

SACC Stage Rally Report, November 2014

MSA ARR Craib Scottish Rally Championship;

The Colin McRae Stages at Aberfeldy saw Euan Thorburn and Paul Beaton take victory both on the day and in the championship after a year long battle with David Bogie and Kevin Rae and Greg McKnight clinched the SRC Junior title in his Escort.

A good entry helped by a few from the British Historic Championship tackled a compact route through 6 of Perthshire's classic stages, including a return to Drummond Hill, whilst avoiding some of the rougher forests near Blairgowrie.

The pre-event forum at Rally HQ, featuring Jimmy McRae and Dario Franchitti amongst others was very well attended by both rally fans and the local public.

Round 8, The Armstrong Galloway Hills Rally at Castle Douglas had secured significant input from the D & G Major Events Fund which was used to attract 25 crews from Ireland on a 'free ferry' deal. This bolstered a disappointing turnout from other areas and the organisers revised the stages to take account of the low numbers. None of this, or the weather detracted from the enjoyment on the day and Jock Armstrong won his 7th Hills on the final stage when leader Dave Weston Jnr. slipped off for 3 minutes. This win put Jock and navigator Paula Swinscoe on the final podium place in the SRC tables.

There have been a number of other notable successes for Scottish crews in National rallying towards the end of the season.

Dave Weston Jnr. and Kirsty Riddick had a comfortable 20 second victory from 136 entrants on the final BTRDA event, the Cambrian Rally at Llandudno.

Scottish Champions Euan Thorburn and Paul Beaton have just finished first amateur crew on Wales Rally GB after a problematic event. Their pace was evident from the start though with a fantastic 12th fastest and best WRC2 crew in SS6, Dyfi which will surely have made a few sit up and take notice.

There was an SRC clean sweep of the podium places in the National event which ran alongside the WRC.

Mike Faulkner & Peter Foy in 1st, Andrew Gallacher & Jane Nicol in 2nd and Barry Groundwater & Neil Shanks in 3rd made it a memorable weekend for all concerned.

We are also pleased to report Dave Weston Snr's successful nomination to MSA Rallies Committee.

Much discussion is of course taking place on the recommendations so far from the Scottish Government's Safety Review Group and it's clear that even these initial findings will have a significant impact on our sport.

The decision by Scottish Borders Council not to sanction a closed road Jim Clark Rally in May 2015 comes as a blow to the organisers and indeed the local economy. Although representatives of the team were in attendance at a morning meeting at Council HQ, it was clear that there was to be no discussion and the press statement from the Council was already prepared for release the instant the meeting closed. A subsequent statement from the Clerk of the Course has since corrected inaccuracies in the council release and questions have been asked at Holyrood by local MSPs. Only 4 weeks previously, Scottish office minister Sheila Robison had stated that the event would go ahead...

The organisers are reviewing their options at present but are determined that a rally will take place on the intended date.

Plans for the end of year SRC Awards Evening in Glasgow are well under way, ticket sales are already nearing 460 and a final attendance of around 500 looks likely. Discussions with ARR Craib and Pirelli have been favourable and hopefully both will remain on board for 2015.

The championship MC is currently surveying competitors regarding the makeup of the championship next year and hope to make an announcement soon.

Dave Robson.

SACC Stage Rally Co-ordinator.

17/11/14