

Championship newsletter: 3/2014 – 6 February 2014

## Welcome

Welcome to championship newsletter number 3 for the 2014 **West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship**.

The **Red Kite Stages** (Sunday 2 February) got the season off to a great start and all the feedback we have had from the event has been very positive. Despite the prevailing weather, the stages were in excellent condition and with 60 registered crews on the rally it was a busy weekend for the championship.

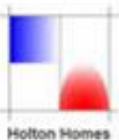
I'm delighted to report that we have now taken 78 championship registrations and we know of plenty more still to come, so our target of 100 registered crews for 2014 is looking achievable.

My congratulations go to all the winners on the Red Kite (see elsewhere for details of the special award winners) and I was particularly pleased to see so many cars in Category 1. Having 15 Cat 1 cars bodes very well for the rest of the season! It was amazing to have both Cat 1 and Cat 2 decided on a tie-break, which must be a first in historic rallying.

Of course, a big vote of thanks goes to all the team at Amman and DMC for running the event twice in less than six months. This small team works very hard to deliver a top quality event and the championship got a very warm welcome in Llandovery. The current championship points are attached.

Now the attention turns to round two, the **Mid Wales Stages** (Sunday 2 March). Please don't forget the notes about entering the event (which follow in this newsletter). I understand that entries are arriving at a very good rate and we are expecting a bumper historic entry on this popular event.

Finally, we are very pleased to unveil the 2014 DMACK Carlisle Stages (Saturday 21 June) in this newsletter. Read on to find details of what we hope will be a very social and fun event to mark the middle of the championship season!



West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners



Best regards

Colin Heppenstall  
Thursday 5 February 2014  
E-mail: [colin@racrallychamp.org](mailto:colin@racrallychamp.org)

**Championship website: [www.racrallychamp.org](http://www.racrallychamp.org)**

### Reminder about the Mid Wales Stages

If you are planning to enter the **Mid Wales Stages** (2 March) please make sure you enter event number 2, titled the Viking Motorsport/Links Electrical Mid-Wales 55 Stages (Nat B).

Competitors in the Open class (Category O) should also enter this event. As a reminder, all historic cars entered for this event will run in **ONE GROUP**, regardless of championship entered: the Category 1 cars will run first, followed by the remaining historics in the traditional style. All the historics will complete the same 55-mile route.

However, due to the way the event regulations have been written, anyone wishing to also contest the Welsh and ANWCC historic championships is obliged to enter the National A historic rally: primarily intended for BHRC contenders. So, if any RAC contenders also wish to score points in the Welsh and ANWCC championships, they must enter the National A rally. Provided they are carrying RAC Championship livery and have signed-on for the RAC Championship, they will be able to score RAC points as usual.

With regard to crews aiming to score points on both the R.A.C. Championship and BHRC on the Mid Wales Stages, we have taken the view that we should make this possible. With the support of Gareth Lloyd at WWRS, we made an approach to the BHRC and they have agreed to our suggestion. So, for this event only, we are allowing such crews to run the R.A.C. Championship sun-strip at the top of the rear window. There is no need for the door panel, however the championship advertisers' strip must be on the car door and the championship header must go on the rear quarter panel. Then, as long as the other R.A.C. stickers are on the car, we will allocate points as normal. After the Mid Wales, liveries should return to normal.

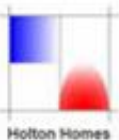


### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners





**IMPORTANT NOTE:** please be aware that the agreement over screen headers applies to the BHRC only and not the Welsh Historic Rally Championship. Obviously we welcome crews also contesting the Welsh Championship, but they will need to run the RAC screen header as usual.

### Red Kite: post event eligibility update

Four cars were designated for post-event scrutineering at the Red Kite Stages but, unfortunately, two retired on the final stage. The other two cars were checked for suspension, brakes, engine, ignition system and body panels, and both were found to fully comply with the regulations.

I'd like to record my thanks to Ian Beveridge for his ideas on tyre marking and checking for the Kumho Clubmans Challenge. From the Mid Wales Stages onwards we will primarily be using bar codes to check tyres. It would help us greatly if, before the rally, crews can make a note of the bar codes on the six tyres they plan to use and give us this information at scrutineering. We can then make routine checks by reading the bar codes. If the tyres to be used do not carry bar codes, we will mark the tyres accordingly.

John Cooper

### Round 3: Tour of Hamsterley (26 April)

The Rally Guide is due to be published next week, quickly followed by the event regulations. The organisers hope to post some pictures of the road improvements in Hamsterley on the event's facebook page in the next week or so. The entry fee is confirmed at £480.

Clerk of the Course Steve Waggett has unveiled details of the new stage in the grounds of Raby Castle. "We have a three-mile stage, which is two miles of asphalt and a mile of gravel through the historic parkland and wooded venue. Plans at present are for the stage to be run twice in quick succession, back-to-back.

"It promises to offer an exciting challenge for competitors in all categories with fast and flowing sections together with some tight and technical elements, all in sight of the historic Castle which is still home to Lord Barnard. We are delighted with the support from the team at Raby Estates in our efforts to improve our rally further and to bring stage rallying back to this venue which was last used in 1996 as a stage. The stage will be strictly NON-SPECTATOR and this will be enforced to protect any future use of the venue."

### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners



## Round 4: Severn Valley Stages (31 May)

Plans are moving ahead well for the Severn Valley Stages and the event organisers are planning to unveil their rally during the Mid Wales Stages. The event has a new website address: [www.severnvalleystages.co.uk](http://www.severnvalleystages.co.uk)

### Co-driver available

Steve Pugh is looking for a ride in the rest of the R.A.C Championship. He's gutted that Mark Spencer isn't doing much in the first half of the year and they won't be defending their 2013 category win. His number is 07814 203868.

### DMACK Carlisle Stages to be 'summer party' for R.A.C. Championship

The 2014 Carlisle Stages (Saturday 21 June), which will again be backed by DMACK, will form the core of a 'summer party' for the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship.

Following on from the runaway success of the inaugural DMACK Carlisle Stages in 2013, round five of the 2014 R.A.C. Championship will run on Saturday 21 June and cover 45 stage miles in the Kershope and Newcastleton forest complexes.

The day before the rally (Friday 20 June) will start with a shakedown forest stage of up to two miles, which will be open to all registered championship contenders as a chance to give sponsors, service crews, family, guests and media a taste of forest rallying. There will be a modest charge for cars taking part and there will be no limit on the number of runs.

When the shakedown stage closes, the focus will turn to pre-event documentation and scrutineering on Friday afternoon at R J Murray & Sons Haulage Company in Longtown, Carlisle: just five minutes from junction 44 of the M6.

Then, as scrutineering closes late on Friday afternoon there will be a championship barbecue for all crew members, including families and service crews. This mid-season social event is expected to be very popular as competitors, organisers and service crews all get together in a relaxed atmosphere.

This compact rally, with 45 stage miles and less than 70 road miles, will give crews a rare chance to tackle some of the most famous gravel stages in the UK during the summer months. The DMACK Carlisle Stages will be organised by the Roger Albert Clark Rally Motor Club.



### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners





"We wanted to have a mid-season social get together for everyone involved in the R.A.C. Championship and the DMACK Carlisle Stages is the ideal event," said Colin Heppenstall, championship manager. "Crews can shake the cars down and give some passenger rides on Friday morning, complete scrutineering on Friday afternoon and then enjoy the barbecue. On Saturday, the rally will finish from around 3pm to allow crews to start the journey home in good time."

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

The special award winners for the first round of the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship have been announced following the Red Kite Historic Stages (2 February).

Graham Thatcher and Robert James posted the first retirement of the rally with gearbox problems for their Hillman Avenger on the opening stage. The last retirement was the Ford Escort Mk2 of Vince Bristow/Tim Sayer, which went off near the end of the final stage in Crychan. Both crews will receive a £100 voucher from West Wales Rally Spares, as will Ford Escort Mk1 crew Paul and Daniel May after their number came out of the hat in the draw for a third voucher.

Meanwhile, Ford Escort Mk2 crew John Baker and Seyyan John will receive a cheque for £237.50 from Holton Homes after their number came out in the draw for a refund of 50% of the event entry fee.

The new Kumho Clubmans Challenge was a runaway success, with 23 out of the 60 R.A.C. crews electing to contest this new Challenge for crews using no more than six tyres during the event. Significantly, the top overall finishers in the Challenge were Tim Freeman and Paul Wakely (Ford Escort Mk2) who finished a tremendous fifth overall.

Category winners in the Kumho Clubmans Challenge were Simon Wallis/Graham Wride (Lotus Cortina) in Category 1, David Kirby/Chris Rixon (Ford Escort Mk1) from Category 2, Freeman/Wakely in Category 3 and Tom Coughtrie/Calvin Cooledge (Ford Escort Mk2) in Category K. Gareth Lewis won two tyres from Kumho for his Ford Escort Mk2 in the draw for Challenge contenders.

The 'Spirit of the Rally' product award from Fuchs Lubricants goes to Terry Brown for a superb second overall in his Ford Escort Mk2 on one of his favourite rallies. Terry and his younger co-driver Den Golding are both pensioners!

### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners





Simon Pickering and Colin Jenkins won the Best Improvement on Seeding, which is a set of axle brake pads from Mintex, after an excellent run in their Ford Escort Mk1. Finally, Meirion Evans won the 'Hard Charger' award of a 20-litre jerry can from Green Valley Industrial Supplies. His pace in his Escort Mk2 was excellent despite a couple of problems and he was fastest of all over the final 15-mile stage in Crychan.

### Hill takes opening WWRs R.A.C. Rally Championship counter

Richard Hill and Pat Cooper took a dramatic final stage victory on the Red Kite Historic Stages (Sunday 2 February), the opening round of the West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship. In what proved to be a perfect start for the championship season, Ray Cunningham and Chris Browne won Category 1 and 2 respectively but only after two tie-breaks!

With a fine 60-car line-up of championship contenders, the Red Kite lived up to all expectations as crews tackled superb stages in the Caio and Crychan complexes. Despite all the pre-event rain, the stages were in excellent condition though heavy rain that returned as the leading crews tackled the deciding 15-mile stage in Crychan made conditions very challenging.

After leading from the start, Nick Elliott and Dave Price took a lead of 28s into the final stage in their Ford Escort Mk2. However, with two miles to go they were caught out by a bump and crashed out of the rally, leaving Hill and Cooper to win by 45s from the flying Terry Brown/Den Golding and Tomas Davis/Eurig Davies.

"It's not the way I want to win a rally," said Hill, but for a first run in a car finished three days earlier it was still an impressive start to his title bid. However, that final Crychan stage was not easy for them as the wipers packed up for the last five miles.

Brown and Golding were two stars of the rally on their way to second overall after a mighty run on some of their favourite stages. Brown went into the final stage less than 10s up on the Sunbeam Lotus of Owen Murphy/James O'Brien, but a detached oil pipe put the Irish crew out at the start of the stage.

Instead, Davies fended off Darren Moon/Elgan Davies for what became third after a day-long tussle. Davies was another in a car finished only just before the rally. Tim Freeman/Paul Wakely moved up well after a slow start to fend off Gareth Lloyd/Ryland James for sixth. Meanwhile, Meirion Evans and Iwan Jones showed strong pace despite a couple of problems, including a puncture in SS1, and were fastest of all on the final stage.

### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



### West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners





Retirements included James Potter and Bob Duck with a blown engine in the last mile of the opening stage. They coasted over the finish line and still set a strong stage time, while a good run for Jerry Bailey and Graham Lacey ended with a roll in Caio 2. Vince Bristow and Tim Sayer ran in D5 in the Rally Xtreme Escort Mk2 and were unlucky to retire near the end of the final stage with a non-damaging off after running at a very good pace.

Local ace Gareth Lewis and Dan Holley took first blood in class D3 within the Rob Smith Rallying Category 3 in their Ford Escort Mk2, but there was frustration for Shawn Rayner/Declan Dear who lost the class spoils after sliding into a ditch at the finish line of Caio 2. They recovered to claim second while James Stait/Mike Harris took class D4 in their Sunbeam Lotus despite stopping to change a puncture on Crychan 2. In class D2, championship newcomers Dave Hopkins and Tony Vart took the spoils in their Sunbeam Talbot despite a jammed throttle cable on Caio 2.

There was an absolute cliff-hanger in the Capital Construction Category 2 as Chris Browne/Ali Cornwell-Browne beat fellow Escort Mk1 crew Roger Matthews/Paul Morris on another tie-break after pulling back a 1s deficit on the final stage. Browne got the nod after being a single second faster than Matthews over the opening stage. "That 15-miler is why we go rallying," said Browne after a great performance.

Class C3 netted a fine debut victory for the Opel Ascona A of Peter Smith/Patrick Walsh after an excellent day, though Peter Egerton and Alun Cook chased hard in their Ford Escort Mk1. Class C2 went to father and son Paul and Daniel May, who made the trip from Newcastle worthwhile with a good day in their Escort Mk1.

There was a fabulous start in the Walker Diecastings Category 1 for the Paddy Hopkirk Trophy as Ray Cunningham/Gary McElhinney (Mini Cooper) ended the rally tied with Simon Wallis/Graham Wride (Lotus Cortina). The Mini crew took the Category on a tie-break by dint of the faster time on the opening stage and also claimed first blood in the Aldon Automotive Mini and Imp Cup.

"The stages were fantastic," said Cunningham after a tremendous performance. Wallis was quick to give credit to his rival: "I couldn't have gone any faster on that last stage and Ray pulled back three seconds to leave it level," said Wallis who had earlier borrowed an intercom battery from the Irish crew.

## West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners



## West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners





With 15 Category 1 cars in action, it marked the best field of pre '68 cars for several seasons and it could have been a three-way lead battle had the Lotus Cortina of Gwilym Roberts/Don James not suffered brake failure at the start of SS4. Roberts was fastest of all over the first three stages and only finished 16s adrift, while father and son Bob and Dale Gibbons claimed Class B3 in their Ford Cortina GT. Steven Higgins and Don Bramfoot took Class B1 in their Saab 96, but the Porsches of Paul Mankin/Desmond Bell and Edmund Peel/Dessie Nutt both retired, with electrical and clutch problems respectively. Other category winners included Tom Coughtrie/Calvin Cooledge (Ford Escort Mk2) in the Holton Homes Category K and Layton Waters/Kevin Bowcott (Toyota Starlet) in Category O. Coughtrie's strong run was interrupted by a puncture and then a problem with the jack. Waters was second among the two-wheel drives in the modern rally and had a decent gap over the second R.A.C. contenders, Barry Stevenson-Wheeler and Jon Pickavance (Ford Escort Mk2).

**West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship tyre partners**



**West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship television partners**

