

Championship newsletter: 10/2014 – 24 June 2014

Welcome

Welcome to championship newsletter number 10 for the 2014 **West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship**.

I am very pleased to report that everyone seemed to enjoy the **DMACK Carlisle Stages**. We had very positive feedback about the format, stages, organisation and barbecue and I'd like to say a big thank you to the many people, including all the marshals, for their support. The only disappointment from our side was that the entry was smaller than we had hoped. I'd be really interested to hear from those who were not there as to why they missed the event. This will help us with planning for the future, so please do let us know. Please see further on in this newsletter for another reminder about **management vehicles**.

Regs for round six, the **Neath Valley Stages** (9 August), are now available and all the reports from the area say that the stages are in prime condition once again this year.

Plans are well underway for the seventh and final round, the **Trackrod Historic Cup** (Friday/Saturday 26/27 September). The Trackrod team has worked hard to deliver an excellent value for money event with some stages in the darkness of Friday evening to add further to the appeal of this first-class event.

You have probably seen or heard that the Roger Albert Clark Rally Motor Club has been named as the preferred bidder for the **MSA British Historic Rally Championship** for five years, starting in 2015. We are delighted with this announcement and are confident that the necessary contractual matters will be swiftly concluded.

From the comments and questions over the Carlisle weekend, I just wanted to cover a couple of important issues. Subject to the contract being finalised, we plan to run a programme of events that will continue to meet the wishes of the majority of competitors.

We believe the format of the 2014 R.A.C. Rally Championship is about right in terms of events and costs and so we plan to maintain that, as far as possible, in 2015. However, we are exploring the probability of including some asphalt rallying in the schedule.



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We expect to remain loyal to many of the events that have worked with us over the last two years. In addition, we will continue to provide competition for all the crews who have supported us to date and will look at ways of encouraging the next generation of historic cars.

We have lots of exciting plans to finalise over the coming weeks and months and we are always keen to hear your views, so please get in touch if you have any ideas or comments.

Best regards

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Tuesday 24 June 2014
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Championship website: www.racrallychamp.org

RACMRC confirmed as preferred bidder for BHRC

The Roger Albert Clark Rally Motor Club Ltd has been announced as the preferred bidder for the MSA British Historic Rally Championship for the next five years, starting in 2015.

The Club currently promotes the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship, the Roger Albert Clark Rally and the DMACK Carlisle Stages. The Motor Sports Association (MSA) has recently undertaken an exhaustive tender process to conclude the award of contracts to organise and promote the major UK rally championships from the start of 2015.

The MSA is pleased to announce that the tender lodged by the Roger Albert Clark Rally Motor Club Ltd for the MSA British Historic Rally Championship has been selected to go forward and is currently in the negotiation stage. The MSA stresses that these negotiations remain subject to contract, but both parties are optimistic that they will result in a positive conclusion for historic rallying.

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Rob Jones, MSA Chief Executive, said: "The MSA British Historic Rally Championship was a difficult decision. The MSA has an excellent relationship with the Historic Rally Car Register and they have done a great job with the championship in recent years. The growth in popularity of historic rallying has brought more cars and more competitors to the sport, which has been great news for event organisers and, of course, spectators.

"However, having considered a number of tenders for the BHRC, the selection panel made a unanimous decision regarding the preferred bid. A subsequent meeting with Colin Heppenstall was very positive and although we have yet to conclude an agreement, I am very encouraged by the progress of negotiations for this important championship."

"We are very pleased to be the preferred bidder for the BHRC," said Colin Heppenstall. "We're looking forward to working with the MSA on the next chapter in the BHRC story."

End of season awards' night

We are delighted to confirm that the date for the end of season awards celebration has been set as Saturday 25 October at the Casa Hotel in Chesterfield. The event was such a success last year that it was a very easy decision to return to the same venue.

We have block booked a number of rooms for R.A.C. contenders and when booking please use code: RACR251014. These rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a Premier Inn is across the road for those on a smaller budget. For details of the hotel and contact information, please visit www.casahotels.co.uk

Eligibility update

Severn Valley Stages

Five cars were selected for post-event scrutineering and three made it to the finish with two retiring. All three were checked against their papers and all were found to be correct.



DMACK Carlisle Stages

Five cars were selected for post-event scrutineering and four made it to the finish with one retiring. The eligibility scrutineers were happy with the results of the inspection and any minor issues were pointed out to the competitor for rectification.

FIA Appendix K cars: suspension

All cars must comply with their HTPs: i.e. if they show Bilstein dampers in the photographs then the car must be presented with Bilstein suspension and must run with Bilstein for the duration of the event.

All cars, whether running to FIA Appendix K or MSA, must carry their vehicle identification papers (HTPs or HRVIFs) in the rally car at all times.

Mitsubishi strut top mounts: these do NOT comply with period specification and must not be used. Period specification top mounts are freely available from the regular suppliers.

Round six: Zutec Neath Valley Stages

Clerk of the course Den Golding has unveiled more details of the Neath Valley Stages on Saturday 9 August. Once again, this will be the only event to use the superb stages in Rheola, Bryn and Margam as previously used on Wales Rally GB and the stages are again in prime condition having not been used since last year's rally.

The event offers 45 stage miles in six stages for an entry fee of £475 and the format will be very similar to last year's hugely successful rally. The action will start just two miles from rally HQ with a nine-mile stage in Rheola. After a 20-minute service will be eight miles in Bryn and five miles in Margam. After a 40-minute service, the route is repeated. The first historic car will start at 9am and be back at the finish by 3.30pm.

Regs are now available shortly and more details can be found at www.neathvalleystages.co.uk

Round seven: the Trackrod Rally Yorkshire

Trackrod Rally Yorkshire 2014 again includes the popular Trackrod Historic Cup. The event welcomes competitors from The West Wales Rally Spares RAC Rally Championship.

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The whole event this year will be based at the Pickering Showground on the weekend of 26/27 September, accommodating Rally HQ, Friday scrutineering and documentation, in addition to the central service area. Servicing of vehicles will take place after a maximum 20 competitive forest miles and therefore management vehicles will not be allowed. Road mileage will also be kept to a minimum.

Scrutineering for all competitors will take place on the Friday afternoon, before one or two night stages in the North Yorkshire Forests. Total competitive mileage of approximately 55 miles is planned for the complete event.

After two stages on Friday night, starting at 7pm and totaling 18 miles, (there will be no parc fermé on Friday night), competitors will then restart on Saturday from Pickering Showground from approximately 8.30am, with the first car due back at the finish at The Showground at approximately 2pm. There will be a dedicated Awards Ceremony taking place as soon after the last car has finished the event as possible.

To keep people occupied at the showground, there will be displays and trade stands on hand as well as a six-seater rally simulator. The organisers hope that service crews will try their hand at this for a nominal fee and then see if the competing crew can beat it when they return.

Rally Guide 1 is now available for download:

http://www.trackrodmotorclub.co.uk/images/Files/Rally%20Yorkshire/2014-Rally_Guide_1.pdf

See www.rallyyorkshire.co.uk, follow us on Facebook or twitter @rallyyorkshire

Management vehicles

We want to again remind everyone that management vehicles are not permitted in the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship. This is the relevant section of the championship regulations:

13. The use of management cars or chase cars is prohibited on every round of the Championship. Servicing will only be permitted from properly identified service vehicles in Official Service Areas.

We now have specific details, including a registration number, from the Carlisle Stages and will take action if any more activity is found on the Neath Valley Stages.

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Pritchard wins WWRs R.A.C. Rally Championship round five

Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke claimed a fine victory on the DMACK Carlisle Stages (Saturday 21 June), the fifth round of the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship.

From a field packed with quality, Pritchard (Ford Escort Mk2) topped a fierce battle that raged over six dry and dusty stages in the Kershope region as the top three crews were covered by 23 seconds and less than a minute covered the top six at the end of a rally that drew rave reviews from the competitors.

Second to Pritchard were Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis, while Meirion Evans and Iwan Jones turned in a fine performance on unfamiliar stages to take third overall. Crews were fulsome in their praise for the event, with first class forest stages and a compact format that included limited road mileage.

The pace at the head of the field was tremendous and it could have been a different result had stage one pacesetter Matt Edwards not gone out on stage two with ignition failure.

Graham Waite and Gill Cotton had a fine run in their Volvo Amazon to take Category 1 from the Lotus Cortina of Paul Mankin/Desmond Bell. David Stokes and Guy Weaver turned in another accomplished performance to win Category 2 in their Ford Escort Mk2, while in Category O brothers Simon Crook and Alister Crook (Opel Manta) took another victory.

Heading into the western block of Kielder, this was perhaps the most open round of the season so far. Few, if any, of the drivers could claim much local knowledge and the warm weather added to the challenge of tyre choice.

Edwards was awesome from the start, going five seconds up on Robinson in the opening 10-miles of Kershope. But his Ford Escort Mk2 went little further and Pritchard set the pace across just the river in Newcastleton. After five miles in Ash Park, Pritchard arrived at service four seconds down on the consistently fast Robinson. Evans was right in the mix in third from Tim Pearcey/Neil Shanks, Nick Elliott/Dave Price and Richard Hill/Pat Cooper. Half a minute covered six of the fastest Escort drivers in the country.

After service at Murray's near Longtown came a repeat of the three stages, now in even better condition after being swept on the first run. Pritchard flew through Kershope and took 10 seconds off Robinson to take the lead. Strong runs through Newcastleton and Ash Park sealed a first historic victory for Pritchard. "It's been awesome," he said. "We had a good clear run and the stages were really nice and flowing."

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"Safe and tidy all day," said Robinson, who ended the rally 10s down in second. In turn, he was 13s up on Evans who had delivered a very impressive run on his first rally in the region. "Brilliant stages: we were sleeping a bit in the morning but we really wanted a finish," said Evans.

Fourth overall was a great result for Pearcey on only his second rally of the season. "The stages were superb: we had a couple of moments, two on the same corner," he said. Hill ended the day on good pace to take fifth, but a wrong tyre choice in the morning had cost him time. Elliott, meanwhile, was even more downbeat about tyre selection for the first loop. "We changed tyres at service and the car was transformed," he said.

Darren Moon/Alan Walker battled home seventh with an engine that would only run at more than 3000rpm and were chased by Category 2 winners Stokes/Weaver. "No problems: the stages were brilliant," said Stokes. Chasing them in the Category were Chris Browne and Ali Cornwell-Browne (Ford Escort Mk1) and there was less than half a minute between them at the finish.

Category 1 featured a tremendous battle between Waite's Volvo and the Mini Cooper of Ray Cunningham/Andrew Bushe. At service, they were dead level on times, but it went wrong for Cunningham when a driveshaft failed near the end of Newcastleton 2 and his rally was over. That took the pressure off Waite, who had lost 15s on the second Kershope stage with an off at a hairpin. Running first on the road had given Waite a sweeper role on the first loop of stages.

Elsewhere in Category 1 Steven Higgins and Don Bramfoot were out early in the first stage with a wheel missing from Saab 96 after a broken stub axle. Meanwhile, John Everard and Mark Sharpley unfortunately rolled their lovely Alfa Romeo Junior. Into second in the Category to Waite's Volvo went Paul Mankin and Desmond Bell, who were glad to finish in their Lotus Cortina after a troubled season to date.

In Category 2, there was a great win in class C3 for David Kirby and Chris Rixon (Ford Escort Mk1), with Phil Jobson and Arwel Jenkins second in their similar car. Kirby only finished repairing his car at 10pm on Thursday after its roll on the Severn Valley. "We kept it on its wheels this time," said Kirby. A first-stage puncture put the Opel Ascona of Peter Smith/Patrick Walsh out of contention in class C3, though they rejoined in the afternoon and set competitive times.

In Class C2 a relieved Robin Shuttleworth and Ronnie Roughead got to the finish ahead despite a broken steering rack on their Escort Mk1. Fortunately it was late in the final stage when the rack failed. Just 14s down in second was the Hillman Avenger of Barry Jordan/James Gratton-Smith. "Mint: a cracking day," reported Jordan.

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Class D3, for the non-BDG powered Category 3 cars, heralded another win for Adrian Young/Gwynfor Jones in their Ford Escort Mk2. They dropped some time behind the ailing Peter Smith in the opening stage but otherwise had a strong run. Mike Reed/Joe Sturdy rolled their Escort out on the first Kershope and second in class went to Paul Fry/Mike Steele after a tussle with the similar Escort Mk2 of John Baker/Ian Jones.

In class D2, for the 1600s, there was another sporting contest between Keith Davison/Henry Richardson (Hillman Avenger) and Dave Hopkins/Tony Vart (Sunbeam Talbot). The stages were new to Hopkins and he dropped time in the morning, but they traded times in the afternoon as Davison stayed ahead. In the Open category of the championship, brothers Simon and Alister Crook emerged for another victory despite spending 15s in a ditch in Kershope 2. However, a storming recovery from the Sunbeam Lotus of Owen Murphy and James O'Brien took them close after dropping a lot of time in the morning with a pedal box problem. Murphy's pace in the afternoon against the leading Escorts showed that the project continues to get stronger and stronger.

TV date for R.A.C. Rally Championship round four

The television coverage of round four of the 2014 West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship, the Severn Valley Stages, will be broadcast on Motors TV on Friday (27 June) starting at 8.30pm.

The 90-minute programme, produced by Olly Dickinson and narrated by David Addison, covers the full story of the Welsh event as another tremendous field of R.A.C. crews tackled stages in Crychan, Halfway and Cefn. The programme will be repeated several times on Motors TV, including at 7.45am on Saturday 28 June and at 11am on Monday 30 June.

Alongside the TV coverage, the entire R.A.C. Rally Championship will again be available on iRally. The free iRally App is available for the iPhone, iPad and Android devices and offers an incredibly popular rally video channel.

Support for coverage of the 2014 WWSR R.A.C. Rally Championship comes from TV partners Amigos, JD Garage Equipment, Jordan Road Surfacing, Lloyd-Thomas Opticians, Lynwood Classic Engines, Rally and Competition Equipment, rallyprep.co.uk, Robinson Road Planing, Skipton Ford, Sherwood Engines and Swift Leisure.

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1600cc cars to be rewarded in WWRS R.A.C. Rally Championship

Drivers in 1600cc cars competing in the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship will have a chance of winning 50% of the entry fee for the Roger Albert Clark Rally (28-30 November) in a new award presented by Jordan Road Surfacing.

In 2014 the award will be worth nearly £1000 as half of the entry fee for the November event, while for 2015 it is planned to double the prize and offer a full entry fee for the 2015 Roger Albert Clark Rally.

Regular competitor Barry Jordan has recently switched to rallying a 1600cc Hillman Avenger and is keen to encourage more 1600cc cars out onto the stages. Cars like the Avenger and 1600cc Ford Escort Mk1s and Mk2s offer some of the most affordable ways of getting into historic rallying. Jordan will not be eligible for the award, which will go to the leading 1600cc car from classes C2 and D2. "There seems to be a lot of interest in 1600cc cars at the moment and I know of several cars being built," said Jordan. "I thought it would be a good idea to help the championship attract more 1600cc entries. Being able to run at the front is really good news and I'd like to think there could be 10 or 12 cars on most events next year."

WWRS R.A.C. Rally Championship award winners announced

The special award winners for the fifth round of the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship have been announced following the DMACK Carlisle Stages (21 June).

Stephen Higgins and Don Bramfoot were unfortunate enough to post the first retirement of the rally when stub axle failure struck their Saab 96 early on the opening stage. The last retirement was the Mini Cooper S of Ray Cunningham and Andrew Bushe, which broke a driveshaft on the penultimate stage of the rally. Both crews will receive a £100 voucher from West Wales Rally Spares, as will Ford Escort crew Steve Magson and Jim Goodman after their number came out of the hat in the draw for a third voucher.

Meanwhile, Ford Escort Mk1 crew David Kirby and Chris Nixon will receive a cheque for £240 from Holton Homes after their number came out in the draw for a refund of 50% of the event entry fee.

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The run-away success of the Kumho Clubmans Challenge continued for cars using no more than six tyres during the event. James Potter and Bob Duck (Ford Escort Mk2) were the highest-placed overall finishers from the Challenge contenders, while Stuart and Linda Cariss (Ford Escort Mk1) won a pair of Kumho tyres in the draw for contenders in the Challenge.

The 'Spirit of the Rally' product award from Fuchs Lubricants went to Hillman Avenger crew Barry Jordan and James Gratton-Smith for their overall enthusiasm and commitment to the 1600cc crews.

Simon and Alister Crook won the Best Improvement on Seeding, which is a set of axle brake pads from Mintex, after another strong performance to win Category O. Finally, Tim Pearcey won the 'Hard Charger' award of a 20-litre jerry can from Green Valley Industrial Supplies. His pace in his Ford Escort Mk2 was outstanding as he finished fourth overall on only his second rally of the year.

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