley Lamont in his MG Midget, would be the early leader, but would be caught out by the tight, tricky tests later in the day, handing the win to Robert Dickson in his Mini. In the Clubman category, Jimmy Dougan in his Vauxhall Nova took the overall category win, with James Mansfield making the trip up north in his Mazda MX5 to take second place in the category.

With Ferguson taking the Overall win, this elevated Peter Grimes to first in Class A, with a 37.4 second advantage over the runner up in class his brother Chris. Guy Foster would be forced to settle for third in class after the gearbox problem which forced him to retire during Round 1 returned costing him valuable time and finally forcing him to retire again at the UAC event.

Andy Blair continued his dominant run in Class B, in his Westfield taking the class win finishing ahead of his father Paul, with Paul Lowther taking the third spot in class. There was disappointment for father and son, Trevor and Mark Ferguson as their usually exceptionally reliable Silvia Stryker developed irreparable mechanical issues early in the day, forcing the Coagh pair to retire.

In the Small Saloon Class C, it was a battle of the brothers, with Andrew and Richard Earney being the only two entered in the class. Despite a mechanical issue with their Mini Saloon, it would be Richard who again took the class win by 7.7 seconds from his younger brother.

Mark King made a long awaited return to the top step of the rostrum in the Large Saloon Class with David Thompson relegated to the runner up spot. Damien Mooney finished third in class despite a troublesome day for the Ardboe man.

In the Clubman classes, Jimmy Dougan would take the Class A win, ahead of Ian McCann, both in their Vauxhall Nova's.

Gordon Buckley would be the solo entry in Clubman Class B in his Westfield, but mechanical issues forced him to retire early in the day.

Kevin McNamee would take the Clubman Class C win in his Nissan Micra from Brendan Mullan in a Toyota Yaris.

Clubman Class D was all Mazda MX5's and it was James Mansfield who would take the class win. Second place in class would go to Roger Gordon, with Ian Lowry in third.

Again, there was a small but highly experienced and competitive turnout in the Advanced Category. Adam McMullan in his Starlet Special would take the Advanced Class A honours ahead of Jack Gillis in his Vauxhall Nova.

Robert Dickson would be the sole entrant in the Advanced Class C, and a faultless performance from the Mini man sealed him the class win alongside the Overall Advanced category win.

Ashley Lamont in his MG Midget took the Advanced Class D win ahead of Gareth Dillon in second and Robert Robinson in third, with both drivers competing in the ever popular Mazda MX5.

In the newly introduced Production Class, Andrew Molyneaux Snr took the class win, with Coagh's Adam Ferguson in second and Andrew Molyneaux Snr in third

With only two rounds completed it is still very much all to play for, with championship and class points all very tight as we head into the next event. Round three will be hosted by Larne Motor Club at the Junction Retail Park on Saturday 15th April, which will see the competitors test their skills again, but this time with hundreds of members of the public watching.

McMillan Specialist Cars Northern Ireland Autotest Championship Round 2

Overall Winner – Steven Ferguson

Championship Category:

Class A – Peter Grimes

Class B – Andy Blair

Class C – Richard Earney

Class D – Mark King

Clubman Category:

Class A – Jimmy Dougan

Class B – No finishers

Class C – Kevin McNamee

Class D – James Mansfield

Advanced Category:

Class A – Adam McMullan

Class B – No Competitors

Class C – Robert Dickson

Class D – Ashley Lamont

Class P – Andrew Molyneaux Snr