



Round 3 : ALMC Stages – 5th July

ASPHALT ASIDES – No.3

MAUGER MAINTAINS MOMENTUM!...

The visit by the REIS MSA Asphalt Rally Championship to the ALMC Stages marked the halfway point in the season and, notwithstanding any unfamiliarity with his 'new' four-wheel drive machine, it's Simon Mauger who currently leads the race to become this year's champion. Accompanied by Jonathan Hawkins on his trip across the Irish Sea, the Bicester driver brought his Metro 4M4 back to the finish at Rally HQ - the Castle Arch Hotel in Trim - in 3rd place overall to take his second maximum points score so far.

However, the finish was a very muted affair following an accident on the seventh of nine stages which involved a number of spectators. One of those injured was Peter Grant who, with driver Mike Taylor, had retired their Sunbeam Lotus on the previous pass of the stage and had stayed to watch the rally before the car was recovered. Peter suffered multiple fractures and is currently hospitalised in Dublin. His recuperation will, doubtless, take a long while and, on behalf of the Championship, we send him our good wishes and hope that the John Horton Motorsport Management trophy will serve to cheer him up!

The rally was curtailed following the accident and the ceremonial finish and prize-giving were abandoned. The results, therefore, were declared after SS7 and Mauger/Hawkins came out on top of a 33-strong Championship presence. Simon Chapman was next, posting the best result to-date in his Proton Satria while, less than half a minute behind him, David Hardie/John McCulloch took 5th overall in their Impreza. With three solid finishes to their credit, David is Simon Mauger's nearest challenger in the Drivers' table, while John finds himself leading the race to succeed Elliott Edmondson as Champion Co-driver.

If they had been just 1.4s quicker, David Tinn/Giles Dykes (Proton Satria) would have been 8th, while David & Mathew White (Impreza) also finished in the Top Ten, taking Group N at the same time. Graham Coffey (Fiesta WRC) won his class and then, having swapped from a Fiesta to an Escort for the event, Roger Moran took top Millington Rear-Wheel Drive



Challenge points on the day. He and Ashley Trimble were 19th, half a minute ahead of Tony Rees' Darrian who took second-place points in both the Millington Challenge and Class B12.

The Careys, Royston & Bridge, came out on top in the AB Motorsport Front-Wheel Drive Challenge - their Renault Clio finished ahead of the Citroen DS3 R3 of Andrew Hockridge/Aled Edwards to maintain their advantage in the category. David Earthy's Citroen C2R2 Max wasn't far behind to take points for 3rd, but also a class win into the bargain. Another class winner on the day was the Nova of Ian Barnard/Richard Bonner that finished six minutes ahead of its closest rival.

It goes without saying that a number of comments by some very experienced MSA Championship competitors at Signing-On for the ALMC Stages regarding the high standard of organisation and paperwork were well received by the organisers. Nevertheless, aided - or hindered, depending on how your day went! - by the weather, the rally produced a stern challenge for all. For the likes of defending Asphalt Champion Damian Cole, it was all over very quickly - he and Jack Morton nudged a chicane on the opening stage of the day, dislodging their Focus' radiator, and that was that!

Having reached the end of the opening stage seemingly unscathed, Steve Simpson/Patrick Walsh were the next to go when their Impreza started to fill with smoke after a gearbox oil pipe became disconnected. Rather than risk a fire or damage to the car's transmission they, too, beat a hasty retreat.

Chris Rice's Impreza suffered power steering pump failure on Saturday afternoon and, after some frantic phone calls, a replacement was sourced in Northern Ireland. The new one was fitted overnight but then, very early on in the event, it also gave up the ghost, leaving Chris and co-driver Craig Cameron with no choice but to retire and launch an investigation into the underlying problem....

=====

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS after the ALMC Stages have already been circulated. Please bear in mind that those relating to the IMGold Manx National Rally are still provisional pending the outcome of various appeals but, in regard to the ALMC Stages itself, any queries should be notified to the Championship Coordinator ASAP.

=====

The **TV PROGRAMME** on the ALMC Stages, prepared by Wayne & Co. from 'Special Stage' is due to be broadcast on Motors TV at 9.30pm on 17th July.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS....



ROUND 4 : **The Tyneside Stages** (2nd August) is next up. The capacity entry of 90 has long since been reached, although the organisers have opened a reserve list. The Championship's first visit to Otterburn offers 80 miles of stages on the Ranges, with a recce of the route between 15.30-18.00 on the Saturday afternoon. The Entries Secretary is :

Maurice Mabon – Tel : 01665 602690 / Email : maurice@mabonm.freeserve.co.uk

Full details are available on www.tynesidestages.co.uk

ROUND 5 : **The Forge Garage Mewla Rally** (30th August) takes us back to the Epynt Ranges over August Bank Holiday weekend. The event contains 80 stage miles, in eleven stages, with a chance to recce the route between 11.00-16.00 on the Saturday. The Entries Secretaries are :

Keith & Trina Edwards - Tel : 01982 551246 / Email : mewla.rally@virgin.net

Full details are available on www.epyntmc.co.uk

=====

FRONTAL HEAD RESTRAINTS

Having just returned from Ireland where they've been compulsory for several years now, it's fitting that we must point out - if you're not already aware! - that the MSA has decreed that Frontal Head Restraints will be mandatory on all rallies in the UK from the start of next year.

JIM CLARK RALLY 2016

Also on the subject of next year, we are delighted that the Jim Clark Rally has been given the go-ahead by the relevant authorities to run as a closed-road event in 2016. Hence, subject to MSA approval, it will form part of the MSA Asphalt Rally Championship calendar and takes place on 3/4th June.

=====

For further details on all the above, please contact the Championship Coordinator :

Andrew Haill – Tel : 0121 313 1416/E-mail : andrew.haill@btconnect.com

OR

Visit the Championship Website : www.asphaltrallying.co.uk

- ENDS -

