Monte Carlo Historique Rally 2026 starts this Thursday, 29th January

Published: January 26, 2026
Author:
Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/monte-carlo-historique-rally-2026-starts-this-thursday-29th-january/

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

This atmospheric and challenging event starts from John O'Groats on Thursday morning…

One of the overseas crews competing in this year's Monte Carlo Historique Rally which starts this week in John O'Groats have suffered a major setback – their car is stuck on a ship in mid-ocean.

Ko Nagai and Masataka Usami from Japan were planning to take part in the rally for the second time in a 1968 Datsun Bluebird originally bought by Ko's father with his first salary and remained in the family ever since.

But the car has not arrived in the UK in time, stranded on a ship which has been delayed by bad weather, so they won't be able to make the start from Scotland on Thursday morning.

However, the latest news is that they're hoping to borrow a replacement car and will be joining the other competitors from Reims in France.

"It is extremely disappointing that I won't be able to run with my own car" said Ko who is a member of the Scottish-based Ecosse Rallye Drivers Club . "However, I haven't given up on the rally itself, if I can get a replacement car in time."

In 2012 they brought the car to the UK and completed the drive to the South of France, after which they took six months to drive home to Japan through Italy, Turkey, Iran and Thailand.

They are inaugural members of an overseas historic rally project at the University of Tokyo which has participated in the event several times since 2011 when it started from Glasgow.

Other long-distance entrants are Jim Pohl and Joyce Mordenti who are coming from California to compete in their 1952 Sunbeam Talbot 90. It is the actual car in which Stirling Moss finished 6th in the 1953 Monte Carlo Rally. For the 2026 event, the car will carry the original Number 318 Monte rally plate.

It'll be the third time Jim and Joyce have competed in the event but their first in the classic Sunbeam. They'll be joined by another Sunbeam Talbot Mk111 from 1955, crewed by Jim Dean and Hugh Crabtree on their first Monte.

The event will begin at the much-photographed John O'Groats signpost on Thursday morning, marking the centenary of the start when a group of intrepid adventurers left the windswept northern tip of mainland Scotland to drive 1500 miles to Monte Carlo in the south of France to establish what has become one of the world's best-known motorsport events.

A century on, their modern counterparts will replicate their achievement in a range of cars, some of which date back to the early years.

The event has been run several times in recent years with a variety of Scottish starts but for this year's major milestone in the history of the event there's a welcome return to the traditional John O'Groats start.

One of the participants' main stops on the marathon journey will be on Thursday evening at Stirling Castle where there will be a 'Monte Fest' with the chance to mingle with some of the competitiors and their cars. That will be followed by an overnight stop at North Queensferry before heading south to Hull for the overnight ferry to Rotterdam for the run through to the South of France.

For more information:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057040406909