



O'Carroll to try four-wheeled hillclimb racing

Motorcycle racer Anthony O'Carroll is already a hillclimb champion on two wheels. He is now going to try his hand at hillclimb racing on four wheels!

Last September the Ballyduff rider won the West Cork Motorcycle Club annual Hillclimb at Twohig's Hill near Clonakilty. The Kawasaki ZXR600 rider won the event outright and was also declared King of the Hill after a thrilling day's racing where he faced big competition the 2023 600cc Senior Support Irish Road Racing Championship winner Keelim Ryan from Offaly.

The event was the last big closed-road motorbike event of the year and given the current insurance crisis was the last 'between the hedge's race to run in the Republic of Ireland. Next month, Kerry Motor Club and the Ballyfinnane Community Hall Association will celebrate 120 years of closed road motorsport in Kerry with the Brian O'Neill Garden Equipment and Trailers Ballyfinnane Festival of Speed.

Although the organisers did try to include motorcycles in the competitive element of the event, the necessary permissions were not granted. O'Carroll, who made his rally driving debut at the Banna Beach Resort Kerry Winter Rally last October, has decided to enter the event anyway. He will drive his father Neilus's Ford Escort G3 in the July 16 hillclimb.

The Ballyfinnane event takes place just two days after the Southern 100 Road Races on the Isle of Man. This is O'Carroll's penultimate preparation event before he tackles the Manx Grand Prix in August but despite his busy schedule, he will put his race bikes on static display during the Festival of Speed.

"I won't even have time to clean them," he said. "They will be on show with all the road grime from the Southern 100. My last race is on Saturday [July 15] and I get into Belfast ferry port around midnight. I will go straight down the road to Kerry, set up the bikes [for display] and jump into the rally car for the day."