

# BHRC Round three Severn Valley Historic Challenge

Thursday, 21 May 2009

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The BHRC is riding a wave of popularity with competitors and spectators and another excellent field will gather in Builth Wells on Saturday 30 May for championship round three of eight.

## Category 1

Category one is for the oldest cars, from the pre '68 era, and they run first on the road with a short gap before the rest of the historic field. In category one, it was the Sunbeam Tiger of Jonathan and Graham Gale that set a cracking pace on the Bulldog Rally to take first blood with the car used so successfully in 2007 and 2008 by Patrick Watts. But in Kielder, Gale hit trouble and slid off the road early in the rally leaving the way open for Dessie Nutt and Geraldine McBride to win the category in their Porsche 911.

But the current top scorer in the championship comes from class B4 in the form of the Lotus Cortina of Paul Mankin and Desmond Bell. They've had two great runs already this season and now come back to Wales aiming for another strong result to stay at the head of the overall title race.

Class B2 is home to the Minis, including the Cooper S of Mike Barratt/Jody Watson and, out for the first time this season, the similar car of Terry Cree and Richard Shores. In class B1, another round of the Imp battle is likely as Gary and Jane Edgington pit their Singer Chamois against the Hillman Imp Sport of Geoff Taylor and Steve Greenhill. The Edgington husband and wife crew took a famous last stage win on the Bulldog, but retired with engine dramas in Kielder.

## Category 2

In category two, for the post-historic cars, Rupert Lomax and David Alcock is the crew to beat after two strong runs, although rotor arm problems in Kielder cost their Escort Mk1 another category victory. Instead, it was the Porsche 911 of Tim Mason and Graham Wild that won on the Pirelli Historic Rally after an excellent run and they have the pace to win again this weekend.

Back in category two for the Severn Valley will be David Stokes and Guy Weaver in their Escort Mk1, after the car was badly damaged on the Bulldog. They borrowed a Mk2 Escort for the Pirelli, but now return to familiar surroundings after a major rebuild on the Mk1. Stokes will go head to head with Lomax at the front of the category, while the return of Ernie Graham/Robin Kellard adds another very quick Mk1 to the contest.

Class C3, for the Pinto-engined Escorts, is one of the toughest in the championship with a whole crop of potential winners. Tim Jones and Don James scored an emphatic victory on home ground for the Bulldog, but in Kielder it was Drew Wylie and Howard Pridmore who took a great victory. Jones has vowed to win again back in Wales, but Wylie is showing great pace this season. Other leading Escort Mk1s in C3 include those of Andrew Siddall/Captain Thompson and Neal James/Kevin Jones. In class C2, for the 1600cc cars, Vince Bristow and Dean Mitchell are likely to set the pace, but have opposition from Matt Fowle/tba, Richard Williams/Richard Ekin, Tony Ginns/Mark Ellis and David Kirby/Sean Kennedy in a battle of the Mk1 Escorts.

## Category 3

Four Escort Mk2 crews stand out at the head of category three, for the cars produced from 1975 to 1981, where the pace this season has been spectacular. Nick Elliott and Dave Price stormed to victory on the Bulldog, but slid off the road on the Pirelli. Instead, it was Darren Moon and Chris Parsons who took a great victory in Kielder to back up a solid start on the Bulldog.

However, both crews know that they cannot afford to overlook Julian Reynolds and Ian Oakey, who could set the absolute pace on the Severn Valley. Reynolds chased Elliott home on the Bulldog, but retired from the Pirelli after gearbox and then overheating dramas. If he gets a clear run on stages he knows well, Reynolds could well make it three winners in three rallies.

But the same can be said of Gwyndaf Evans and Clive Jenkins, who make a welcome return in the car of Phil Mills' Viking Motorsport. They showed good pace on the Bulldog and will now build on that in their second BHRC outing.

Others Escort Mk2s to watch in category three include those of Seamus O'Connell/Paul Wakely, Dick Slaughter/Preston Ayres, Gareth Lloyd/Ryland James, Will Onions/Tim Hobbs, James Potter/Arwel Jenkins and Simon Tysoe/Cliff Simmons. Ranged against the Escorts at the head of the category are the Vauxhall Chevettes of Rob Smith/Shawn O'Gorman and Roger Kilty/Lynette Banks, and Smith is overdue a clear run to show just what he can do against the Escort hordes.

More Escorts pack out class D3, for the Pinto-powered cars, and it is the car of Ryan Barrett and Barry Ferris that should set the absolute pace after a stunning BHRC debut victory on the Pirelli. Rivals to the flying Irish crew include David Lloyd-Roberts/Dei Jones, Richard Lane/Frank Richer and Adrian Young/Keith Fellowes.