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Scratching the Surface

Newark-based Jordan Road Surfacing was set up by Barry Jordan more than 25 years ago. Having worked in the industry since he left school, 'Baz' now lists a number of blue-chip companies among his clients, including several well-known supermarkets, plus the likes of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire County Councils.

"As a service provider, we're a one-stop shop," Baz told Pacenotes. "Everything required for their contracts - apart from the tarmac - is available in-house and our slogan, 'Working with you - not for you', obviously strikes a chord that has seen the company evolve into the success it is today.

As a self-confessed petrolhead, it was Baz's involvement in rallying that culminated in the Jordan Road Surfacing sponsorship of the BTRDA Rally Series which features seven of the best forest rallies that England and Wales have to offer.

Baz's love of motorsport, both on two wheels and four, dates back to his teens. Allied to a particular affinity with Ford Escorts, this led to his first rally car arriving as a result of a part-exchange deal when he was 18.

His initial foray into the world of competition occurred not far from home on a single venue event held at the former RAF base at Fulbeck in 1985. We're not privy to how he fared but it was the beginning of an active love affair with the sport!

During the past 30 years, many Escorts have passed through Baz's hands, not to mention examples of each of the 10 different Mitsubishi Lancer Evos and a Subaru Impreza formerly driven by 1991 and 1993 World Rally Champion, Juha Kankkunen.

None of them have spent more than a year in the Jordan stable before being moved on but, when a deal for a Ford Focus World Rally Car fell through, it prompted the purchase of an 'historic' specification Hillman Avenger.

Not possessing a particularly illustrious pedigree in terms of competition, no great hopes were attached to its arrival but, four years and 68 rallies later, it's still there!

A 100 per cent finishing record on all seven rounds of the 2017 BTRDA Rally Series saw the Avenger finish third overall in the two-wheel drive category, only beaten by a couple of far more powerful Ford Escorts.

This year Baz and co-driver Paul Wakely have concentrated on the Historic section of the series, winning their class by a country mile and finishing runners-up in the category overall - and the smiles are still evident!

Serious Fun!

Welcome to Pacenotes Rally Magazine's special feature on the BTRDA Rally Championships! With a focus on the hugely successful gravel series, Howard Wilcock turns back the clock to look at some of the most poignant moments in the BTRDA's history...

The BTRDA started life in 1938 as the British Trial Drivers' Association (BTDA) but as motoring and the availability of cars developed, there were many competitors who wished to participate in longer and more arduous motorsport events. To meet this demand, the BTRDA Rallies Committee was formed in 1953 and created the BTRDA Gold Star and Silver Star Rally Championships.

The original championship events included the RAC Rally, Circuit of Ireland, Morecambe Rally, Scarborough Rally, Scottish Rally and Rally of the Dams. These were the most challenging rallies in the UK at the time and were mostly long distance, endurance road events.

This was the era of British sports cars such as the Triumph and the Austin Healey. At the end of the 1950s, a very young Stuart Turner was the champion navigator for three successive years. As the championship developed, the events were changed to include many of the most competitive night-time road rallies in the UK including the Express & Star, Mini Miglia and the London Rally.

The 1960s

By the 1960s, most of the rally cars being used were a reflection of the cars being sold on the high street, but with relatively simple modifications to make them more suitable for use on night-time road rallies. Moving through the decade, the most successful rally cars were Ford Anglias and Mini Coopers, through the Cortina GTs to the Lotus Cortinas and early Mk1 Escorts.

In 1967, Jim Bullough and navigator Don Barrow won the BTRDA Gold



1991 GS Holfield

Star, Motoring News and RAC Rally championships in a Mk1 Lotus Cortina. As a reward for his British title, Bullough got one of the first Escort Twin Cams for 1968.

This was a period when British rallying was moving from road to stage rallies and Bullough showed that he was part of that change by finishing third on the RAC Rally that year, thus helping Ford to win the European manufacturers' title.

In the mid 1960s, some events started to incorporate timed 'Special Stages' in addition to a competitive night road rally. A typical example of these combined road and stage events was the 1968 Dukeries Rally.

This started on the Saturday evening with six special stages using private roads (including a then unused Donington Park). A brief supper halt was followed by a full 200-mile Derbyshire / Staffordshire road rally with 'selectives' timed to the second.



1992 GS Steve Petch

At dawn, the event changed back to a stage event and ran six stages in Sherwood Forest before a lunchtime finish at the Olde Bell at Barnby Moor.

Interestingly, on this event in 1968, the leader was Brian Bell until he crashed out during the last of the night-time selectives. Fast-forward 51 years and he is still actively competing on BTRDA Rally Series events!

The 1970s

By 1970, competitors and cars were beginning to specialise and 1972 was the last Gold Star Rally Championship to use both stage and road events. The last of the multi-tasking champions were Will Sparrow and Nigel Raeburn in their Mini Cooper S.

From 1973, the Gold Star Championship was contested exclusively on stage rallies, whilst the Silver Star Championship continued for road rally competitors and often ran alongside and complemented the Motoring News Road Rally Championship.

Both these championships were very popular throughout the 1970s and 1980s with good events and huge entries attracting some of the best competitors from around the UK.

Sponsors

Commercial sponsors have been an important element of stage rally championships since the 1970s. The original title sponsor of the BTRDA Gold Star Championship in the 1970s and 1980s was Esso and Esso Uniflow followed by European Motorsport.

In the 1990s, it was Ashley

>>>



Graham Middleton Former Gold, Silver & 1400 Champion!

"My best memory was in the early '80s when I competed in the Woodpecker Stages which was my first forest rally. I had been doing the Motoring News and Welsh Championship road rallies so it was quite a bit different to what I had been used to."

"We entered the 1300 class and registered for the 1300 Championship. We were seeded at 50-something, and were pleasantly surprised to finish in a good overall position and win our class."

"We continued to have great results throughout the season which then allowed us to have our first BTRDA Championship win. We were very surprised to win the largest trophy at the table. I have very good memories of that year and how welcoming the whole of the championship organisers were, from top to bottom."

"My second best memory was to win the Gold Star Championship. It was something that I had my eye on whilst competing in some of the rounds before deciding to make a serious effort to win the championship. Luckily for me, we won it against some stiff opposition in 2004."

"Following that, the Silver Star was my next target. That came in 2007 and again it was a very competitive class and a pleasure to win."

"I was then asked to compete in the new, very competitive 1400 category in an attempt to make a little bit of history. I embraced all of the banter that came in the way of 'could the old man beat the youngsters?' We managed to do it in 2009!"

"It was great to achieve so much and I must give thanks to those who braved the passenger seat in steering me to the success – thanks to Ella Flynn, John O'Gorman, Paul Morris and Gemma Price. I'd still like to win another title before I retire so will continue to compete in the modern BTRDA events!"



1997 GS Litterer



2001 GS Wetton



2002 GS Perrott

Competition Exhausts followed by Peugeot Sport. Since then, Clear System Solutions, Dunlop, Silverstone Tyres, Get Connected, REIS Insurance, Ravenol and now Jordan Road Surfacing have all backed the series.

Their financial support has enabled the BTRDA Stage Rally Championships to develop and flourish while helping to provide coverage and publicity for the championships as well as pay for some of the essential admin costs.

For 40 years, Tynemouth Computer Services (TCS) has been providing computerised results for the various championship events. As the BTRDA Rally Series has grown in popularity, TCS has become an indispensable partner, undertaking the huge task of collating the championship class, category and overall points after each event.

Martin Liddle and David James have an excellent results archive of events and championships which can be found online.

One-Make Series

The BTRDA rally championships have been a natural home for the one-make stage rally competitions targeted at the club competitor. These have included the Escort Mexicos, Escort 1300s, Faberge Fiestas, the Astra and Nova Challenges, some rounds of the Lada Challenge, various Peugeot Cups and Trophies, Ford KA Rally Championships and more recently the revival of the Fiesta ST Trophy.

1979 was a particularly busy year in this respect with Ford promoting both the Ford 1300 Championship and the Faberge Fiesta Ladies Championship which created a huge demand for entries on some events.

Former British Autotest Champion, Trevor Smith, was the Gold Star Rally Champion twice in the early 1980s but that was the last time that the

ubiquitous MkII Ford Escort was used to win this title.

In 1983, an Audi Quattro driven by Darryl Weidner became the first four-wheel drive car to win a BTRDA Rally Championship, but was followed by three years of Gold Star Champions all driving Opels; 1994 Clinton Smith / Stuart Dytham (Ascona 400), 1995 Vince Wetton / Chris Allen (Ascona 400) and 1996 Pete Doughty / Lyn Jenkins in a Manta 400.

Because of a rising demand from club competitors, the BTRDA Rallies Committee introduced a BTRDA Clubman's Stage Rally Championship in 1987, which placed more emphasis on lower cost forest rallies.

Ron Crellin, Phil Short, Chris Lord, Stephen Bye, Mike Sones and Jon Ballinger have all had a big influence on the work of the Rallies Committee over the years.

The idea of 'reverse seeding', which was first used in the mid 1980s, came about at the BTRDA Rally Committee from a suggestion by Phil Short. It was based on the idea of creating a build-up of tension and excitement as the final competitors (who were the likely winners) approach the finish of the event.

Likewise, the Rallies Committee also developed a 'second per mile' time handicap system and later a bonus points system to try and balance out the performance difference between the various rally cars and, thus,



2004 GS Middleton

That year also saw Ron Beecroft and Mike Kidd crowned as the final champions of the very competitive Silver Star and Motoring News Road Rally Championship, the demise of which is still much lamented.

Also in 1987, Ian and Pat Beveridge became the first BTRDA Gold Star Champions driving a Metro 6R4 and that model continued to be the dominant championship winning car for the following five years.

increase the level of competition and participation.

Ian Butcher (Gold Star Champion, 1994/95) was Chairman when the BTRDA became the first rally championship to switch to Formula 2, and Richie Holfeld (Gold Star Champion, 1991) was Chairman when the current successful format was adopted.

Organisers

The BTRDA Rally Championships are organised and administered by the BTRDA Rallies Committee, a specialist committee of BTRDA Ltd, which has always encouraged the involvement of competitors and former competitors. Mike Broad,



2003 GS Burton



2005 GS Chitman



2006 GS Gardener



2007 GS Nicholls



2008 GS Hunter

The 1990s

1993 was a year of consolidation for UK stage rallying with the Gold Star and Clubman's Rally Championships running on the same calendar of events.

The BTRDA Rally Championships maintained their popularity throughout the 1990s with eight successful years (1993 - 2000) when the Gold Star Championship, supported by Peugeot Sport, was exclusively for front-wheel drive Formula 2 cars, whilst the Silver Star Championship was contested by non-homologated two and four-wheel drive cars.

This change was a great success and attracted competitive fields of up to 70 F2 cars in addition to the traditional mix of two and four-wheel drive rally cars.

Ricky Evans and Ian Butcher were the Gold Star champions in both 1994 and 1995 when a hard-driven Peugeot 205 GTi was initially the car to have. This changed to an Astra GSi for a couple of years and by 1998, when Adam Kent and Andy Bull were Gold Star champions, it was a Peugeot 306 S16.

Nick Elsmore used a Nissan Sunny to win in 1999 and in the final year of F2 cars, Martin Meadows and Ian Oakey won using a Proton Compact and were chased by a whole host of Peugeot 106 GTis. Whatever the make and model of car, one constant throughout the Formula 2 era was the very close competition.

Andy Burton also made his mark during this period, winning the Silver Star Championship in 1995 and again in 2000. (Who could forget his hilarious speech at the Championship Awards presentation where he brought out all the mechanical parts of the car that had "stopped him winning" during the

year?!)

It was partly Andy's success on events in 2000 which led the Rallies Committee to review the format of the stage rally championships for the new millennium.

The Noughties

In 2001, to reflect rally car trends and competitor demand, the format was changed, with the Gold Star Championship again being open to all stage rally cars, the Silver Star Championship exclusively for the two-wheel drive cars, and the creation of the BTRDA 1400 Championship.

The aim was to encourage participation in forest stage rallying by providing a range of well supported and competitive rally championships which were accessible to the clubman competitor. The BTRDA 1400 Championship quickly became very popular and developed a devoted following. Some of the event results achieved by 1400 crews have been truly amazing.

It was around this time that the term BTRDA Rally Series was introduced to better describe the growing number of championships and categories. The rally championships' Golden Jubilee year in 2002 was one of the most popular with 210 drivers and 230 co-drivers registered, including a very young Jari-Matti Latvala, and full entries on every event.

Co-ordinators

The role of the BTRDA Rally Championship Co-ordinator has also developed and expanded over time.

During the 1980s, the official Championship Co-ordinator for the Stage Rally Championship was Ron Crellin with Mike Sones undertaking

this role for the Silver Star Road Rally Championship. Since then, the BTRDA Stage Rally Championship co-ordinators have included Chris Lord, Phil Short, Keith Baud, Andrew Kellitt, Howard Wilcock, Andy Bull, Steve Gregg and more recently Ian Arden.

Benefits of Success

One of the main reasons for running any championship is to bring together competitors so that they can compete against each other on a number of similar events over a season. This competition creates a great sense of camaraderie between the crews and their supporters which is often illustrated by the help that rival teams give to each other during the season.

A key benefit of being part of a successful championship is that bringing together a large number of competitors means that the championship events become financially viable. It's all about the numbers!

The current breakeven point for a UK forest event has gradually increased over the years and is now around 110 entries. Therefore, being part of a championship that is able to attract 60, 70 or even 80 crews is a huge advantage to any rally organiser and means that they can plan their event with confidence.

In turn, this should mean that they are able to set the event entry fee at a 'reasonable' level - although stage rallying is never going to be cheap! A bumper championship entry also makes it a little easier to attract enough marshals and officials, without whose support rallying would simply not happen.

The individual rallies that have been included in the BTRDA Rally Series over the past 66 years are one of the key reasons for its success.



RICKY EVANS

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"I suppose this goes back to 1994. Peugeot supported me and asked if I would be interested in building a 205 to compete in what was known at the time as the Peugeot Sport Formula 2 Series which ran as part of the BTRDA Championship. We decided to put a car together and went on to win the series and also claimed the Gold Star award. Then, in 1995, we thought we would give it another go but this time try to win all of the events that year. We did just as we said and made it a clean sweep! Personally, the BTRDA has always had the best organised clubman events hence the reason why my sons, Matthew and Dan, have followed in my footsteps and are currently taking part in the championship with a 205!"

What is your favourite BTRDA memory?

"For me it has to be the 1995 Woodpecker Rally! Why? I started as car one on the road, with the number one on my doors and I remember being on the start ramp waiting to be waved off by the Lord Mayor. I was sitting there thinking to myself, 'wow...is this what it feels like to be a world rally driver about to start an event with the crowds gathered?' It was an amazing moment!"



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2009 GS Wright



2010 GS Perez



2011 GS Burton

Since 1993, the BTRDA Rally Series has had a more settled calendar of events with only small changes from year to year.

Some of the traditional BTRDA events, such as the Dukeries and the Somerset Stages, are no longer included because they are unable to run as forest stage rallies. But events such as the Malcolm Wilson Rally, the Nicky Grist Stages (formerly Quinton), the Woodpecker and the Plains rallies have all been part of the BTRDA Rally Series for more than 30 years.

The 'specification' for a successful BTRDA Rally Series event has not changed much over recent years and is really quite straightforward. The aim is to provide a one-day, 45 stage mile event with good stages that competitors enjoy.

Time is a very valuable for the vast majority of competitors, service crews, officials and marshals so any event needs to be structured to make the best use of the time needed to participate.

All the formalities of scrutineering and documentation should be completed on a Friday afternoon or evening and the competition should take place within an eight-hour envelope, finishing by late Saturday afternoon so that competitors can travel home on the Saturday evening and spend Sunday at home with their families.

Volunteers, Trophies & Champions

Just like the BTRDA, all the individual event organisers are volunteers who make a huge commitment to their events in order to provide the platform for the rally crews to compete. Unfortunately, the recent 'Rally Future' Stage Safety Requirements, whilst necessary, have significantly increased the burden on the event organisers.

One of the most coveted trophies

that the BTRDA award each year is the Bill Turner Trophy for the 'best event in the BTRDA Rally Series'. A list of the events and clubs that have won this award can be found in the archive section of the BTRDA Rally Series website.

Andy Burton and the Peugeot Cosworth became synonymous with the BTRDA Rally Series, not only by winning the Gold Star Championship in 2003 and 2011, but also for winning many BTRDA events, including a remarkable run of victories on his home event, the Woodpecker Stages.

Graham Middleton also completed a unique feat of being Gold Star Champion in 2004, Silver Star Champion in 2007 and finally the BTRDA 1400 Champion in 2009.

Jon Ballinger has competed in the BTRDA Silver Star Championship for many years and became a triple BTRDA champion by winning in 2002, 2003 and 2010 in his trusty Opel Manta. The feat was matched by Matthew Robinson who was Silver Star Champion in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

During this period, Julian Wilkes and Will Rutherford were the dominant crew in the BTRDA 1400 Championship, winning in both 2012 and 2013, and achieving some memorable results way above what was expected of a 1400 Nova.

A roll of honour of all the BTRDA Rally Champions over the past 65 years is on page 46.

Rally First

The BTRDA Rally First Championship was introduced in 2008. This innovative idea was to create a category for essentially standard cars based on any of the popular small hatchbacks that are readily available at a modest price.

Only very limited modifications are permitted to keep costs to a

minimum. Better to spend a limited rallying budget on competing on events and gaining valuable experience, rather than buying expensive performance modifications which are often unreliable and may only help you to go off quicker!

Rally First cars are very economical in fuel and tyres and have generally been more reliable than other more modified rally cars. They also do very little damage to the gravel roads, so they are relatively environmentally friendly.

This idea quickly caught on and by 2011, there were up to 20 of the Rally First cars on events, some of which were being hired by relatively new competitors as an ideal introduction to stage rallying.

Dave Bennett and Alistair McNeil were the first BTRDA Rally First champions in 2008 and again in 2009. They went on to win the BTRDA 1400 Championship in 2015.

Challenges

For eight years, until 2017, the BTRDA Rallies Committee was led by Norman Robertson and had to successfully negotiate significant challenges within UK stage rallying, the BTRDA Rally Series and the Committee.

The restriction on the stage rally running order imposed suddenly by the MSA in 2015 at the time of the Stage Rally Safety Review was a significant blow to the BTRDA Rally Series, especially competitors in the popular BTRDA 1400 and Rally First championships as well as those with older Historic spec rally cars.

These cars were - and still are - an essential part of any BTRDA rally entry. The decision was imposed without consultation and was a knee-jerk reaction without justification or evidence base. It soon had an effect on competitor numbers and by the start of the following season, there was a 50 per cent reduction

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JASON LEPLEY

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"Because it's the biggest National Rally Championship in the UK, not to mention the longest standing with the best reputation and best supported. If you win in the BTRDA, then you really did deserve to win. That's no disrespect to championships such as the BRC but the numbers of competitors are very low so the winner is usually whoever has the least issues and the gaps between the top five are huge. Along with the costs aspect, time wise and financially the BTRDA offers good value compared to the BRC. The BTRDA has moved with the times and constantly change or create new classes, for example, the new R2 class, historic class, 1400s and B13 for modified Group N cars."

What is your favourite BTRDA memory?

"Although I competed and won, seeing my son George win the Silver Star Championship last year in an underdog car, and being the youngest ever person to do so, was a great father and son moment. It's a great sense of achievement."



STEVE BROWN

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"When I did the BTRDA, they had a good F1000 Championship with lots of competition with the classes being full and all having the same cars. The BTRDA do a brilliant job of looking after all competitors from the top of the entry list down to the bottom."

What is your favourite BTRDA memory?

"Winning the championship in 2010 on the last stage of the last round at the Cambrian Rally. It was a good battle all year, meaning it literally went to the last stage of the season."



2012 GS Gardener



2013 GS Thorburn



2014 GS Perez



DYLAN DAVIES

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"The BTRDA is achievable to the working man. We only need to take the Friday off from work and go rally. Most other championships rely on nearly a week away."

Favourite BTRDA memory?

"It has to be the Quinton Stages in 2011. It was our first year in a four-wheel drive car and we battled hard with Tom Cave and Jamie Anderson in Group N. We managed to finish fifth overall and won Group N."



ED FOSSEY

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"The biggest draw to competing in the BTRDA is the competitiveness of the entire series, regardless of what class you're in. There's competition from Rally First all the way up to the Gold Star class, and this is something that you cannot find in any other series across the UK. The range of events is also world class with differing forests around England and Wales offering very differing stages."

What is your favourite BTRDA memory?

"My favourite BTRDA memory is probably of the 2017 Trackrod Rally when we won the 1400 championship. The event itself is my favourite on the calendar with a great mix of fast and technical sections, and to be able to win the title on the very last stage of the event was an amazing feeling! To be able to repay Mum and Dad and everyone at Yokohama, Harrow Wood Farm, TS Tools and SVP for all their hard work throughout the year was a great feeling."



2015 GS Weston



2016 GS Payne



2017 GS Petch

(approx. 25 crews) in the 1400 and Rally First entries.

This had a detrimental effect on the BTRDA events as well as the BTRDA Rally Series. It was not just an issue of running first through the stages, but also the loss of identity and the camaraderie that had been created in these groups.

Thankfully, this restriction was rescinded midway through 2018 and this year more competitors have returned to the BTRDA 1400 Championship, but unfortunately the BTRDA Rally First numbers have not yet recovered.

Competitors cannot simply be 'switched on' and from making the decision to compete on stage rallies, it takes significant time and money to get both the car and crew to the start line.

Fiestas and R2

The Fiesta ST Trophy has been a valuable addition to the BTRDA Rally Series since 2016, and thanks particularly to the enthusiasm of Ian Arden, it has become an ideal starting point for forest stage rallying.

It was also a precursor to the introduction of the BTRDA Rallye R2 Cup in 2018 which has been a great success, with 15 crews registered this year. The more modern range of R2 cars are perceived as more relevant by younger competitors and the Rallye R2 Cup will certainly be an important element in the future of the BTRDA Rally Series.

Current Champions

The current Gold Star and Silver Star Champion drivers both have a long-standing association with

the BTRDA Rally Championships. For Matt Edwards, his success in 2018 was the culmination of a long journey which began back in 2004 when he first started to compete on BTRDA events in an old 1300 Astra.

Since then he has become the BTRDA 1400 Champion and English Rally Champion in 2010 in a MG ZR, and then, in 2012, he was the runner-up in the Gold Star Championship with a Mitsubishi Evo.

2018 started with a difficult result on his home event, the Cambrian Rally, but from then on Matt and co-driver Darren Garrod dominated with four event wins and maximum points on the Rallynuts, Plains, Nicky Grist and the Woodpecker to give them an unassailable lead. Matt and Darren had a stellar rallying year, also securing the British Rally Championship title.

George Lepley and Tom Woodburn (Fiesta R2) are the 65th BTRDA Silver Star Champions, and at the age of 21, George is the youngest ever winner. He was quick and consistent throughout the year with six class wins in six events, and wrapped up the BTRDA Rallye R2 Cup on the Woodpecker Stages.

They often finished events in the top 20 and on the Carlisle Stages, they were 14th and the highest placed 2WD crew. In recognition of his domination of the inaugural BTRDA R2 Cup and for being the youngest ever BTRDA Silver Star Rally Champion, George also received the Phil Price Trophy for Rally Man of the Championship.

However, George was not the first 'Lepley' to compete in the BTRDA Rally Championships. His father, Jason, was a serious competitor in

the Silver Star Championships in the 1990s and grandfather, Graham Lepley, was runner up in the Gold Star Championship in the mid-70s.

2019 Committee

The present committee, under the Chairmanship of Neil Cross, continues to include a number of current and former competitors as well as experienced event organisers and officials. So it has first-hand experience of present-day stage rallying and is able to understand what competitors want.

The BTRDA is always on the lookout for new members to join its Rallies Committee – so, if you have an interest in helping to drive the future of the most successful Rally Championships in the UK, then get in touch!

The 2019 Jordan Road Surfacing BTRDA Rally Series is the 66th consecutive year of the BTRDA Gold Star and Silver Star Rally Championships. It is open to all Motorsport UK licence holders and includes a wide range of competition classes to ensure that all stage rally cars are accommodated.

As well as the Gold Star, Silver Star, BTRDA 1400 and Rally First Championships, there is the Historic Cup, Production Cup, the BTRDA Rally R2 Cup and the Fiesta ST Trophy.

The 2019 calendar includes seven one-day forest rallies with the best five scores to count, and plans for 2020 are already being discussed.

Other Series

While the gravel rally series is among the most successful motorsport championships in the UK, the BTRDA encompasses many other motorsport events too.

The association also holds the permit for the popular Prottyre Motorsport UK Asphalt Championship as well as a host of grassroots events that include autosolos, autotests, car trials, sporting trials and rallycross.

Whether you want to compete in your everyday road car or a potent high-powered rally car, there's something there for everyone. Check out www.btrda.com to find out more!



2018 Gold Star Champion Matt Edwards

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MATTHEW HIRST

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"Firstly, the pace within the championship is fierce. There are around 15 competitors all capable of being the first non-R5/WRC on a good day. If you really study the results, you will see that it's often just seconds here and there that decide positions. That means you really have to focus on the little things and by doing that, you can really up your level of performance. Secondly, the variety of events. There are lots of classic stages and the fact that all the events are one day works for everyone involved. Thirdly, the championship offers generous junior driver incentives and prizes. Finally, the camaraderie and just general enjoyment you get from competing in what is a welcoming championship with a tight knit loyal bunch of competitors and organisers is a big draw."

Favourite BTRDA memory?

"Putting aside personal memories of the championship, you'd be hard pressed to look past Andy Burton's Peugeot. It's quite possibly the coolest thing ever! However, I'm sure that will be mentioned elsewhere, so for a left of field mention I'd suggest Dave Brick in his 1400 Nova. I don't know him, but I have seen quite a few videos of him doing some certifiable things in that car and I've got nothing but respect for him for putting on such a good show."



STEPHEN PETCH

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"The championship suits my lifestyle with work commitments and not too much time away. It also has a great selection of gravel rallies but it's a shame they're not a bit longer."

Favourite BTRDA memory?

"My favourite memory is probably winning the Trackrod Rally because it was local and my first BTRDA rally victory."

Rallies Chair: Neil Cross

I've been Chair of the BTRDA Rallies Committee for a little over 18 months now, having been a member since 2011 when the event I clerk, the Nicky Grist Stages, won the coveted Bill Turner Trophy for 'Best Event'...

I sat on the committee as a representative of the events in that first year and then stood for election as a member in my own right. When the previous Chair, Norman Robertson, stood down, I stepped forward.

The BTRDA Rallies Committee runs the BTRDA Rally Series, and the Motorsport UK English Rally Championship on behalf of the BTRDA. We meet three times a year where we discuss all things championship, from what events will form the series through to organising the awards evening. As Chair, I have responsibility for all the budgets and I agree the final arrangements with the sponsors and supporters.

We are a small committee when you consider what we organise and will always welcome willing volunteers. One volunteer is worth 10 pressed men, as they say!

As I already mentioned, my involvement with the Committee started when I represented the Nicky Grist Stages way back in 2011 as Clerk of the Course. I have been Clerk for 10 years now, having first marshalled on the event in 1986 when it was known as the Nicolet.

The event is now celebrating its 40th running, 30 years if which it has been a round of the BTRDA Rally Series and 10 years of which it's had sponsorship from Nicky Grist.

As Chair of the Rally Series and a Clerk of the Course, it's important that I'm out and about supporting other events, including those outside of the championship. To that end, I'm often out marshalling in various guises, be it in a safety car, or running a time control or a radio point.

However, some of our competitors get to see me in another role. Along with my brother, Pete, we run a fully licensed Motorsport UK Recovery Unit – call sign 'Tunnel Recovery'.

We started life as Rover 27, nearly



30 years ago when Pete brought an ex-Electricity Board Series 3 Land Rover. Since then, we have used a couple of Range Rovers and Discoveries, and used the call sign 'Quinton Recovery' during that time. Our current call sign comes from my time working at the Channel Tunnel. Our normal radio call sign is 'Cheriton'.

We have covered events from local single venues through to the BTRDA Rally Series, the old ANCRO National Championship, British Rally Championship and the World Rally Championship's Wales Rally GB. We have also provided cover at several WRC teams' pre-event tests.

What do we do and how do we do it?

Motorsport UK set out what kit we have to carry and what training we need to do gain our licence to operate. Basically, we carry stops and chains, fire extinguishers and first aid kit. We also have suspended tow facilities.

As a Recovery Unit, we are there to support our rescue colleagues should they need to attend an incident. Thankfully, these aren't too often but we can assist with vehicle stabilisation and casualty extraction.

Our main role is to remove stricken

competitors who have suffered a mechanical breakdown or have 'run out of talent' and parked their car in the undergrowth.

Our record for being on duty was at a Woodpecker event. We signed on at 7am and during the running of the stage, we attended the scene of a car fire with the Rescue Unit. Then we spent five hours recovering a car, eventually leaving the forest at 2am. After that, we were back on duty at another stage at 7.30am the following day!

Sometimes we work with other units to complete a difficult or tricky recovery. Each unit has gone through the same training and carries the same basic kit so it makes working with others fairly seamless.

When it comes to competitors, we have had a number of repeat customers over the years. One competitor we recovered twice on one event and then once again on the next event!

We can often be found 'resting our eyelids' during an event but rest assured, we can spring into action and be ready in a moment!

Neil Cross

Chair, BTRDA Rallies Committee



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The Rise of the BTRDA



It was an intriguing opportunity when Pacenotes Magazine invited me to write my column this month about the golden days of the British Trial and Rally Drivers Association (BTRDA)...

WORDS
MARTIN HOLMES

IMAGES
MARTIN HOLMES RALLYING

To my surprise, I realised that I had never really known very much about the BTRDA when I was competing in British rallying, even though I had been in the thick of the action. I could even say that the BTRDA was a forgotten championship, even if it is now in its 66th year; it is the oldest rally championship in the land.

The British Rally championship started operations in 1958, the Motoring News championship in 1961 but the BTRDA began in 1953 and for a long time, the qualifying events largely overlapped. Until the Forestry Commission opened its property to motorsport in the '60s, the essence of rallying in mainland Britain had been night rallying on open roads, held in locations where the roads were less crowded.

In the days before the internet arrived, the medium which held the sport together was the Motoring News weekly newspaper and outside the major international rallies, the centre of the national sport was the Motoring News road rally series, helped by commercial support from Castrol.

It was a crowded sport in which the leading national championship rallies of the day counted for at least two of the championships – indeed more than two as the BTRDA series was itself split up into two different series, the Gold and the Silver series. The media world ensured that the MN series was the major interest source of the sport in those days but basking in reflected glory was BTRDA.



MIDNIGHT AT THE 1971 CILWENDE RALLY

Welsh Road Rallying

Wales was the active area of the British Isles for night closed road rallying, a sport that was so popular that compulsory systems of allocations of roads became necessary. All over the Principality it was not just the competitors who rushed around the countryside at night – almost as many cars were manned by marshals who dashed from one location to set up their next control.

And then, on the bigger events, there were the fans dashing from one exciting spot to the next. Some rallies were spectator meccas, not the least was the Newcastle Emlyn based Cilwende Rally.

On the nearby Nutcracker Rally (a typical joint MN and BTRDA event) my driver was Alun Rees

from South Wales in a Mini Cooper S. We were doing fine until the car suddenly stopped.

"Driveshaft again," he exclaimed. As I collected my maps hoping for a passing spectator to take me to safety, I found Alun joking with a local farmer.

"I know him well, in fact I retired here on a rally last weekend." What broke that time? "That was a driveshaft as well, and it failed in exactly the same spot on this road!"

Wales has some splendid if sometimes very testing rally roads. Virtually the highest road in Wales, the Bwlch-y-Groes (the Pass of the Cross), was frequently used on road rallies, very close to the family home of Elfyn Evans.

On one frozen night in 1965, the Shunpiker Rally used this road. A 'shunpiker' was a traveller in Wales who took to side roads in olden days to avoid paying the tolls at the turnpike gates. It was so icy that many crews, including our Mini Cooper 998 could only climb the pass in reverse, at night, up a road on the edge of an unguarded drop down to a valley.

It was only 50 years later, when Rally GB used this road as a daylight road section, did we discover how dangerous it had been. The road had now been extensively barriered, but the daylight now allowed competitors to see what a spectacular part of Wales this was.

The night rallies were spread over many other areas of Britain, one of the most attractive was in South West England. One night we came to a halt with a detached tie bar on our Cooper S on a Plymouth Rally and hobbled off to seek refuge off rally route in a farmyard. We switched off the engine and heard a lot of gun fire. Did they hate rally drivers so much?



WORKS PREPARED ONE-LITRE HILLMAN IMP OF TRIPLE CHAMPIONS COLIN MALKIN AND JOHN BROWN (BTRDA GOLD STAR, BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP AND MOTORING NEWS SERIES 1968)



WELL USED MINI COOPER S OF ALUN REES (RALLY OF THE VALES 1969)



EARLY RALLY EXPERIENCES FOR TONY POND AT THE 1968 NUTCRACKER RALLY



BWLCH-Y-GROES FINALLY VISIBLE IN DAYLIGHT ON WALES RALLY GB 2018

>>> Eventually the firearms bearing farmers found us quivering in the car. It seemed we had interrupted their weekend vigil of shooting the vermin in the farmyard! They happily welded up the car's subframe for us, enough for us to drive to civilisation.

The character of the roads in Devon were the high banks on either side. It was like driving all night through tunnels. Rallying round the country taught us the character of the people around the country.

Every northern rally finished at some large country club estate which had obtained local licences to sell beer to competitors so they could drink to celebrate the arrival of dawn and await the publication of the results.

Yorkshire rallies were popular, long, high-speed moorland roads which meant that for navigators it was hard to get lost as there were very few junctions. Crews from the south of the country

were few and far between up there.

When Paul Faulkner (from Waterloo in Hampshire) and I (from Woking) won the Illuminations in Lancashire, we were treated like friendly aliens! We made friendships which lasted a lifetime and we learned so much about our country.

Road to Stage

The BTRDA gradually replaced road rallies with stage rallying at the end of the '60s, but before then the road rallies, whether they were national championship, Motoring News or BTRDA events, attracted competitors who had considerable experience of foreign events.

Semi professional high speed road rallying had a relatively short lifespan. Rallying underwent a metamorphosis in the '70s when the fuel crisis brought British road motorsport to a standstill, and as the sport waited to start up again, new

organisational controls were imposed. These were not helped by the imposition of a new open road overall speed limit of 50 miles per hour (80kph), the transition from major events to special stage events was inevitable.

The BTRDA championship survived this transition and nowadays they aim themselves firmly on stage rallying for amateur competitors - their Gold Star series for drivers of four-wheel drive cars and the Silver series for two-wheel drive cars.

The old times were glorious days while we had them. The recently enacted public road closing opportunities are being studied to discover if any of the classic night rally roads could now be run competitively in daylight, maintaining the driving delights while providing the chance to see the countryside for the first time.



Malcolm Gibbs and Randal Morgan, Gold Star and Silver Star Champions, also Motoring News Champions, 1966



COLIN MCRAE ON BTRDA

Colin McRae only ever contested one round, the 1988 Border Auto Developments Rally (Border Counties), where he and Derek Ringer took victory in a RED Ford Sierra Cosworth.

Pictured: Colin McRae/Derek Ringer - 1988 Border Auto Developments Rally - Craik Forest // pro-rally.co.uk

Current Hyundai World Rally Team driver, Andreas Mikkelsen, has a bend in Greystoke Forest named after him. It's where he crashed his Ford Focus WRC on the Malcolm Wilson Rally in 2007. The location is hardly recognisable today as the trees have been felled!

Richard Burns contested four BTRDA rounds between 1988 and 1991, winning his class on both the 1989 Cambrian Rally in a Toyota Corolla GT and the 1991 York National Rally in a Peugeot 205 GTi.

Jari-Matti Latvala contested four rounds of the 2002 series - the Dukeries, Quinton, Plains and Cambrian. His best result came with second place on the Cambrian at the wheel of a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 6.

The 1979 BTRDA Gold Star Series opener, the Dukeries National Rally, attracted no fewer than 270 entries all vying for a place on the start list that was limited to 130 cars. How times have changed!



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Photos by
www.pro-rally.co.uk

Looking back at the BTRDA series over the past quarter of a century, there's been plenty of changes in terms of both crews and cars. Phil James reports...



2002 NHFR: JOEL/WOOD



2004 CAMBRIAN: JOEL/WOOD



2011 WOODPECKER: JOEL/WOOD

It's not surprising really. What is surprising is that throughout this period of time, one particular crew, Ian Joel and Graeme Wood in a Ford Escort Cosworth, have been a familiar sight on BTRDA rounds.

Since competing together for the first time on the 1995 Wyedean Rally, the pair have started close to 100 BTRDA rounds together in one of two Ford Escort Cosworths.

The only year in which they didn't contest any BTRDA rounds was 2010 when they dabbled with some tarmac events but that didn't last. The draw of gravel rallying soon pulled them back into the forests and their love affair with the BTRDA series continues to this day.

As with most things in life, it hasn't all been plain sailing and they've experienced some ups and a few downs along the way. Indeed, it was one of those downs that could have put paid to their rally careers, and more besides, but thankfully they survived to tell the tale.

Well, Graeme can, but Ian, whose helmet split after hitting the roll cage, can't remember a single thing about the whole of that fateful day that ended with him being hospitalised in Scarborough.

The day in question was Saturday 6 April, 2002, and the event was the North Humberside Forest Rally. Entering a tightening left hand bend in Cropton at

120mph and braking, the car was still travelling at 98mph when it hit a tree.

It wasn't just the end of their rally, it was the end of that particular car, which was then replaced by the one they still compete in today.

Another 'down' came on the final round of the 1999 series, the Cambrian Rally, when a '10 pence' mechanical failure left them stranded on the road section en-route to the start of the opening stage. They'd hoped for a good result in order to pip Brian Bell and Paul Spooner for the title but it wasn't to be.

Such incidents are brushed off as part and parcel of the sport as they have far more positives to look back on. Winning the Somerset in that 1999 campaign is obviously one of them and more recently their runners-up finish on this year's Malcolm Wilson Rally is another.

The positives clearly outweigh the negatives though and one of the biggest positives for Ian and Graeme is the way each round is formatted. For most events, together with their long-standing service crew, Paul Alderson and Dave Hurst, they leave



2015 TRACKROD: JOEL/WOOD

their Lancashire base on a Friday afternoon and are back home with their families on a Saturday evening.

They enjoy all the rallies on the calendar, but some more than others. Both of them like the Trackrod, despite it often using Cropton, while Ian singles out the Nicky Grist and Graeme the Woodpecker and Cambrian.

They both miss the Carlisle and the Somerset rallies, despite the long journey, but suggest that the current crop of events contains too many stages in Wales. As a national championship, they feel it should have a more geographical spread, including a round in Scotland, and put forward the Border Counties as a suitable candidate.

Notwithstanding that, they both reckon the championship benefits from having some of the UK's best stages, Radnor being a particular favourite of Graeme's while Ian rates the Woodpecker's Haye Park, in whichever direction it's run!

There's more to their continued support of the BTRDA series than the calendar though. It clearly meets their budget constraints and the camaraderie between competitors ranks high in their reasons to return to the championship year after year.

"We see all the events as a challenge and we never get tired of doing them," Ian revealed. "Added to that, we enjoy some really good banter with those we're in close competition with."

Graeme summed up why many BTRDA regulars continue to support the series when he said: "It's been the best rally championship in the UK for the past 25 years!"

What more can be said?



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- 2019 Rallynuts Stages Historic Winner & 1st 2WD
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GOLD STAR

1954 JIMMY RAY
1955 JOHN WADDINGTON
1956 JOHN WADDINGTON
1957 RON GOULDBOURNE
1958 RON GOULDBOURNE
1959 JOHN SPRINZEL
1960 BRIAN HARPER
1961 BILL BENGRI
1962 TONY FISHER
1963 TONY FISHER
1964 ERIC JACKSON
1965 BRIAN MELIA
1966 MALCOLM GIBBS
1967 ROY FIDLER
1968 COLIN MALKIN
1969 JOHN BLOXHAM
1970 JIM BULLOUGH
1971 WILL SPARROW
1972 WILL SPARROW
1973 RICHARD ILIFFE
1974 GORDON BATCHLOR
1975 DAVID STOKES
1976 GEOFF SIMPSON
1977 MIKE BAYLISS
1978 TIM BRISE
1979 GEOFF SIMPSON
1980 MALCOLM PATRICK
1981 TREVOR SMITH
1982 TREVOR SMITH
1983 DARREL WEIDNER
1984 CLINTON SMITH
1985 VINCE WETTON
1986 PETER DOUGHTY
1987 IAN BEVERIDGE
1988 BILL PARTON
1989 SIMON PATON
1990 ANDY SHARAM
1991 RICHIE HOLFELD
1992 STEVE PETCH
1993 NEIL FREEMAN
1994 RICKY EVANS
1995 RICKY EVANS
1996 STUART EGGLESTON
1997 PETER LITTLER
1998 ADAM KENT
1999 NIK ELSMORE
2000 MARTIN MEADOWS
2001 VINCE WETTON
2002 JOHN PERROT
2003 ANDY BURTON
2004 GRAHAM MIDDLETON
2005 ROGER CHILMAN
2006 SHAUN GARDENER
2007 WILL NICHOLLS
2008 HUGH HUNTER
2009 DAVID WRIGHT
2010 STEVE PEREZ
2011 ANDY BURTON
2012 SHAUN GARDENER
2013 EUAN THORBURN
2014 STEVE PEREZ
2015 DAVID WESTON JNR
2016 CHARLIE PAYNE
2017 STEPHEN PETCH
2018 MATT EDWARDS

SILVER STAR

DR J T SPARE
ERNIE SNEATH
ALEC NEWSUM
BOBBY PARKES
TOM GOLD
KEN WALKER
ARTHUR HOBSON
BRIAN HARPER
REG MCBRIDE
REG MCBRIDE
DAVID FRISWELL
PETER NOD
MALCOLM GIBBS
JIM BULLOUGH
LIZ BARLOW
LIZ GRELLIN
WILL SPARROW
FRANK PEIRSON
RANK PEIRSON
JOHN EDWARDS-PARTON
KEITH WATKINSON
MIKE BRIANT
MIKE PATTERSON
BILL GYWNNE
BILL GYWNNE
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GWYNDAF EVANS
RON BEECROFT
STEVE HILL
RON BEECROFT
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MARTYN ANDREWS
WILL CLARKE
JASON BIRD
STEPHEN FRENCH
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MATTHEW CLARKE
WARREN PHILLISKIRK
THEO BENGRI
BRIAN BELL
ANDY BURTON
PHIL COLLINS
JON BALLINGER
JON BALLINGER
PHILLIP SQUIRES
JAMES BELTON
PAUL BARRETT
GRAHAM MIDDLETON
FRANK KELLY
WILL ONIONS
JON BALLINGER
ALLAN MCDOWALL
MATTHEW ROBINSON
MATTHEW ROBINSON
MATTHEW ROBINSON
BOYD KERSHAW
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ASHLEY DAVIES
GEORGE LEPLLEY

BRONZE STAR THE NEW NAME FOR 1400 CLASS

2001 PAUL GRIFFITHS
2002 RUPERT HOPCRAFT
2003 SHAUN WOFFINDEN
2004 IAN EVANS
2005 GEORGE THOMAS
2006 NEIL WEAVER
2007 CLIVE WHEELER
2008 DARREN PINCHIN
2009 GRAHAM MIDDLETON
2010 MATT EDWARDS
2011 DARREN PINCHIN
2012 JULIAN WILKES
2013 JULIAN WILKES
2014 MATTHEW SMITH
2015 DAVID BENNETT
2016 JORDAN HONE
2017 ED FOSSEY
2018 DAVE BRICK



The Recipe of Success

The BTRDA Rally Championships have been a consistent favourite among competitors and rally fans for many years. But what is it that makes the gravel championship such a popular series?



The secret recipe for success lies with the variety of categories that cater to all competitors, the format of events, plus the challenging stages that form part of well-organised rallies.

Over the years, the BTRDA has nailed every aspects of those requirements. The series has always changed with the times, helping it to stay relevant and affordable for competitors at all levels of the sport.

Like many things in life, people want to get maximum enjoyment but spend as little as possible. Also known as smiles per mile!

By making the championship an attractive prospect, competition has remained high at all events and with each round being well-supported by crews, it ensures that all of the series' categories are worth fighting for...

Rallying on a Budget

Keeping the costs at an 'affordable' level is crucial. Stage rallying is always going to be expensive and very few people are lucky enough to have massive budgets. So to encourage more competitors to commit to a full championship campaign, costs have to be kept as low as possible.

Part of the BTRDA's secret in doing that is to only include one-day events in its championship calendar. That means that competitors can finish work on a Friday, compete on a Saturday and be back home and ready to go to work before a Monday morning. No time off required!

It also helps that stage mileage is kept around 45 stage miles. Not only do competitors need to use less fuel but this keeps entry fees lower too...

Event organisers incur extra insurance costs for routes that include more than 45 stage miles - an extra £24 (per competing crew) for those higher mileage events. It might not sound like much of a difference but it's another cost that would ultimately be passed to competitors via the entry fee.

Who wants an extra £24 on their entry fee? And that's before we start to think about any additional Forestry Commission fees.

Classes

When we talk about the BTRDA gravel championship, we're actually referring to a number of different championships. And within each of those, there is a huge variety of classes and awards that gives all competitors something to fight for.

At the top of the tree are the Gold Star, Silver Star and soon to be Bronze Star championships - a renaming of the Fuchs Lubricants 1400 Championship. Within each of these series are a host of classes and categories.

There is also the Historic Cup, Production Cup, Rallye R2 Cup and ST Trophy which is open to any Fiesta running the M-Sport Fiesta ST specification.

There's even a 'Rally First' Championship - a series that was designed to be a low cost category for 'standard' cars. There are some strict technical regulations that competitors must adhere to, all helping to keep the costs down. Body shells must not be modified unless for strengthening or guarding purposes, while standard engines and gearboxes must be used.

In Summary...

So it's not rocket science! Shorter events keep the costs down and make events affordable for more competitors, especially if they don't need to take time off work.

Combined with having a selection of well-organised events on the calendar - all of which have stages that competitors love as well as low road miles - plus a variety of categories that give something for everyone to fight for, it attracts higher numbers of competing crews which makes for a really competitive series.

And that all amounts to serious fun in motorsport!



Generation Games...



GRAHAM IN ACTION

The Lepleys have a long association with the BTRDA rally series as four generations of the rally immersed family have made their mark on the series. It all started back in the 1970s...

Graham Lepley competed on his first rally in 1970. He went on to win numerous BTRDA events during the early '70s in a variety of Escort Mk1 rally cars before upgrading to a MkII Escort.

However, it was Graham's father that donated the largest trophy on the BTRDA awards table which is still handed out today. He kindly donated the famous Graham Lepley/Derby Road Garage BTRDA trophy during the early '70s.

Fast-forward a few years and Graham's son, Jason Lepley, started

to compete in motorsport too. He used a variety of cars over the years and in 2003, he won the BTRDA Silverstar Championship on the tie-break in his Escort MkII. After 10 hard-fought rounds, he and John Ballinger finished the season on equal points, with Jason taking his grandfather's trophy home.

The Lepley's BTRDA success didn't stop there. George Lepley is the latest in the line to take up the driving seat. He is the family's third generation rally driver, but given it was his great-grandfather who donated the sought-after trophy, it technically means that he is the fourth generation Lepley link in the BTRDA!

In 2018, George won the Junior category and the Silver Star Championship with a Fiesta R2 - the first time a front-wheel drive car won the series in more than 10 years! He is also the youngest ever winner of the Silver Star Championship, having won the series at the tender age of 21.

For 2019, George switched vehicles to something a little bit different - he



GRAHAM LEPLEY

opted to use the historic Hillman Avenger belonging to headline BTRDA sponsor, Baz Jordan.

It's been another highly successful season. The young gun has managed to secure both the Silver Star and Junior awards once again. And in another first for the Lepley family, it's the first time an historic class car has won the championship!

The Lepley family has certainly made their mark on the BTRDA series... and we're sure that there's more to come!



GEORGE LEPLEY



GEORGE IN ACTION



JASON LEPLEY

JASON LEPLEY IN ACTION

BTRDA MEMORIES

MADS OSTBERG - 2009 CAMBRIAN
WWW.PRO-RALLY.CO.UK



MADS WINS CAMBRIAN WRC!

Running less than a week before Wales Rally GB, the 2009 Cambrian Rally attracted a star-studded international entry with some high-profile names on the entry list. Not surprisingly the stages were packed with fans, making the most of the brilliant sunshine and enjoying some brilliant driving to match!

The then World Rally Championship leaders, Mikko Hirvonen and Jarmo Lehtinen, were running as car 0 in a works Ford Focus WRC and from their (unofficial) stage times, would almost undoubtedly have won the rally.

Officially, it was Norwegians, Mads Ostberg and Jonas Andersson, who took that honour after setting four fastest stage times in their Subaru Impreza WRC08.

Nasser Al-Attiyah and Giovanni Bernacchini took B13 awards after finishing fourth overall in their Impreza while Eyvind Brynildsen and Denis Giraudet had been fifth before retiring their Skoda Fabia S2000.

British honours were upheld by Hugh Hunter and Andy Marchbank who finished as runners-up in their Ford Focus WRC01 while Steve Perez and Paul Spooner completed the podium in their Ford Focus WRC05. The rally also saw Graham Middleton complete a unique set of BTRDA wins, adding the 1400 title to his previous Gold and Silver Star successes.

Family Fortunes...

A host of family teams have been successful in the BTRDA's Gravel Championship over the years. Many successful rally driving fathers have drafted their offspring into the co-driving seat (and vice versa) but the family successes all kicked off with a successful husband and wife team back in 1969...

Liz and Ron **Crellin** were a force to be reckoned with during their 1969 Silver Star campaign. With Liz driving and Ron reading the maps, they proved to be unbeatable as they powered to glory.

Interestingly, it was Ron's second successive title, having navigated Elizabeth Barlow to the same award in 1968. As for Liz Crellin, she also won the Ladies' Cup in a Mini at the 1970 RAC Rally but became better

known for her navigating skills, having partnered the likes of Pat Moss-Carlsson at various international events such as Monte Carlo and RAC.

Richard and Stuart **Iliffe** claimed the 1973 Gold Star title while Ian and Pat Beveridge took the 1987 Gold Star award. The **Egglestone** brothers, Stuart and Steve, enjoyed much success during the '90s which included a 1996 Gold Star title.

Fast-forward to the noughties and



RUSS THOMPSON

more names joined the list. Rupert and Susan **Hopcraft** won the 1400 title in 2002 while Philip and Michael **Squires** picked up the 2004 Silver Star title.

And in a somewhat unusual combination, Jordan **Hone** had his father, Paul, navigate him to the 2016 1400 Championship title. More recently, Dave and Tony **Brick** claimed last year's 1400 title.

Sometimes the family successes have been achieved at different times. Steve **Petch**, for example, won the Gold Star title back in 1992 while his son, Stephen Petch, followed in his footsteps by taking the same award in 2017.

Looking back even further, Bill **Bengry** took the Gold Star title in 1961 while his son, Theo, went on to win the Silver Star award in 1983 and 1998.

Many others have vied for success, although some haven't reached the dizzying heights of Silver Star or Gold Star awards. At least not yet anyway...

Martin **Meadows** was the Gold Star champion in 2000 and his son, Tommi, is definitely one to watch for the future. He was voted as the 2016 Young Rally Driver of the Year at the Professional Motorsport World Expo in Germany and is now making tracks in the BTRDA's R2 category.

Shaun **Gardener** is a two-times Gold Star champion (2006 and 2012) and now his son, Perry, is also tackling the R2 category. Other father and sons include John and Russ **Thompson**, David and David (Jnr) **Weston** plus Steve and Callum **Black**.

There are plenty more too. It must be true that success breeds success!



BTRDA Rally Champions 25 Years Apart!

Stephen Petch & Michael Wilkinson
2017 BTRDA Gold Star Champions

Steve Petch & George Tindall
1992 BTRDA Gold Star Champions



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JASON PRITCHARD Current Champion

What is it that draws you to participating the BTRDA series?

"What draws me to the BTRDA Championship is the little amount of time away from work. Usually we only need to take the Friday off so time from the business is limited. There's always a great atmosphere within the championship and its competitors."

What is your favourite BTRDA memory?

"My favourite memory recently has to be winning the Mewla Rally on its 40th anniversary. This event starts on the Royal Welsh Showground in Builth Wells, opposite North Road Garage. To win it after watching my Dad win the same rally on three occasions when I was a child was a very special day for me."

All Haill Asphalt King Andrew!

Andrew Haill was the co-ordinator for the Asphalt Championship for more than 20 years. It all started back in the mid-90s for the West Midlands motorsport fan. He reveals a bit more about his story...

By 1995, I'd already been working with the BTRDA for quite a while when the opportunity to co-ordinate what was then known as the EARS Motorsport/Motoring News National Rally Series presented itself.

I still have the letter from the late David Williams (DKW) confirming my appointment! 'Right', I thought, 'I'll sort this lot out' and, 20 years later, I was still trying!

It was universally known as the Tarmac Championship - understandable, really, because it was a Championship and all the events ran on tarmac! But then I started receiving letters from the legal department of a certain large company based in Wolverhampton requesting that I stop using their trade name.

A glance at the Oxford English Dictionary proves that 'Tarmac' is always spelt with a capital 'T' - and, while we had no control over how it was referred to in conversation, after a brief flirtation with 'tarmacadam', the word 'asphalt' began to appear on all printed matter.

In the early days, the MSA permit for the Championship was in my name and it was only when our governing body decreed that such documents should, in future, purely be issued to motor clubs or organisations with whom it had been dealing for a number of years, that I went scurrying off to see my friends at the BTRDA and make them an offer they could quite easily have refused!

Fortunately, as there wasn't a Plan B, they didn't - and the Asphalt Championship was added to the already impressive arsenal of motorsport disciplines that came under the BTRDA's umbrella.

Even with this new-found backing, rally championship co-ordination can be a lonely place, not least when it comes to formulating a calendar! You can ask a dozen people for their thoughts on which events to include and, likely as not, get a dozen different answers.

However, the buck stops with you - you have to weigh up the options and take a view, which is where the old adage 'you can please all the



John Price - 12 Times Champion!



An amazing sound...

people some of the time' etc, seems particularly pertinent! Somebody once described me as a benign dictator - others have been less complimentary...

Due, in no small part, to the challenging nature of the terrain, a number of rounds of the Asphalt

were extremely accommodating when it came to getting the show back on the road.

With the exception of 2001, when the 'Foot & Mouth' epidemic in the UK drastically curtailed all rallying activities, the Asphalt Championship has paid at least one visit to Ireland every season - either north or south and sometimes both. And while there were certain differences between the MSA and Motorsport Ireland regulations, we were always sure of a very warm welcome and a keenness to exchange best practice.

Even for those of us not actively involved in a recce, most of the Irish events necessitated a five-day trip from the mainland and, especially in the early days, they could turn into quite an adventure!

Memories of B&Bs in Holyhead in readiness for crossing the Irish Sea the following morning and what a revelation the introduction of the high-speed HSS on the route proved to be...as long as the wind speed wasn't more than about 2 knots. If it was, it was cancelled for the day and we were redirected to a more traditional

There was a time when I was the undisputed 'King of the Cancellations' - or, to be more precise, dealing with the aftermath of such occurrences!

Championship have always taken place on MoD land and permission for these to proceed is granted on the understanding that it can be withdrawn at very short notice.

For various reasons, there was a time when I was the undisputed 'King of the Cancellations' - or, to be more precise, dealing with the aftermath of such occurrences! But in most instances, all parties involved, especially those based in Colnbrook,



Damian Cole - Multiple Champ

tub - eventually! 'Character-building', they used to call it...

In a career that dates back more than 40 years now and which began in Dunlop's Competition Centre, I've always tried to adopt the maxim that rallying at national level, while nevertheless fiercely competitive, is supposed to be fun and, for most, a leisure activity.

However, especially in recent times, that view has necessarily been tempered by a realisation that the amount of money required - certainly towards the front of the field - to attain that level of enjoyment is considerable!

My job was to try and ensure that, for all the right reasons, the 'experience' was a memorable one - by and large the plan worked, but we all have bad days at the office!



Asphalt Cover Stars





DARKEST DAY ON DUKERIES

Tragedy struck the BTRDA Series on the 15 June 2010 when Martyn Lewis died after his Vauxhall Nova rolled and hit a tree in SS7, Harlow Wood, during the Dukeries Rally. The stage was cancelled, as was the awards ceremony, as a mark of respect.

The 32-year-old, from Kerry in Mid-Wales, was co-driven by his brother Richard who was taken to hospital for checks and later released. It was the fifth year that they had contested rounds of the BTRDA series and they had a number of class wins to their credit, the most recent being on the previous month's Plains Rally.

Down to the Wire!

The 2012 Gold Star Championship went right to the wire with three crews going into the final round, the Cambrian Rally, with a chance of taking the title. But who could have predicted what was about to unfold?

Having recorded their third win of the series on the previous round at the Woodpecker Stages, Roger Chilman and Bryan Thomas were piling the pressure on championship leaders Hugh Hunter and Andy Marchbank.

Meanwhile, Shaun Gardener and Ben Innes had finished every round and had piled up the points but with dropped scores coming into play, they were the rank outsiders in the title race.

The scene was set with three crews all in with a shout of becoming Gold Star Champions but by the end of the opening test in Clocaenog Main, the three were reduced to two. It was rally over for Chilman and Thomas, having rolled their Subaru Impreza after clipping a bank and launching the car onto two-wheels.

All was going well for Hunter and Marchbank. By the time they reached the start of SS5 Clocaenog East 2, they headed the standings by almost a minute and looked assured to take the title.

Sadly, for them, it was about to go wrong. Launching their Ford Focus WRC car off the start line, Hunter selected first gear, then second gear, then third gear, then BANG!

The gearbox exploded and his efforts to bypass the third slot resulted in fourth, fifth and sixth gears all going



SHAUN GARDENER/BEN INNES - 2012 CAMBRIAN / PRO-RALLY.CO.UK

missing as well. They completed the test in second gear but their lead was cut to 16 seconds and with no way of fixing it, Hunter decided to drive the car home.

Gardener and Innes went on to finish the rally fifth overall in their Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 5.9 and with that they took the 2012 Gold Star Driver and Co-driver Championship titles.

A highly-delighted Gardener told Pacenotes, "It was a hare and tortoise scenario, all a bit fraught and I never thought it would happen." But happen it did!



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Engineering Excellence!

No BTRDA special would be complete without touching upon what was perhaps the series' most beloved and controversial car, Andy Burton's homebrew Peugeot 306 Cosworth. Jamie Arkle reports...



ANDY BURTON WITH STEVE PEREZ

At its heart, watching rallying is a purely visceral, sensory experience. Without wanting to sound trite or to 'over egg the pudding,' the smell of a damp pine forest, the squelch of mud underfoot and the background chatter of like-minded, bobble hat-clad individuals; these are nothing less than sensory bookmarks for those of us raised on a rallying diet from a young age.

While it's true that there's nothing quite like the sight of a car being chucked, broadside, through a technical bit of special stage at full chat, I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest that it's actually the noise of the said car that makes watching a rally such a beguiling spectacle.

I'd never be as brazen as to attempt to ID the best sounding rally car of all time (seriously, that's a gallon drum of worms right there) but I do have a suggestion - Andy Burton's Peugeot 306 Cosworth.

Burton's Pug was one of those rare cars able to provide visual and audible sensory drama in equal measure, and that's before we touch upon other, less tangible aspects, not least its ability to scalp WRC cars for fun!

This, coupled with the disquiet it subsequently stirred, makes the home-built 306 the most 'punk' rally car of all, and it's therefore no surprise that it retains a rabidly passionate, cult following to this day.

Not that Burton was an unknown before the emergence of the 306 back in 1997. He'd spent a good portion of the preceding decade charging round the British forests in another, almost as beloved creation, his Ferrari 308-powered Alfa Romeo Alfasud.

Come the mid '90s though, and even a car as well built and well driven as the 'Alferrari' couldn't stem the rising tide of Group A machinery flooding the lower echelons of British rallying. It was this that eventually convinced our hero to begin work on what would become the 306 Cosworth.

The 306 Build

Rallying is no stranger to well-engineered, big power engines with high-pitched notes, warbles and wails of course, and the upshot is that it really does take something rather special to raise the eyebrows (and eardrums?) of your average specccy.

The 306 was that, and from the outset it made a glorious cacophony thanks to the addition of a modified Metro 6R4 lump, which

as any long-term rally fan will tell you, ranks among the most evocative motors ever to grace a special stage.

Austin Rover struggled to make the 6R4 lump a viable proposition though, and so in turn did Burton. This led him to fit the engine that's since become more closely associated with the car than any other, the Cosworth KF V6. The KF was actually designed for Opel's all assault on the FIA DTM/ITCC, and as such benefited from having untold millions invested in its development.

The 54-degree angle of the KF's banks gifted it compact dimensions, perfect for fitment to an Opel Calibra DTM racer, and as it turned out, a home-brew 306 rally car. It made a good 455bhp in race trim, and while this was pegged back to 'just' 400bhp for special stage duties, it nevertheless looked and sounded the part.

Indeed, very few engines have sounded as good, the KF's unhinged note bouncing

>>>





2004 CAMBRIAN



BURTON WAS A FAN FAVOURITE



2011 DUKERIES

>>> off the pine trees as it sung its way to a piercing 11,000rpm.

Not that everything was plain sailing from the off. The rigors of stage rallying proved too much for the highly-strung touring car KF to deal with, at least initially.

This isn't such a surprise when you realise this it was commissioned and designed by a mass market car maker in the mid '90s, a decade of spiraling motorsport budgets and little to no consideration given to either cost or length of time between service. Indeed, Opel reckoned its pneumatically valved KFs had a lifespan of 200 miles at most, with rebuilds after each and every round of the DTM - and that was in a relatively clean, gravel-free (unless something went awry) environment!

"We had to build it after each and every rally as a matter of course purely because it's such a highly-strung engine," explained Burton in an interview 10 years ago. "It would rev to 11,000rpm, so sounded lovely and was very popular, but the work that went into maintaining that engine...we went through loads of pistons and cylinder heads each and every season."

The need to retain some semblance of sanity, not to mention a few hours away from the workbench when not at rallies, eventually forced Burton to swap the KF for a Cosworth 24v from a Granada Scorpio, the BOA, and later still a similarly configured Nissan engine.

Both of these engines had power outputs and notes which belied their

production origins, with the Cosworth unit being particularly immense by dint of its all steel bottom end. It would still rev to 9000rpm, still made a good 400bhp, and still sounded like God moving trying to manoeuvre an especially heavy chest of drawers down a tight staircase with a bad hangover.

Engineering at its Finest

While the engine understandably garnered much of the rallying public's attention, the rest of Burton's creation was just as noteworthy and as exquisitely engineered.

A Hewland six-speed sequential was a pretty trick bit of kit when the 306 was first laid down, and it only became more so with the passage of time and Burton's attentions. A paddle-shift setup could be seen on the car from 2002 onwards, this twinned with pneumatically governed actuators for the clutch and 'gearstick.'

Other drivetrain elements were just as cleverly sited, not least the trio of differentials - one per axle, plus another, slightly offset, centrally mounted torque-apportioning unit to dole out drive fore and aft. It sported custom driveshafts and Impreza WRC hubs, another addition which would've been considered the height of technology when Burton first set about building the car nearly a quarter of a century ago.

All of this was crammed within the bare bones of a Peugeot 306 body shell, albeit so comprehensively modified as to be all but unrecognisable to anyone from PSA.

It was of course based upon a tubular space-framed chassis, one carefully blended into the Custom Cages roll-cage and designed with both low mass and strength in mind.

Peugeot structure was notable by its near total absence, with only bulkhead, inner front wings and door apertures carried over 'as stock.' Everything else was reconfigured in either a composite material, or, in the

case of the floor-pans, plastic.

The sheer amount of custom metalwork, let alone the associated drive to get everything functioning correctly and reliably, beggars belief, and also underscores just why Burton's creation was as beloved by spectators as it was disliked by the powers that be.

It goes without saying that the thing looked great, if slightly unhinged. The blistered arches, the Morette headlights and the ever-changing roster of aerodynamic devices (first a 306 Maxi wing, then a 206 WRC), all helped make the 306 look out of this world and gave it the kind of stage presence anything this side of a Group B Quattro would kill for.

Another, less obvious trait of the 306 was the ease with which it could be serviced, something Burton had built into his creation from the very beginning.

Indeed, it's no exaggeration to suggest that nothing this side of a works WRC car was built with as clear a commitment to being serviced and repaired as swiftly and as simply as this barn-built car. (And that's before we even touch upon Burton's equally brilliant, improbably capacious custom Land Discovery support vehicle.)

You need only look to the gearbox to get a taste of just how committed to ease of servicing Burton was, with the Hewland only connected to the bellhousing by means of a pair of lynchpins. It could therefore be decoupled within moments, saving precious seconds.

The result of Burton's engineering brilliance and ability to peddle his creation were dramatic. Not only did the Cosworth Pug attain the kind of cult forest following that it's hard to imagine ever being repeated, it proved incredibly competitive.

Countless outright rally wins soon fell to the affable farmer and his bonkers creation, and by the late '90s, it was a fully paid up BTRDA legend, able to take its owner to a brace of titles in 2003 and 2011.

>>>



ARKLE'S ANGLE

WORDS: JAMIE ARKLE

IMAGES: JMS PHOTOGRAPHIC & WWW.PRO-RALLY.CO.UK

» The Death Knell

There's a sad end to this tale though, one well known by the rally community and all but guaranteed to crop up whenever a discussion on British motorsport politicking rears its ugly head, and that's that the Cosworth Pug is no longer with us.

The legitimacy of the decision has been well debated by people better versed in the minutiae of Motorsport UK's regulations than me, but the impact of the ruling, one designed to outlaw non-production rally cars, reduce performance and bring British rallying more closely in line with that of our friends on the continent, was dramatic to say the least.

As is so often the case with sweeping regulation revisions designed to bring about sporting sea changes, the name was nothing if not innocuous – the K37 review (now section R46).

Dry it might've been, but the implication was clear: cars like Burton's, cars with engines from different manufacturers, mounted in configurations

never deemed suitable of by their maker, were placed on death row, and the way cleared for more conventional, production-based machinery.

The 306's final BTRDA season was in 2011 (though Burton was at least able to retire as Gold Star Champion), after which it was wheeled into forced retirement in its creator's barn where it has remained ever since.

Proof of just how loved this car remains, if indeed it were required, can be seen in the

social media storm generated when a new photo of it emerged last year, still in one piece and with Burton standing proudly alongside. It does at least still exist, and for that we should all be thankful.

Perhaps the most galling aspect of writing a feature on a car of this kind, quite apart from the challenge of nailing down a definitive specification, is the knowledge that, try as I might, I'll never be able to convey the true character of the diminutive Pug.

For that, you need to have been there, stage side in the early part of the last decade, with one hand cupped to your ear and straining to hear the first notes of its manic, bark-shredding V6 howl. Nothing short of a Works Stratos has ever come close and owing to the increasingly homogenised nature of modern rallying, probably never will.



ED FOSSEY & WILL RUTHERFORD



2017 BTRDA 1400 & Junior Champion
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Mike Broad PRESIDENT

How did you become interested in motorsport?

"My elder brother was a member of the local Curborough Car Club and started doing regularity type rallies and sprints. The club owned its own sprint course so I started doing sprints when I was 17. I also did some night rallies with my twin brother. We didn't get on too well but I enjoyed navigating so I entered some events with my elder brother and other people in the club."

"My mentor was Ron Crellin, who took me under his wing. From very early on, I was his 'number two' and was Deputy Clerk of the Course for an event when I was 20 years old. When he retired, I continued on from there. I did an RAC Rally with Alan Jones and soon after that I was doing international events."

First rally?

"My first ever rally was a Shenstone Car Club event called the Little Rally. I entered with my elder brother and we won it! It was June, 1966, and I was 17 at the time. It was a regularity event in those days and afterwards, I thought 'this is the sport for me'."

"I wasn't particularly great at night navigation rallies but my big break came after I talked myself onto the London to Mexico organising team. I landed the role of Chief Marshal and

organiser for South America! That put my name on the map because all the well-known drivers did it."

"I ended up organising the entire South American leg - it was an amazing task. After that, I managed to get some good drives because people knew who I was from being heavily involved in the London to Mexico event."

Best achievements?

"Event wise, winning the London to Sydney event in 1977 with Andrew Cowan and Colin Malkin. That was probably the highlight of my whole career. Also the years of competing in the British Rally Championship with Russell Brookes was the best time I had in motorsport."

"I've been very fortunate to be with some brilliant drivers, including people like Walter Rohrl. I think he was the best driver of the era... he was so smooth and instinctive. I had a good innings in motorsport - 20 good years of competing professionally and then I was involved in team management too."

How did you become involved with the BTRDA?

"It was thanks to Ron Crellin. He was Chairman of the Rallies Committee in the late '60s so I also became involved in the committee around the same time. I've been a BTRDA

member since then."

"The BTRDA is an association of people - it's not like a car club with members who meet regularly. We have quarterly committee meetings there are some very committed people involved. That's why the BTRDA is so successful. There are a lot of competitors and event organisers involved who know what they're talking about. It's run by people who compete at the highest level or who organise championship events. They are all very committed volunteers."

What's so good about the BTRDA Rally Championships?

"The stability of the championship has been its forte. Number one - we try to welcome everybody. We accommodate every car and every competitor. We don't exclude cars - we find a class for them somewhere."

"Number two - we don't change the championship too much. We tweak it and massage it to suit. Over the years, some people have come up with brilliant ideas. We were first to come up with the idea of reverse seeding. In fact, Russell Brookes and I won the first event with reverse seeding - I think it was the Wydean in 1982. We started as the last car on the road and won it."

"So we're not afraid to introduce

different things if we think they'll work. The standards of events are generally very high. One of the big awards we hand out at the end of the year is for the best event - and to be the best event is a big accolade. Every event wants to win that so competitors know that they're going to get a good rally if they enter a BTRDA event."



The BTRDA is an association of people...

Anything else you want to say?

"I'm so pleased to bring back the Asphalt Championship. It's still in its infancy but over the next couple of years it will get stronger and stronger. As an association, the BTRDA isn't afraid to invest in things we believe in. I think the Asphalt will become a really, really strong championship over the next two to three years, especially with the new closed roads legislation as we'll be able to get even better quality events in the championship."

Howard Wilcock ADMINISTRATOR

How did you become interested in motorsport?

"When I was 18, I went to marshal with a friend at a rally in Yorkshire. We ended up in Wycombe forest in the middle of the night. It was freezing and we spent most of the night watching cars slide into ditches before helping to push them out. Not surprisingly, by the end of the night I thought it was really enjoyable!"

First event?

"A friend bought a Mini and we started doing events in the 1960s. Our first event was a road rally around Hull. It went up as far up as the Yorkshire moors. I remember one particularly long selective that went up one side of the valley and back down again. I remember seeing all these Twin Cam Escorts. We certainly didn't win...we were near the back of field!"

Best achievements?

"As a competitor, I was the East Midlands Road Rally Champion navigator back in 1979. That was really good. It was a season of road rallies with Rob Hughes and we came out as winners of the championship."

"As an organiser, I started getting involved in the organisation side back in 1975. I ran a couple of road rallies in Lincolnshire and Derbyshire, and then I was Clerk of the Course for the Dukeries in the '70s and '80s. After that, I got involved with the Lombard RAC Rally for 20 or 30 years. Those were the days when it used to go all around the country. I organised the Sunday stages and arranged for Chatsworth to be used."

How did you become involved with BTRDA?

"I joined the BTRDA rallies committee in 1979. At the time, they were looking for people who were not only competitors but also organisers. By chance, I was still competing but was also organising the Dukeries Rally, which was a round of the BTRDA, so I fitted the bill. It was a very interesting rallies committee and I always enjoyed going to the meetings."

What's so good about the BTRDA Rally Championships?

"Mike Broad uses the expression 'serious fun' for the BTRDA in general and I think that's what the BTRDA is there for. It's a realistic



It was freezing and we spent most of the night watching cars slide into ditches before helping to push them out...

aspiration for people to come and enter the events regardless of the car they have. It's open to everybody."

"Rallying isn't cheap but relatively speaking, the BTRDA championships have always tried to be open and practical for as many people to enter as possible. Time is a big factor and with the BTRDA events, competitors can rally on the Saturday and be home the same evening, giving them the Sunday with their family."

"I genuinely understand why some events need a recce but that requires a lot more time commitment and time is the key factor, especially nowadays. I'm retired but I still don't have enough time to do all the things

that I want to do. When competitors have a full-time job or a business to run as well as young families, it's difficult for them to find the time to compete."

"My son is into running and does park runs.. That's quite simple - he turns up at 9am, completes the run, the results are emailed to him and he's doing something else by 10am. But you can't just jump into a car at the start of the first stage of a rally and drive. It takes a lot of commitment to get to that point. Motorsport is much more difficult to do so keeping the time commitment to a minimum is key."

Anything else you want to say?

"I started running championships in '87 and was effectively the championship co-ordinator for 13 years. I'm still involved and try to help behind the scenes but I'm also heavily involved with the Dukeries Motor Club as well. We run three events per year and I've been Secretary of the Meeting for 20 or 30 rallies over the last few years...and I'm also the Treasurer."



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