

Fiona aims to race to the top

MY CARS



Fiona Kindness with her husband's track car, a Subaru Impreza WRX STI Type R, which she will be racing for the rest of this year. Photographs: JIM IRVINE



She got her first taste of competing back in 2007 when she entered one round of the Time Attack championships at Knockhill.

After that she was "hooked" and continued to compete for the next number of years.

This year Fiona Kindness decided to take on her first full year of competing. "I entered the full season of Time Attack in 2011 but due to work commitments I wasn't able to attend all the rounds," she said.

"Since 90% of the events are down south, the travelling can be a bit tiresome. "Because of that, I decided not to commit to a full season in 2012 and just tried out a few different events, mainly at Knockhill and when I had time."

Although she had spent a few years trying out track-days for fun, it wasn't until 2007 when she experienced competing for the first time.

"In 2007 someone was offering up their space for Knockhill's round of Time

Attack and my husband suggested I give it a try," she said. "At that point, I hadn't really heard about Time Attack so I didn't know what I was letting myself in for. The buzz on the day was amazing, though, and I was hooked."

This year she is competing in the full season of Time Attack – a national racing event where the fastest lap of the track wins – as well as Super Lap Scotland, Knockhill's own new series to fill the "Time Attack gap" since they are not venturing north this year.

Over the winter months, her car – a 1992 Nissan Skyline R32 GTR with about 600bhp – underwent drastic surgery including a full

engine refresh, sequential gearbox being fitted and a full respray.

Fiona, 31, of Aberdeen, said: "I bought it about seven years ago from a guy in Shetland who brought it over on the ferry."

"Although I bought it with the intention of stripping it out and turning it into a track car, I was looking for a very good condition car and it was the seller's pride and joy. I think he spent more time cleaning and maintaining it than driving it. It was immaculate."

"It was more of a show car. It had a full interior and sound system installed in the boot. That was all quickly removed to turn it into a track car.

She's had a tough start to the season but this Aberdeen girl is getting herself back on track and gearing up for success, writes Cheryl Livingstone



"I think since buying it, I am on to my second roll cage, to meet safety regulations, third engine and about sixth gearbox – I seem to be in the habit of breaking them."

She said following its makeover, the car seems to be getting a lot more attention than it previously did.

"Up until now the car has always been a bit of a banger," she said. "It's been into a couple of tyre walls and had a few bumps and I have always been a believer in function over form, so I have never really cared too much about the look of the car."

"For once, though, it is looking good at the moment and seems to be getting more attention now."

But her new look car has now been sidelined after Fiona was in a crash during a recent competition.

She had been taking part in Superlap Scotland at Knockhill when disaster struck.

"It was a combination of things," she said. "I went maybe a bit too hot into the corner, hit a bump before the kerbing which unsettled the back of the car and sent me into the apex of the corner, where I hit one of the hump kerbs which flipped the car over and sent me careering on my roof into the gravel."

"The car filled up with gravel so I had to 'hang' upside down for about 10 minutes while the marshals and medics dug out the car to give me enough room to be released out of my harness and get out the car."

She said the car isn't too badly damaged, "mostly cosmetic".

And far from being put

off, Fiona is already making steps to ensure she can continue to compete this year.

"I actually put down a deposit on a new shell today," she added.

"I'll be getting a Subaru Impreza, the same as my husband's, which will be built up over the rest of this year. We might finally then be able to settle who is the fastest. The shell comes with a full roll cage, lightweight panels and gearbox so I will need to get an engine built and new brakes and suspension."

"For the rest of this year I'll be borrowing my husband's track car, Subaru Impreza WRX STI Type R, if he lets me."

"It had a new engine fitted over the winter and still hasn't been out on track yet so he wants to have a shot of it before I'm let loose with it."

Price cut for sporty model



Nissan has reduced the starting price of its entertaining 370Z two-seater sports car, taking it very close to that of the much less powerful Toyota GT86 and Subaru BRZ.

Now starting from £26,995, the 324bhp 370Z is just £2,000 more expensive than the 197bhp GT86 and BRZ. The entry-level 370Z is unashamedly positioned to steal sales from the newer and less potent alternatives.

The £26,995 car now comes with 18in alloy wheels that had previously only been available on the roadster.

Jimmy retires after 52 years



Retirement presentation to Jimmy and Yvonne Callaghan with Frances Hamilton, chairman and Andrew Grzesinski, group managing director, Macrae & Dick Ltd

A north man who has spent more than five decades working in the motoring industry has retired.

Jimmy Callaghan, of Inverness, joined Macrae and Dick in 1961 as an apprentice.

After leaving for a period to work for the Post Office, he returned to the company on January 27, 1975, aged 30, and went on to serve a further 38 years – bringing his total to more than 52 years.

Back in the 1980s, Jimmy could be found outside the back door of the service workshop, with a hose in his hand checking for the water leaks and other numerous faults that the vehicles which came out of Austin Rover, Longbridge, at that time often had.

Latterly, Jimmy was a key member of the Parts Goods Inwards and Warehouse Department for Ford Inverness.

His dedication and long service was recognised at a ceremony in the Highland capital.

He said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed working at Macrae and Dick and met many characters throughout my time. I am looking forward to retirement but will miss my colleagues and the banter."

Macrae & Dick have added to their list of franchises with the opening of a Toyota centre on Harbour Road, Inverness.

Macrae & Dick Toyota has a dedicated centre which aims to provide a brand new customer experience and will be one of the first Toyota Centres in Scotland to have this layout.

Sandy Mackenzie, general manager, Macrae & Dick Toyota, said: "The team have all been selected for their commitment to customer service and have spent the last month in intensive training to ensure we are all ready."

Andrew Grzesinski, group managing director, Macrae & Dick, added: "The acquisition of the Toyota franchise in Inverness is a significant development for the company."

"We are looking forward to growing the market for Toyota in the Highlands and providing the high standard of customer service to Toyota drivers in our dealership and workshop."

My first car...



■ Ford Fiesta Popular

My dream car...



■ Off the top of my head – 993 GT2, 997 GT3 RS, Shelby Mustang GT500 (pictured), classic Fiat 500 – I'm sure there are more