



MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION  
UNITED KINGDOM

# PRESS RELEASE

## **Junior Trials initiative introduces new generation of youngsters to off-road motor sport**

The Motor Sports Association, governing body of motor sport in the UK, is encouraged by the positive response to its Junior Trials Vehicle (JTV) initiative. Introduced at the start of this year to provide those under-14 years old with a new entry-level form of off-road competition, the inaugural event for JTVs organised by the Southern Rover Owners Club attracted eight enthusiastic entrants all aged between eight and 11. Building on this successful platform, further Junior Trails are now planned around the country.

As an integral part of its programme to attract more youngsters into all disciplines of motor sport, the Motor Sports Association introduced the JTV formula at the start of 2003. The basic concept is centred on converting lawn tractors into safe competition vehicles via the fitment of an approved roll cage as well as other recommended safety items.

“We wanted to introduce a new entry-level formula for those too young to compete in Tyro Trials for 14-year-olds and above,” explains Ian Davis, secretary of the Motor Sport Association’s off-road committee. “The Tyro Trial category enables youngsters to drive full-size standard off-road vehicles, such as Land Rovers, at low speed under tight control but we want to arrive at a structure which allows progression to this level for younger age groups,” Davis continues. “To fulfil this ambition, we needed to find a suitable vehicle that was both practical and affordable. A car-based vehicle would have been too big while most of the existing buggies we considered were far too fast. We wanted something slow enough to teach the children how to read the ground – after all, that’s what the discipline of trials is all about.”

Although new lawn tractors are not inexpensive, research suggests JTVs can be built for between £500-£1000 using second hand equipment. The Junior Trials Vehicles are two-wheel drive adaptations of front-engined lawn or garden tractors, with the cutter decks and ancillaries removed. The machines are powered by a four-stroke petrol or diesel engine of industrial or commercial restriction type with governors, preventing tuned engines being used. The JTVs contesting the UK’s first-ever Junior Trial included vehicles based on Westwood, Toro and Laser lawn tractors – all coped well with the seven tricky off-road sections set out for the event.

“We know several more JTVs are already under construction,” confirms Davis. “There are more young competitors on the way, too. The kids just love driving these vehicles, which are specifically designed to inspire confidence. We are delighted by the initial response to our initiative and particularly pleased to see we had four boys and four girls contesting the first-ever Junior Trial. Traditionally trials boasts more female competitors than any other forms of motor sport as it demands precision and patience rather than strength and aggression.”

Trials is one of the UK's most popular amateur forms motor sport disciplines, with 700 events each year with an average of 20 competitors per event.

**Photography:** A wide selection of copyright-free, high-resolution images from the inaugural Junior Trial are available on request

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**For more information:** Deborah Tee or Tim Bampton at MPA Media Limited,  
Imperial House, Imperial Way, London SW6 2AG. **Telephone:** 0207 384 8700;  
**e-mail:** [deborah.tee@mpamedia.co.uk](mailto:deborah.tee@mpamedia.co.uk) or [tim.bampton@mpamedia.co.uk](mailto:tim.bampton@mpamedia.co.uk)