

Championship newsletter: 2/2015 – 5 February 2015

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Welcome

Welcome to championship newsletter number 2 for the 2015 **West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship**.

We were all delighted with the opening round, the **Red Kite Stages**, which delivered a true challenge in some tough conditions. I'd like to record a big vote of thanks to all the team at Amman and DMC as well as the marshals, radio crews, timekeepers and rescue and recovery crews for coping with all the challenges thrown at them. To their great credit, we were all able to enjoy a fine day's sport.

We were pleased with the support for the opening round of the championship, both from the crews in the Open Category and also those in the lower-powered historic classes who opted to register for the R.A.C. Championship.

We are now only three weeks away from the **Mid Wales Stages** and entries are arriving at a good rate, so please enter as soon as possible. We are hoping for a very big combined BHRC/RAC field and hope to surpass the 70-cars on the Red Kite.

Championship points should be available on the website by the time this newsletter arrives.

Don't forget that tea, coffee and cakes are always available from the championship awning in the service area and we are always keen to meet up for a chat and get your feedback. I hope to see you in Newtown.

Best regards

Colin Heppenstall

Thursday 5 February 2015

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The 2015 events in detail

RAC round 2: Mid Wales Stages (Sunday 1 March)

The Viking Motorsport/Links Electrical Mid Wales Stages will follow the successful format of previous years with rally HQ in Newtown and four superb stages in Pike's Peak, Myherin and Hafren. The competitive action will again finish with the spectacular run down the Pike's Peak hairpins. Scrutineering and documentation will be on Saturday afternoon (28 February) at the Theatre Hafren on the outskirts of Newtown. Entries close on 19 February and regs are available from www.newtown-mc.co.uk

RAC round 3: Pirelli Rally (Saturday 25 April)

Scrutineering and documentation will be on Friday 24 April, starting early afternoon at the H&H auction mart just of J43 of the M6 at Carlisle. There will be a ceremonial start in Carlisle city centre on Saturday morning, likely to be from 10am with cars in place from 9am.

The route will take crews up to Kielder for three stages (25 miles), then service in the Kielder area, followed by the same stages again. All the stage mileage will be on the south side of the Kielder dam using the best Category A haul roads. The Rally HQ and finish will be at Kielder Castle, with the first car to the finish at around 4pm, with the prize-giving on the ramp.

RAC round 4: Severn Valley Stages (Saturday 30 May)

The 42nd Severn Valley Stages will be based at the Royal Welsh Showground at Builth Wells and take place on 30th May.

Scrutineering will be on Friday afternoon 29 May. The organisers do not expect to make any major changes from the 2014 format. www.severnvalleystages.co.uk

RAC round 5: Carlisle Stages (Saturday 13 June)

The Carlisle Stages will again be based close to Carlisle and will use the superb stages in the Newcastleton and Kershope complexes. Scrutineering will be on Friday afternoon, with Saturday offering a 45-stage mile route with limited double usage. The event is a round of the BTRDA Rally Series as well as the R.A.C. Championship, so a bumper entry is expected. More details to follow shortly. www.racrallychamp.org

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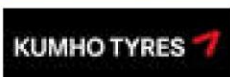
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RAC round 6: Harry Flatters (Sunday 26 July)

This one-day rally over the famous Epynt ranges is traditionally based in Brecon where scrutineering and documentation is held on Saturday afternoon. The route recce will take place on Saturday morning.
www.breconmotorclub.co.uk

RAC round 7: Neath Valley Stages (Saturday 15 August)

Scrutineering and documentation will take place from 2pm on Friday 14 August at Rally HQ in Rheola (the same venue as 2014). There is free overnight camping on Friday and Saturday nights. The 45 competitive miles will feature three stages run twice: Rheola, Bryn and a brand new stage that has NEVER been used. The format will be: first car starts at 8.30am for a nine-mile stage followed by service. The second loop takes in stages two (six miles) and three (seven and a half miles). After a main service halt, the route is repeated, with the first car due at the finish at around 3.45pm.
www.neathvalleystages.co.uk

RAC round 8: Trackrod Rally Yorkshire (Friday/Saturday 25/26 September)

The organisers of the Trackrod Rally Yorkshire intend to run a very similar format to 2014 with Friday afternoon scrutineering followed by a 7pm start and stages in the dark, finishing at around 10pm. The event will then restart on the Saturday at approximately 8.30am with classic Yorkshire stages before finishing early afternoon. The event will be again based at Pickering.
www.trackrodmotorclub.co.uk

End of season awards night (Saturday 24 October)

To wrap up the season, we will be returning to the fabulous Casa Hotel in Chesterfield for the end of season awards night. More details to follow, but please get the date in your diary!

Post-event scrutineering – Red Kite

Post-event eligibility scrutineering has been stepped up further in 2015 and a number of cars were checked following the Red Kite Stages. The event organisers kindly arranged the use of a garage with a vehicle lift, which allowed John Cooper and Rob Harris to have a good look around. The items inspected included front and rear suspension, front and rear brakes and engine ancillaries. Items were checked against relevant papers and all was found to be in order.

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Eligibility – a reminder of item 8 in the championship regulations

All championship entries must have and produce at all events those forms necessary for their Category:

- (a) An FIA HTP or MSA HRVIF which must be carried in the car at all times on each round, where appropriate.
- (b) Vehicle Registration Document (V5 or V5C).
- (c) Valid MOT Certificate as appropriate
- (d) An MSA Competition Car (Stage Rally) Log Book.
- (e) Homologation papers (Category 3 and 4)

If the required papers are not in order (not correct or not produced) then championship points may not be allocated for that round.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The issue of these papers does not necessarily mean that your car complies with the Championship Regulations.

Dampers on historic rally cars – from the MSA

The basic philosophy of historic motor sport is that the vehicles remain in the specification that they were in period, and that the vehicle complies with the technical regulations of that period. For homologated vehicles this means compliance with the relevant homologation form, but it is possible that the technical regulations of the period did not cover certain items, for example exhaust systems may have been free. In cases such as this, those components must still be of a design and specification as used in period on that make and model of car.

Shock absorbers (dampers) have a huge influence on the performance of a car. There has been a lot of chatter about certain brands of shock absorber being acceptable or otherwise. A number of companies that manufactured components in period no longer exist. The key to whether a particular component – be that a shock absorber or anything else – is acceptable within the regulations is whether the component is of period specification. With shock absorbers we have no knowledge of any user-adjustable monotube dampers in use until after 1981. Therefore a monotube damper, maximum body diameter less than 42mm (as exemplified in period by Bilstein) with no user-adjustment and no remote reservoir would be considered as being period specification and within the regulations for pre-1981 cars. Units of later specification, user-adjustable, fitted with remote reservoirs, etc. would not be.

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For clarity, if a shock absorber could be adjusted without depressurising it would be considered to be user-adjustable. Be wary of referring to shock absorbers by the manufacturer's name, for providing that the units are of period specification, the fact that they may be manufactured by a company associated to modern specification is of no consequence. It is the specification that is the critical factor, not the identity of the manufacturer. In particular, although advised that Reiger do not manufacture 'period historic dampers' we have now been further advised that this advice is – or may be – incorrect. As we have made clear, it is the specification that is key!

Beveridge stars in WWRS R.A.C. Rally Championship opener

Ian Beveridge/Paul Price and Philip Burton/Mal Capstick were the major winners on the opening round of the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship, the Red Kite Stages (Sunday 1 February). While Capstick and Burton marked their championship debut with victory in the Open Category in their Ford Escort Mk2, Beveridge and Price turned in a mighty performance to win Category 1 in their rare Volvo PV544. An inspired tyre choice for the opening snow and ice-bound stage in Crychan set Beveridge on course for victory.

The Red Kite was a great start to the new R.A.C. Championship season and the hard work and professionalism of the organising team at Amman and DMC was rewarded with a fine day's sport. Great credit is due to all the marshals and officials out on the stages for keeping the event running smoothly in challenging conditions.

The scene was set for a big battle in the Open Category when crews headed into the ice-bound Crychan North stage and it was Leyton Waters and Kevin Bowcott (Toyota Starlet) who set pace, helped by being further down the running order. However, Burton was soon back into his stride on his first rally for two years and was able to move ahead for a clear victory. "We had a slow start and then a good run," said Burton.

Sadly, the challenge from brothers Simon and Alister Crook (Opel Manta) ended with an off in Caeo and so it was Waters second in the Category from the Escort Mk2 of Barry Stevenson-Wheeler/John Pickavance.

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Beveridge made the right call to fit some Russian remould tyres for the opening stages and clearly had better grip than many and took a big chunk of time from his rivals. "We got off to a good start, but it was still very slippery in the afternoon," he said after a tremendous performance. Bob Bean and Malcolm Smithson (Lotus Cortina) were content to have kept it on the track for second in Category 1, while Gwilym Roberts/Don James (Lotus Cortina) battled to the finish despite a major propshaft vibration over the closing stages.

Stuart and Linda Cariss clinched victory in Category 2 in a Ford Escort Mk1 that had been a bare shell 12 days earlier. Their aim was simply to get a finish and get back into the groove, seven months after a hefty accident in Greystoke, and they duly achieved both ambitions. Sadly, out on the opening stage with a damaged water pipe went the Hillman Avenger of Andrew Stokes/Hu Kent.

In Category 3, Grahame Standen and Jane Edgington survived the conditions to win in their Ford Escort Mk2 although an off on sheet ice on a road section gave them a big scare. Second in the category was the Talbot Sunbeam of Dave Hopkins/Tony Vart. "It was a riot," said Hopkins of the conditions, and he was one of many drivers to rave about the fast and flowing Caeo stage.

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