



## RACRMC Newsletter February 2024

### Welcome to the February newsletter

The first part of the month has been very busy. With the annual awards night celebrating the winners of last season and the start of this season on the recent Riponian Stages which got the season off to a great start.

### Championship News

42 Registered contenders participated on the Riponian Stages and a full set of Championship Points are attached to this newsletter and are available on the club website.

A reminder that Entries are available for the second round of the Championship at Rally North Wales, and entries open for the third round on the 1<sup>st</sup> March the Rallynuts Severn Valley Stages

Tour of Epynt have now clarified that their event will be running on the 20/21 July 2024.

### Rally Anglo Caledonian

The outline of the event has now been published and attached to this newsletter. We are currently working towards April for the publication of the event regulations but we are looking at putting on 140 stage miles over the two days.

### Other News

Remember Memberships are due, and to keep up to date with the latest information prior to it being announced via press release you will see it here first. At the end of February non members will be removed from the email address lists.





Press Releases from the past month:

## **Lepley lands BHRC Riponian Stages Rally win**

**George Lepley took his Mitsubishi Galant VR4 to the first win of the 2024 Fuchs Lubricants British Historic Rally Championship on Sunday [11 February] with a win at the Riponian Stages Rally.**

Lepley and co-driver Dale Bowen used their four-wheel-drive machinery to great effect in the treacherous, rain-soaked conditions, to secure the second BHRC win of their career, finishing ahead of Matthew Robinson's Ford Escort MKII, who took maximum BHRC points in the process.

Adrian Hetherington would round out the top three crews home in his Escort MKII, finally able to lock in a podium result after a run of bad luck during last season's title campaign.

The Thirsk-based event would once again open the BHRC season, but crews were greeted with significant rainfall during Saturday night in the Yorkshire forests, coupled with the recent melting snow, it had left the stages with large amounts of standing water and thick mud across the three tests.

A new era of the championship would see four, four-wheel drive machines line up to tackle the series, a first in the history of the championship as the new generation of historic machinery begins to gain momentum. Not eligible for the overall title, they would still mix with the more traditional two-wheel drive cars to offer fans and crews a fascinating prospect for the 2024 season.

The Wass Moor stage kicked off the event and there was a brand new name at the head of the leaderboard; Daniel Mennell, going an impressive six seconds faster than anyone else to take an early lead. Sadly the Yorkshireman would fire his Ford Escort MKII off the road on the next test enduring significant time loss.





Normal service was resumed as the rally moved into the Cropton and Gale Rigg stages, with Lepley out front and an interesting battle opening up behind, with Robinson and co-driver Sam Collis jostling with Hetherington and co-driver Ronan O'Neil, the pair separated by just nine seconds.

Just 24 seconds split the top five and the ultra-close competition would be a theme of the event, swapping just a handful of seconds during the opening loop of stages. A returning Ben Friend and Cliff Simmons would also be in the mix in their Escort, fighting it out with last year's BHRC runners-up Nick Elliott and Dave Price in their FIAT 131 Abarth.

The afternoon loop offered a little more in the way of grip in the forests, but the stages were still tricky to master and continued to catch out the unwary throughout the day. However, Lepley would go on to keep his nose clean and secure the overall and Category 4b victory.

"It's been good, but certainly tricky out there," said Lepley.

"You could do nothing really wrong at any point and still go off the road today but it's great to be back. It's so enjoyable [the car] and nice to see the other four-wheel drives out as well".

Robinson was happy enough with maximum BHRC points to get his season off to the best possible start. Having won the event in 2022, the Yorkshire pairing knew how to master the conditions and aside from nudging a bale on the final test, kept their nose clean to win Category 3 [Cars registered from 1975 to 1981] and the top BHRC score.

"Actually, it's been a bit of a shabby day" smirked Robinson at the finish.

"It's been tough to put a stage together properly today, although it came together in the middle. But we have tried to drive `Banner style` [in reference to Steve Bannister,





Yorkshire rally ace] and short shifting, trying not to do anything too sideways. But that's not a bad start [to the season] is it?"

Hetherington rounded out the top three and a solid start to his season, whilst Friend took fourth spot and Elliott rounded out the top five, taking the FIA Category K in the process. Barry McKenna and Andy Hayes led the Irish contingent in sixth place.

In the Category Two [cars registered between 1968 and 1975] fight, it was last year's championship runners-up Jeremy Eason and Mike Reynolds who took the early advantage on the opening stage, but only by one second from reigning champion Josh Carr and co-driver Osian Owen. But the very next test saw Carr move ahead, a place he secured until the end to take the Category victory on home soil in his Ford Escort MKI. Tim Percy and Steve Pugh rounded out the top three in their similar machine.

The championship now heads to the Get Jerky Rally North Wales for the second round of the season in March, with classic stages such as Dyfi and Garthieniog set to test series contenders to the limit.

### **Fuchs Lubricants British Historic Rally Championship – Provisional Points after Round 1 – the Riponian Stages Rally**

1. Matt Robinson 31
2. Adrian Hetherington 26
3. Ben Friend 23
4. Nick Elliott 21
5. Barry McKenna 19





## Rally Anglo Caledonian

### Plans unveiled for Rally Anglo Caledonian

Outline details of the new Rally Anglo Caledonian have been confirmed for the exciting new forest rally that will feature more than 140 stage miles across two days.

The November 23-24 rally will be based in Carlisle and feature stages in Northumberland on Saturday and then over the border in southern Scotland on Sunday. The rally will be organised by the Roger Albert Clark Rally Motor Club, the same team as the Roger Albert Clark Rally, and scrutineering will be held in Carlisle during Friday.

As well as being the final double-header round of this year's Fuchs Lubricants British Historic Rally Championship, Rally Anglo Caledonian will be open to all cars including four-wheel drives. With more than 140 competitive miles, it will be easily the longest UK gravel rally in 2024, covering more than three times the length of most one-day gravel rallies in England and Scotland.

From a rally base in Carlisle, Saturday's opening day will feature more than 70 stage miles in Kershope, Buck Fell and Gowanburn. With service both at H&H Auctions in Carlisle and at Kielder Greenside, the first car is due back in Carlisle at 6:30pm.

Sunday features another 70 stage mile day using the classic Scottish stages of Castle O'er, Twiglees, Greskine and Ae, based around a new service area at H&H Auctions in Lockerbie. The first car is due to finish at Lockerbie at around 5:30pm.

The format for the event will feature two-wheel drive cars running first on the road in reverse order, followed by four-wheel drives and for much of the forest mileage the Anglo Caledonian will be the next event to use these famous forests.

Rally manager Colin Heppenstall said: "We expect to publish event regulations in April and entries will open after that. Our aim is to make the entry fee as competitive as possible for more than 140 stage miles. The new event should be a good lead in for people who are already planning to contest the 2025 Roger Albert Clark Rally and I'm pleased that we will be able to welcome all types of car to Rally Anglo Caledonian."

