



RACRMC Newsletter August 2023

Welcome to the August Newsletter

A lot has happened since the announcement in June of the Anglo Caledonian Rally. The Championship has had its only asphalt round of the season the Tour of Epynt and the Championship points tables are attached to this email for information.

The 2nd instalment of the entry fee money for the Roger Albert Clark Rally has passed so we have a very good indication as to the entry level for the event.

New for the revised Carlisle Stages Rally is announced below.

At the back of the newsletter are various press releases we have published recently.

Roger Albert Clark Rally

With the 2nd instalment of entry fee money now paid, I am very pleased to confirm that the event currently has 176 entries. We are still talking to a number of overseas crews so I am hopeful that this figure will be close to 180 by the end of next week.

Spectator Information is due to be published in September on the web site.

Carlisle Stages Rally

After some very good feedback after last years event about availability of accommodation we are pleased to announce that the event is moving back to H&H Auctions in Carlisle.

Therefore, Scrutineering and documentation will be taking place at H&H on Friday 20th October.

The event will start on the Friday night to tackle two stages and 10 miles before returning to H&H for the overnight halt.





The restart is again from H&H with the service area moving to Greenside and the Castle Car Park in Kielder.

Another 45 miles take place on the Saturday with the event finishing at Kielder Castle.

Regulations will be available at the beginning of September.

Anglo Caledonian Rally

After the initial announcement about the event a lot of interest has been shown for the event offering 60 to 70 miles each day with England running on the Saturday and Scotland on the Sunday.

After consideration it has been decided due to other event clashes to run the event over the 23rd / 24th November 2024 which is the club's traditional weekend for an event.

As this new event develops, we will keep publishing more in the newsletters.

Club Dinner Dance

Early notification that the end of season Dinner Dance and awards presentation will once again take place at CASA Hotel in Chesterfield on Saturday 3rd February 2024.

Booking codes and costs will be published in the next newsletter.

Press Releases:

39-mile stage to conclude 2023 Roger Albert Clark Rally

The Roger Albert Clark Rally will conclude with a mammoth 39-mile final stage, the longest gravel special stage in UK rallying for 40 years.

The stage, being called 'The Big One', will run in the early afternoon of Monday November 27 and will be the deciding stage in the marathon event. The 2023 Roger Albert Clark Rally will run from 23 to 27 November covering 350 stage miles in the forests of England, Scotland and Wales.

'The Big One' will run in the Pundershaw region of Kielder forest in Northumberland and will cover 39.22 miles. Earlier in the day, much of the stage route will be used in three stages





which will then be joined up to give the rally its longest ever special stage. It will take the leading crews around 40 minutes to complete the stage.

Rally manager Colin Heppenstall said: "No one has run a stage of this length for a very long time and it will be a real sting in the tail. A lot of people remember the long stages run on the original RAC Rally and we thought it would be good to re-create that era. The stage could have a dramatic impact on the final results!"

A similar, but shorter, Pundershaw stage was run on the 1995 Network Q RAC Rally, covering 36.59 miles. The stage was won by Carlos Sainz (Subaru Impreza 555) in 31m36s from Richard Burns (Impreza 555) and Alister McRae (Ford Escort RS Cosworth), though the rally was won by Colin McRae in his Subaru Impreza 555.

However, it is 40 years since a longer stage was run and that was in Yorkshire on the 1983 Lombard RAC Rally when SS16 in Dalby was a mammoth 40.50 miles. The stage and the rally was won by Stig Blomqvist (Audi Quattro A2) and he completed the stage, which crossed the forest drive to link other forests to Dalby, in 36m30s.

Leading contenders in this year's Roger Albert Clark Rally say that it will be a massive challenge and that tyre choice will be critical to make sure the rear tyres on the more powerful rear-wheel-drive cars can last the distance.

Pritchard produces BHRC masterclass on Epynt

Jason Pritchard secured his first Fuchs Lubricants British Historic Rally Championship victory in five years at the weekend, after storming to a convincing win at the Nigel Ferguson Fabricators Tour of Epynt (Sunday 30 July).

After a slow start, Pritchard and co-driver Phil Clarke overhauled current championship leader Nick Elliott during the rain-soaked afternoon loop of stages, to take the win and give his newly built Ford Escort MKII its perfect maiden outing.

Despite being in command for much of the morning, Elliot and Dave Price had swapped their usual FIAT 131 for an Escort MKII for the weekend and would have to settle second place, whilst Richard Jordan and James Gratton Smith secured their best BHRC result in third.

The arduous Epynt Military ranges signalled the championship's only asphalt round of the season and a small but competitive field set out to tackle almost 70 miles of challenging moorland tests.

The day would start dry and Elliott immediately took control, completing the first loop of two stages with a 12-second advantage over Pritchard who suffered an overshoot on the second test. Richard Tuthill and Stephane Prevot were a further 12 back in their Porsche 911 but were hampered from a lack of Epynt and sealed surface experience of late.





The repeat run began to see the weather change, but Elliott held Pritchard at arm's length. However, Tuthill was the first casualty of the day, putting the Porsche off the road at a famous right-hander on Burmah Road. That promoted Jordan to third as the rain descended on the Welsh mountains.

In torrential conditions, Pritchard dug deep and called on all his previous experience of the ranges to go quicker by a staggering nineteen seconds on the sixth test; and repeated the feat on the final stage to emerge from the day as a worthy winner.

"To come away with the win in the BHRC in a brand-new car is the icing on the car," he said.

"It's always good to be competing on Epynt and especially in the stunning Escort Scott Williams Motorsport have built for me. The changing conditions just added to it, and I love the challenge.

"We always enjoy the British Historic Rally Championship, and we never rally just to make up the numbers. We got more valuable mileage in the car before the Roger Albert Clark Rally in November."

Elliott was a delighted second, stating he "would have taken that [the result] at the start of the day" and his runner-up spot ensures that he strengthens his lead in the championship with just three rounds remaining in 2023.

Equally happy was Jordan who firms up his fourth in the standings with a sensational drive to third, just a small off-road excursion in the morning a blight on an otherwise perfect run.

Round one and two winners Roger Chilman and Patrick Walsh took fourth in their Escort and top Category 3 [cars between 1975-1981] spot in their MKII whilst Tom Walster and Glyn Thomas rounded out the top five in their similar machine.

Phil and Mick Squires had a smile on their faces all day long across the Epynt ranges and although having spent "99.9% of our careers on gravel", enjoyed their asphalt experience in their Escort.

David Dobson and Tudor Jenkins took seventh whilst Robin Shuttleworth and Malcolm Smithson bagged their first Category Two [cars between 1968-1975] win in the Escort MK1.

The championship now returns to the gravel at the Phil Price Memorial Woodpecker Rally, taking crews back into the forests on both sides of the Welsh border in September.

Colin & Nicola

12 August 2023

