

'Rixy'
Ian Rix 1962 - 2023



The loss of Ian Rix who died unexpectedly on 9th April aged only 60 has caused great sadness within the Sporting Car Club of Norfolk. SCCON is primarily a rally-oriented club and Rixy personified so much of what we love about rallying. His life revolved around Special Stage Rallying in so many ways and he was very highly regarded in the rallying community.

Ian was born in Harleston and after leaving school he became an apprentice toolmaker at Howard Rotavators, learning skills that would serve him well in his later life. In the 1980s he worked for Van Diemen Racing Cars at Snetterton helping Ayrton Senna win multiple Formula Ford 1600 and FF2000 championships. He also helped Roland Ratzenberger win the 1986 Formula Ford Festival. In a tragic coincidence both Roland and Ayrton would lose their lives during the weekend of the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix meeting at Imola. In 1987 Ian took the bold decision to set up Rix Engineering which has grown to become one of the most highly respected companies supporting British motor sport.

Rixy first met Clare in the 1980s when they both wanted to marshal at a British Championship rallycross. Clare had been immersed in motor sport and SCCON via her Dad, Peter Banham, but she wasn't old enough to drive so she teamed up with Ian for the rallycross meeting. They hit it off straight away and after they married in 1988 they formed a long-lasting partnership at the core of SCCON. They spent their honeymoon watching the RAC Rally! By this time Ian had started stage rallying with Clare co-driving for him, a role she continued until they started a family.

Rixy entered well over a hundred Stage Rallies between 1988 and 2019, always staying loyal to Ford Escorts, initially the Mark 2 model then Mark 1s since 2007. Ian would agree that he wasn't the outright fastest driver but his enthusiasm never dimmed and he regularly picked up class awards and the occasional class win. I serviced for Ian and Steve Greenhill on a few stage rallies and the 2014 Wales Rally GB National Rally was particularly memorable. It started with one of those 'it can't happen' moments. I was driving Ian's Transit van from my home in Wymondham to the start near Chester. Ian was towing his red Mark 1 Escort to the start, picking-up Steve in Royston along the way. As I passed junction 23 on the A14, Ian was driving up the slip road and he joined the A14 immediately behind me - extraordinary timing! During the rally Ian took great care in selecting his part-worn tyres so the squarest corners of the tread blocks would help braking on the front wheels and traction on the rears. And it paid off: he got one of his best results finishing 2nd in class and 20th overall (against mostly much newer cars) on one of Britain's premier events.

Ian often entered eight or more stage rallies in a calendar year and in 2015 he competed on an amazing twelve! And at the same time, he was busy running Rix Engineering.



Ian will be long-remembered for his superbly prepared Ford Escorts, here getting bit of air under his tyres

Rixy wasn't focused solely on his own motor sport and he helped Clare go rallying too, often competing in her Ford Ka on the same events as Ian. And since 2016 Ian has been supporting their son Aaron in special stage rallying. Aaron started in Clare's Ford Ka but more recently Ian entrusted him to drive his Escorts. In the spirit of giving something back to the sport he loved, Rix Engineering has been a sponsor of the Snetterton Stages tarmac rally since its inception in 2017 and this year is also the main sponsor of the 2023 Rix Engineering AEMC/ASEMC Stage Rally Championship, promoted by the Associations of Eastern, and South Eastern Motor Clubs.

Rixy had other interests too being a keen fisherman and enjoying shooting. Just like his rallying, the most important thing was the enjoyment of taking part and the camaraderie of being with his friends.



Ever a practical chap, when Ian knew he didn't have long to live, he rang some of his friends for a final chat and he helped his family by choosing the music and the poetry for his own funeral. A measure of Ian's popularity was shown by the hundreds of people who were there.

There are common themes to the messages sent to Ian's family: "a kind and good natured person", "such a good friend", "a cheeky sense of humour", "he always had time for a chat", and "a great privilege to have known him".

The Sporting Car Club of Norfolk offers our heartfelt condolences to Clare, to Ian's mum Shirley, daughters Adele and Jasmin, son Aaron and to his wider family.

Peter Riddle, June 2023