

SACC Stage Rally Co-ordinators Report, November 2013

ARR Craib Scottish Rally Championship

Round 7, Colin McRae Forest Stages Rally at Aberfeldy,

As mentioned previously, the presence of Amy Williams and Sir Chris Hoy, at Aberfeldy, together with the Scottish launch of a new book on Colin McRae brought a lot of extra focus to this event with large crowds of spectators particularly at The Hermitage in Craigvinean.

There were 78 starters in the SRC event along with 12 in the British Historic counter and a total of 67 finishers. Stages generally in good condition, although punctures played a significant part in the results with David Bogie suffering his on the second stage and leader Euan Thorburn, crucially, getting his on the final test allowing David to win the event and along with it, his 5th Scottish title.

Round 8, Armstrong Galloway Hills Rally at Castle Douglas.

A specially built spectator special stage was the highlight of this event, constructed by the Armstrong family allowing great viewing for spectators and a new challenge for competitors. The stage is unique in the UK having an over and under bridge/tunnel set up and proved very popular.

71 starters and 50 finishers on a very wet day, stages well received, being new to many.

It is noted that despite a great relationship between organisers and the local forestry, the final stage in Dalbeattie had to be shortened due to poor road conditions. As in many other areas, it appears at times that FE engineers insist on turning a good road surface into an unuseable one, only days before an event.

With his championship effectively over, Euan Thorburn chose not to compete, instead concentrating on the BTRDA championship and the 3 way battle for the title on the final round in North Wales. In a winner takes all situation, Euan and Paul Beaton totally dominated the Cambrian Rally from the off, quickly establishing a 20 second lead which eventually turned into 1m 42s by the finish. Despite his closest title challenger finishing second, Euan and Paul could not be beaten for the crown, winning on a tiebreak by virtue of more wins and becoming the first Scots to win the Gold Star Championship in its 60 year history.

This victory gave them a free entry to the 3 day National section of Wales Rally GB through a link not afforded to other MSA titled series.....and again, they proved to be the class of the field, winning by over 4 minutes, setting times which were on a par with 3 times BRC winner Mark Higgins, just outside the top ten in the main WRC event and clearly demonstrating that rallying in Scotland produces a pace good enough to win anywhere in the UK.

Regular SRC competitor Steve Bannister along with Champion co -dvr Kevin Rae from Hawick also had a successful outing on the 3 day Roger Albert Clark Rally, recording their second victory on this event, by over 4 minutes. Hawick & Border CC, with help from BECC ran the service area at Hawick on the final day.

The second of 2 programmes covering the SRC was broadcast on Sunday with a prime slot at 5pm on BBC 2. This helped greatly in boosting the audience figure to 77,000, around 5% of the total audience. This will hopefully go a long way to convincing the BBC to commission the coverage in 2014. A further programme for Motors TV is in production at present.

The annual Awards Dinner takes place in Glasgow on 30th November and with ticket sales currently at 450, another great night looks in store.

Regulations for 2014 are almost ready for submission to MSA for approval, no changes are planned to vehicle eligibility or to counting events.

Blue Scottish Tarmac Championship

After the Pendragon in Cumbria in late September, attention switched to Mull in October for round 10 and rarely can there have been a better setting for motorsport, anywhere!

4 days of unbroken sunshine meant high spirits and high speeds throughout rally weekend.

100 crews took the start on Friday night with large crowds at the Dervaig split junction on stages 1 & 2.

Unfortunately an off on the Hill Road meant SS2 was cancelled for many with cars 28 onwards awarded a notional time. The expected battle between Callum Duffy and John MacCrone failed to last into Saturday after Callum left the road at Ardtun. MacCrone, in his works spec Fiesta was never out of the top 2 on any stage and maintained an advantage over a hard charging Peter Taylor in a Focus, to win by 3m 57s.

Further incidents on Gribun on Saturday led to the stage being cancelled but of greater concern was the apparent use of scanners by spectators (parked up in stage), allowing them to learn of a delay and leave the stage in clear breach of the 'Road Closure Order', causing the stage to be cancelled on safety grounds for the remaining competitors.

A very tough final leg saw many fancied runners retire with the survivors arriving to a tremendous atmosphere at the final control in Dervaig, where drams and hot Tunnocks pies were the perfect tonic!

Round 11, Crail Airfield

Another fine entry on a very cold and wet day saw some surprises in the results, an excess of power being at times unsuitable in the slippery conditions.

Alistair and Colin Inglis were victorious in their Mitsubishi ahead of Stuart Baillie with 2wd cars filling the next 3 places.

Ian and Kathryn Forgan stayed on all four wheels this time to finish 10th and clinch a very popular championship win, just ahead of Steven Hay in his 1400 Corsa, a brilliant year for the Junior.

The Championship Awards Dinner takes place this weekend at Grangemouth.

Congratulations to all at STRC in securing a new venue for rallying next year at Machrahanish Airbase near Cambelltown in Argyll. A 2 day event in the summer looks likely and we all look forward to returning to the west of Scotland for what is sure to be a success.

Dates.

Following the last SACC meeting, a request was received from Solway CC to look into the date clash on 9/10th August 2014 between the Solway Coast Rally and the Speyside Stages at Elgin.

The Speyside had moved one week to avoid a clash with the closing weekend of the Commonwealth Games, the likelihood being that any event publicity would be swamped by events in Glasgow.

After discussions with Neil Shanks and amongst 63CC the Speyside has reverted to 2nd August for 2014 but have indicated that they would wish to move away from the holiday period to the 2nd weekend for the following year.

Dave Sharp

I close by noting with great sadness the passing of the Chief Timekeeper for the Border Counties and many other events, Dave Sharp from Galashiels, who died peacefully on Thursday after a short illness.

Dave was a member of the MSA Timekeeping Panel amongst various roles and will be greatly missed as a 'father figure' in the Borders and beyond.

His sons Alan and Ian will I'm sure, continue the family S.M.A.R.T. timekeeping tradition with the same level of expertise and authority.

A service will be held at the Boders Crematorium, Melrose, this Thursday at 11 am.

Dave Robson.