

Championship newsletter: 13/2014 – 2 October 2014

Welcome

Welcome to championship newsletter number 13 for the 2014 **West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship**.

Our final championship round was the **Trackrod Historic Cup** (Friday/Saturday 26/27 September) and it ended the season on a very high note with a superb entry, great stages, faultless organisation and warm sunshine. The Trackrod team worked hard to deliver an excellent value for money event with some stages in the darkness of Friday evening and it was all very well received. The only downside was some issues with spectators on Friday night in Staindale: if anyone has any information at all on this, please contact Rod Parkin from the organising team.

I am pleased to report that our plans the **MSA British Historic Rally Championship** in 2015 are now well advanced and we plan to unveil the programme at our awards' dinner on 25 October, followed by a series of press releases in the days after the awards. I'm delighted with what we will have to offer and I'm very grateful to the organising clubs for their support.

Meanwhile, at the end of November we have the **Roger Albert Clark Rally**, which promises to be one of the best yet! Entries for the main event and the two support events are already coming in well and we've had a great response from overseas crews for the main event. Event regulations are available for download from www.rogeralbertclarkrally.org

On a very sad note, we were all very sorry to hear of the death of Greg Strange, rally broadcaster and founder of iRally. We have worked closely with Greg over the last couple of years and were very grateful for the support he gave to the championship. I am pleased to hear that there are plans to continue his great work with iRally.

Best regards

Colin Heppenstall
Thursday 2 October 2014
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End of season awards' night

The date for the end of season awards celebration, Saturday 25 October at the Casa Hotel in Chesterfield, is fast approaching. The event was such a success last year that it was a very easy decision to return to the same venue.

For details of the hotel, please visit www.casahotels.co.uk If you would like to book tickets for the evening, please contact Nicola Heppenstall as quickly as possible: Nicola@racrallychamp.org

Post-event scrutineering

We continued our regular post-event scrutineering checks on the Trackrod Historic Cup. Four cars were selected for a range of post-event checks and all was found to be in order.

Hill wins WWRS R.A.C. Rally Championship round seven

Richard Hill and Steffan Evans claimed a superb victory on the Trackrod Historic Cup (Friday/Saturday 26/27 September), the seventh and final round of the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship.

A fabulous field of historic rally cars tackled the classic Yorkshire forest stages, including Staindale and Dalby in the darkness of Friday evening and it was Matt Edwards and Paul Morris who made the early pace in their Ford Escort Mk2. However on Saturday morning Hill/Evans started a major attack to try and claw back Edwards' 15-second overnight lead.

Going into the final stage in Langdale, the gap was down to just two seconds and Hill pushed hard to secure victory by seven seconds after a fine performance by both crews. Next up in the Rob Smith Rallying Category 3 were the Escorts of Tim Pearcey/Neil Shanks and Tim Freeman/Paul Williams.

David Stokes and Guy Weaver turned in yet strong performance to win the Capital Construction Category 2 in their Ford Escort Mk1, underlining their status as Category 2 champions. The Holton Homes Category K went to Tom Coughtrie/Calvin Cooledge (Escort Mk2) while in Category O it was Barry Stevenson-Wheeler/John Pickavance on top in their Open Category Escort Mk2. The opening two stages in Staindale and Dalby on Friday evening and they proved to be full of drama and incident. James Potter/Bob Duck and David Goose/Caron Tomlinson both had scary high-speed accidents in Dalby, fortunately without injury.

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Ray Cunningham and Phil Clarke (Mini Cooper) took championship victory in the Walker Diecastings Category 1 for the Irish ace, finishing clear of the Volvo Amazon of title rivals Graham Waite and Gill Cotton. Category 1 victory on the event went to local legend Bob Bean with Malcolm Smithson (Lotus Cortina), who made a welcome return to the stages after their accident on the Tour of Hamsterley.

Cunningham, teamed with Clarke for the first time, took class B2 and the Category One title in his mighty Mini Cooper. Clarke, co-driving in a Mini for the first time in about 40 years, loved the experience after his recent WRC outings with 2013 R.A.C. champion Marty McCormack. Class B4 and overall Category One victory went to the evergreen Bean in his Lotus Cortina. An off on Friday evening cost Graham Waite and Gill Cotton (Volvo Amazon) any chance of beating Cunningham to the title. Meanwhile, Stephen Higgins and Dom Bramfoot topped class B1 in their wonderful two-stroke Saab 96.

Dave Watkins and Linda Cariss teamed up for the first time to win C2 in Watkins' famous Escort Mk1. However, it might have been different if Baz Jordan/James Gratton-Smith had not suffered damaged steering on Friday evening. Robin Shuttleworth and Ronnie Roughead also lost a lot of time with a puncture. There was a great Escort Mk1 battle in class C3 as Steve Magson and Darren Smith took a much deserved win on home ground after a big tussle with David Kirby/Chris Rixon on what Rixon claimed to be his final rally. Peter Smith and Patrick Walsh had a tough time with the Opel Ascona, with an off on Friday and a broken halfshaft the following day. The result left Kirby as a worthy class C3 champion after a season of tremendous competition.

Ceiriog Hughes and Emyr Hall were welcome class D2 winners in their Toyota Corolla after Chris Skill and Glenn Hall slid their Escort Mk2 into a Dalby ditch. Class D3 featured a cracking battle between the Pinto-powered Escort Mk2s and top points' scorers were Paul Fry and Mike Steele, despite starting their rally with a spin after three miles of Staindale.

After the drama of the opening leg, Edwards was 15s up on Hill, but when Saturday morning dawned Hill was wide awake and immediately on the attack. He pulled back time on each of the next three stages and went into the final 10-miler in Langdale only two seconds behind. By the end of the stage, Hill had gone nearly 10 seconds quicker than everyone else and pipped Edwards by seven seconds to claim a deserved victory.

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"We didn't have a brilliant run last night and we slid wide on the fourth corner of the first stage, but this morning we pushed really hard from Dalby onwards," said Hill. "We struggled for traction a bit this afternoon but no excuses: he was just quicker than us at the end," said Edwards.

The first six-miler in Staindale significantly shaped the event when Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis slid off less than two miles in. They lost two and a half minutes, but Robinson made amends the following morning by beating everyone by 10 seconds in Gale Rigg.

Overnight, Nick Elliott and Dave Price ran third despite giving themselves the challenge of running on maps rather than notes. "It was a complete baptism of fire," said Elliott. They dropped a place to Tim Pearcey/Neil Shanks on Saturday morning but sadly went out with a not too damaging roll at Mikkola's Bend in Dalby.

"It was like a car park in there," said Pearcey of the opening two stages. Once into the daylight of Saturday, the Yorkshireman upped his pace and was never too far away from the lead contest to score a strong third place overall.

Behind Pearcey, the battle for the glory of Gloucestershire fell to Stokes and Weaver (Escort Mk1) by less than three seconds from the Escort Mk2 of Freeman/Williams. Both crews had run very well, with Stokes also claiming overall honours in Category Two.

In pursuit of Stokes in Category Two was another excellent contest between the Escort Mk1s of Warren Philliskirk/Nigel Hutchinson and Chris Browne/Ali Cornwell-Browne. The final gap was only 26s as Philliskirk revelled in his local stages. Running nicely in the top 10, and shaking off the effects of a year away from competitive driving, was Tim Mason with Graham Wild on the notes in the class C4-winning Porsche 911.

Clutch dramas eliminated both Alan Walker/Jez Rogers and Richard Lane/Frank Richer but not before Walker had posted top six stage times. Lane was one of many to drop a lot of time after going off in Staindale. Even quicker, despite a fair lay-off, was Ryan Champion in the Tuthill Porsche 911 with Craig Thorley alongside. A detached fan belt in Dalby wrecked any chance of a good result, but fastest overall in Cropton showed what might have been.

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Gearbox failure sidelined the leading Open Category Opel Manta of Simon and Alistair Crook early in the opening Staindale stage. Instead, their season-long rivals Stevenson-Wheeler and Pickavance took the Category in their Ford Escort Mk2. They had a minute and a half in hand over the similar car of Dave Hemingway and Simon Ashton. "I'd nearly forgotten what to do," admitted Stevenson-Wheeler after several moments on Friday evening and an off in Staindale, but it all came back together on Saturday.

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

The special award winners for the seventh and final round of the 2014 West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship have been announced following the Trackrod Historic Cup (26/27 September).

Brothers Simon and Alistair Crook were unfortunate enough to post the first retirement of the rally when gearbox problems sidelined their Open Category Opel Manta early in the opening stage in Staindale. The last retirement was the Opel Ascona of Peter Smith and Patrick Walsh, with halfshaft failure on the final stage. Both crews will receive a £100 voucher from West Wales Rally Spares, as will Ford Escort Mk1 crew Alan and Liam Carfrae after their number came out of the hat in the draw for a third voucher.

Meanwhile, Talbot Sunbeam crew Pip Coulson and Daniel May will receive a cheque for £300 from Holton Homes after their number came out in the draw for a refund of 50% of the event entry fee.

The run-away success of the Kumho Clubmans Challenge continued for cars using no more than six tyres during the event. Tim Freeman and Paul Williams (Ford Escort Mk2) were the highest-placed overall finishers from the Challenge contenders in fifth place, while James Potter and Bob Duck (Ford Escort Mk2) 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 Ben Mellors after a fabulous debut for his Toyota Celica RA40. The immaculate car drew widespread acclaim and Mellors achieved his ambition of a good finish in the car that was only completed the night before the rally.

Phil Jobson and Arwel Jenkins had a great run in their Ford Escort Mk1 and won the Best Improvement on Seeding, which is a set of axle brake pads from Mintex. Finally, event winner Richard Hill 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 battled ahead of Matt Edwards on the final stage to secure victory.

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Regulations published for 2014 Roger Albert Clark Rally

The event regulations for the 2014 Roger Albert Clark Rally (28-30 November) have been published and the first entries have already started arriving as the event starts a new era with Sunderland as the host city.

With the rally start, finish and HQ all based in Sunderland, the route will make extensive use of the Kielder forest complex. The event offers 187 stage miles for an entry fee of £1875 for early entries, making it one of the best value pounds per mile gravel rallies of 2014.

As well as the historic classes, the Open Rally will once more be available to any two-wheel drive cars complying with MSA regulations.

The move north to Sunderland is being supported by Sunderland Live, the events arm of Sunderland City Council. The event will be based around the Seaburn Leisure Centre, which will provide the venue for rally HQ, scrutineering, documentation and prize-giving. The event will also feature a spectacular spectator stage at the Herrington Country Park.

After six stages in the darkness of Friday evening, there will be two very full days of rallying on Saturday and Sunday. Six forest stages will be more than 10 miles long and the Falstone stage, run twice on Sunday, will be the longest of the rally at 14.86 miles.

For more details about the Roger Albert Clark Rally, please visit www.rogeralbertclarkrally.org

Roger Albert Clark Rally support events unveiled

Details of the support rallies to the 2014 Roger Albert Clark Rally (28-30 November) have been announced and will offer fantastic cost-effective forest rallying with entry fees from as low as £7.84 per mile.

The two support rallies both offer competitors a chance to be part of what many people regard as the best rally of the season, as well as the opportunity to tackle classic and little-used stages in the Kielder complex. Both events are open to two-wheel drive cars of any age.

The Peregrine Print Rally will start in Sunderland and cover 53 stage miles on Saturday, while the Clubman's Rally will be based in central Kielder and cover 49 stage miles on Sunday. With a £100 discount for crews entering both rallies, the overall package offers 102 forest stage miles for £800.

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"I'm keen to see crews from the region come and join us to sample the flavour and atmosphere of the Roger Albert Clark Rally," said Rally Manager Colin Heppenstall. "I have tried to make the support rallies as user friendly as possible with compact routes and very attractive entry fees."

The support events for the 2014 Roger Albert Clark Rally are:

The Peregrine Print Rally

53 stage miles; entry free £450 (cost per mile £8.49)

Starting from Sunderland at mid-day on Saturday (29 November), the Peregrine Print Rally will take in seven stages in the Kielder complex including Shepherdshield, Kershope and Ash Park. The rally will finish at RJ Murrays near Carlisle on Saturday evening after 53 stage miles, including a significant competitive mileage in the dark. The event will be limited to 30 entries taken in order of receipt.

The Clubman's Rally

49 stage miles; entry fee £450 (cost per mile £9.18)

Based at the heart of the Kielder complex, the Clubman's Rally runs through Sunday (30 November) over stages in Ogre Hill, Redesdale and Falstone. The start, service and finish will all be based in central Kielder, ensuring a very compact route with low road mileage. The event will start at 10.45am following morning scrutineering and will finish from 4.30pm. The event will be limited to 20 entries taken in order of receipt.

The package deal

If crews enter both the Peregrine Print Rally and the Clubman's Rally at the same time, they will receive a £100 discount. The package offer will provide 102 stage miles for £800, giving a cost of £7.84 per mile. This is believed to be the cheapest rate for forestry mileage in the UK in 2014.

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