

06.07.15

Blog

Finland, new brooms and rivers of chocolate

Engineering the production of biscuits is the second best job in the world. The best job in the world involves telling people how fast to go around corners while wearing a crash helmet.

The best job in the world doesn't help you with the melting point of chocolate. It's 31 degrees Celsius, by the way. And nor does it help when the Tunnock's thermometer goes north of that number.

If the crews on Rally Poland thought it was tricky doing the best job in the world in the searing heat of Europe's north-east last week, they should have tried doing the second best job in an equally scorching north-west of Britain.

We actually had a chocolate river running out of the Caramel Wafer machine last Wednesday. Fortunately, this being Britain, summer went as soon as it had arrived.

But the heat stayed on for the duration of Poland, where the action on the stages looked as hot as it's been all season.

I haven't competed in the World Rally Championship since Catalunya last October and I'm really starting to get some withdrawal symptoms now. Watching the cars competing in the Polish Lake District was tough, but it inspires me and drives me harder to get there. I'm absolutely determined that I will make it to the top.

It's funny, when I've been watching the WRC on television, I always feel motivated to run that bit faster on the treadmill and pull that bit harder on the rower.

And watching Poland was an absolute must. The action was phenomenal. I haven't done that event, but I have done Finland and, trust me, there's no more exhilarating feeling than sitting in a car while it bounces off the rev limiter between the trees.

When the speed's big, the focus and concentration are at their maximum – it's a natural reaction to the elevated risk in the situation. And it's on just those kind of Polish stages that the incredible satisfaction comes from doing the job right. You've walked the tight rope.

But even having sat in the seat, been there and done it, I still find it incredible to see what the guys were doing and how quickly they were doing it.

This is quite a tough time for me right now – which is why I'm going to Finland at the end of month. Jyvaskyla is the perfect place to get my fix of rallying and to talk to people about the potential for competing or working with the teams as a gravel-noter on some of the asphalt rallies in the second half of the season.

Keith Cronin and I should have been right in the middle of our WRC 2 campaign right now – we would have been on our way back from Poland and preparing for Neste Oil Rally Finland. Unfortunately, a testing accident – which was not Keith's fault – wiped the first half of the season out. Keith's piecing his plans back together and I'm ready to get straight back in the car with him. I absolutely believe he has the talent to succeed in WRC 2 and up from that level.

In the meantime, I will be competing again in China soon with Alister [McRae], which is a hugely exciting prospect. The BAIC team we're working with are very enthusiastic to move this project forward and to make the car quicker, which is great news.

It's funny, but with all this talk of heat around, my first event in China did afford me the opportunity to let my fellow Scots know that, actually, 30 degrees wasn't all that hot.

When Alister and I were competing in China last month, the temperatures in the cockpit were getting up towards 60 degrees. As always, I'd kept a Snowball in the co-driver's bag [useful, as you never know when your next Teacake's coming...] and I can tell you it wasn't looking exactly as we'd intended the Snowball to look when I found it at the end of the day.

For the first time, I passed on a Snowball and settled for another salt tablet.

Since my last outing, I have read a lot about next year's British Rally Championship and the new calendar. I have to say, it looks fantastic. Yes, there are three rounds in Scotland, but how can that not be a good thing?

Especially when those three rounds are absolutely brilliant. We all know of the qualities of the Scottish and Jim Clark, but to finish the season on the Granite City is pretty inspired.

I did the Granite with Graeme Schoneville this year and had a great time. Winning the class by eight minutes is always going to make for a good day, but the roads up there are fantastic – so wide and fast. And Aberdeen's a great place for next year's BRC season to finish, I've heard it can be a real party town...

It's really encouraging to see guys like Dave Weston getting behind the Granite and Ben Taylor working on the BRC – they are the driving force

behind the feeling that a new broom's being put to good use in our sport right now.

Stuart Loudon media enquiries

Sandra Evans

+44 7887 693993

Sandra@wordspr.com

To access the library of press releases please click the link:

<http://www.wordspr.com/our-work/stuart-loudon>