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CHAMPIONSHIP NEWSLETTER No. 5 – 2026

NICKY GRIST STAGES

FUCHS LUBRICANTS BTRDA GOLD STAR® CHAMPIONSHIP

HIRST'S FIRST 'FIRST' OF THE SEASON!...

Twelve months ago Matthew Hirst/Declan Dear (Fabia Rally2) scored maximum Fuchs Lubricants BTRDA Gold Star Rally Championship points on the Nicky Grist Stages on their way to clinching their maiden title. Another barn-storming performance this time saw them head home from Builth Wells having, once again, finished ahead of all their rivals. However, that is where any similarities end…

Matthew Hirst/Declan Dear 1st Gold Star

This was Hirst/Dear's first 'victory' of the current season and couldn't have come at a more opportune moment. Their Gold Star Champion predecessors, Elliot Payne/Patrick Walsh (Fiesta Rally2) had come up trumps on each of the previous three rounds, leaving Hirst/Dear in a virtual 'must-win' situation if their bid for back-to-back titles was to remain on course. They're not out of the woods (pardon the pun!) yet but it's the Trackrod Forest Stages next – and they won that last year as well!...

Elliot Payne/Patrick Walsh 2nd Gold star

Another baking-hot day in mid Wales saw Hirst/Dear eclipse an off-colour Elliot Payne & Patrick Walsh by four seconds on the opening stage and, although the Fiesta crew set a couple of BTRDA FTDs, the winning margin had extended to 24s by the finish. 'Lady Luck' was definitely smiling on the Skoda as its power-steering pump failed on the way to service and was promptly replaced without incurring any time loss…

Daniel Sigurðarson/Asta Sigurðadóttir 3rd Gold Star

Daniel Sigurðarson/Asta Sigurðadóttir (Fabia RS) continue their successful season with a second successive 3rd place in the points to maintain their position as Payne/Walsh's nearest challengers. Dan O'Brien (Fiesta Rally2), Daniel Hiorns/Michael Gilbey (Fiesta S2000t) and Rob Morris (Citroen C3 Rally2) also claimed Top Ten finishes.

Having made their presence felt on the Plains Rally, James Wilson/Paul Mulholland (Fabia Rally2) and Trevor Gamble/Chris Davies (Fiesta Rally2) were unable to capitalise on their results, both disappearing during the day.

In Class 2 Russ Thompson/Steve Link's domination was brought to an unceremonious end after their

Fiesta failed to appear at the finish of the opening stage. Likewise, Geoff Smith/Joe Dunn (Lancer EVO6) retired around the same time, leaving Pete Gorst/Mark Twiname (Lancer EVO9) to an untroubled run to maximum points and the class lead as we head into the summer break.

PROTYRE AUTOCARE BTRDA SILVER STAR® CHAMPIONSHIP

FRIEND REUNITED!...

Ben Friend/Osian Owen 1st Silver Star

2023 Silver Star Champion Ben Friend and co-driver Osian Owen took their Escort MkII to maximum points in this year's Protyre Autocare BTRDA Silver Star® Championship, finishing half-a-minute ahead of Max Utting (Fiesta ST Max) who claimed runner-up spot for the second event in a row. Jack Bowen, sitting in with an unregistered driver, took 2nd place points while Boyd Kershaw/Keegan Rees (Escort MkII) were next.

Max Utting 2nd Silver Star

Two 'wins' and a 3rd place see Boyd leading the Silver Star drivers' table by a single point from Rian Walker (Adam R2) whose co-driver, Paul Cribben, leads his particular category. Having missed the Plains, erstwhile Silver Star leaders Baz Jordan/Arwel Jenkins (Galant VR4) returned for the Nicky Grist and their efforts were rewarded with a class win. Baz also moves back up to the bottom step of the podium!

Tom Constantine/Tony Walker (Adam R2) claimed BTRDA Rallye R2 Cup honours in mid Wales, from the aforementioned Walker/Cribben and Michael Jenkins/Martin Haggett (Fiesta R2). Cribben has a significant cushion in the points but Walker has Jenkins breathing down his neck. Both have finished all four events to date but it's interesting to note that there has been a different winner on each occasion…

It's not often that Steve 'Korky' Ward/John Millington (Escort MkII) fail to finish an event and it is just such reliability that puts them into the lead of the BTRDA Historic Cup at this stage. Ben Friend/Osian Owen (Escort MkII) claimed maximum points on this occasion but, with three different winners from four events, there's a good deal of sorting out still to be done!

Boyd Kershaw/Keegan Rees 3rd Driver 2nd Codriver Silver Star

Baz Jordan/Arwel Jenkins (Galant VR4) were 2nd, finishing one place ahead of Bryan Jardine (Escort) with Plains 'winners' Ben Jemison/Adam Burkill (Chevette HSR) next.

Nick Dobson/Phil Sandham's usually reliable Escort will need a stern pep-talk between now and its next outing – starting the season with a 2nd in class and

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then a class win, it has caused its crew to take early baths on each of the last two events!...

FUCHS LUBRICANTS BTRDA BRONZE STAR® CHAMPIONSHIP

ALFA BETS ARE ON!...

Dale Glover/David Smalley 1st Bronze Star

Dale Glover/David Smalley (Alfasud TI) kept their heads, while all around etc etc, to take maximum Fuchs Lubricants BTRDA Bronze Star Championship points on the Nicky Grist Stages. They arrived back in Builth Wells half-a-minute in front of Ed James/Kevin Lane (Micra Kit Car) who posted their first finish of the season. Luke Watts/Matt Rogers (MG ZR) took 3rd – more than sufficient to maintain their lead in the Bronze Star.

Ed James/Kevin Lane 2nd Bronze Star

The day started off as one might have expected – Dylan Fowler-Bishop/Emma Clarke (Micra) swopping times with Nigel & Kaz Jenkins (Nova) over the first loop of stages, but then the former took a maximum in SS6 and the latter retired on the next one. Ah – as you were!...

Giles Armitage/Josh Rhodes (205 GTI) took maximum points in the BTRDA Rally First Cup. A similar performance on the Trackrod Forest Stages could well see the pair take the first BTRDA Rally Series award for 2026!

Luke Watts/Matt Rogers 3rd Bronze Star

As is the case in Silver Star, we've had three different Bronze Star winners from the four events that have taken place so far. Such division of honours makes it impossible to predict a winner – so, we won't but, at the same time, we can be sure that there'll be fireworks as the season moves towards its conclusion.

KINGFISHER INSURANCE MOTORSPORT UK ENGLISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

AND THEN THERE WAS ONE...

Elliot Payne (Fiesta Rally2) and Russ Thompson's (Fiesta) joint lead of the Kingfisher Insurance Motorsport UK English Rally Championship was brought to an abrupt halt on the fourth round, the Nicky Grist Stages, by the latter's retirement from the event. Payne's 2nd-in-class points score, to add to his earlier pair of maximums, leaves him out in front on his own for the next couple of months until at least the Trackrod Rally at the end of September. However, with three rounds left to run, nobody's current standing could be described as 'safe'!....

So, Payne and co-driver Patrick Walsh lead their respective categories, with a maximum points score on the Nicky Grist elevating Pete Gorst/Mark

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Twiname (Lancer EVO9) to second place. Consistent scoring sees Icelanders Daniel Sigurðarson/Asta Sigurðadóttir (Fabia RS) in 3rd.

However, just to emphasise how close the scores really are, Russ Thompson's retirement has dropped him from equal first to twelfth place!….

Photos by Kevin Money & Malcolm Almond

GET WELL SOON

Championship photographer Kevin Money was taken ill after the Nicky Grist Stages, we wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him out on the stages on the Trackrod Forest Rally

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS: Competitors to check!

A full list of all the **Protyre Autocare BTRDA Rally Series** points after the Nicky Grist Stages can be found in the Competitor section of **www.btrdarally.com**

A full list of all the **Kingfisher Insurance Motorsport UK English Rally Championship** points after the Nicky Grist Stages can be found in the Competitor section of **www.englishrally.co.uk**

Both sets of points can be found on the Sportity channel BTRDA2025

KIELDER POWER AWARDS

Thanks to generous support from KIELDER Works Team, they will be awarding one of their valuable "Impact Wrench Kit" as a prize on each round of the 2026 Protyre Autocare BTRDA Rally Series.

Further details of the kit Kielder provide please visit https://www.kielder.co

On the Nicky Grist Stages the award goes to the Highest Placed Driver in Class 10: no finishers awarded to Class 9 – **Dale Glover**

On the Trackrod Forest Rally the award will go the highest placed driver in **Class 7**.

ETS RACING FUELS & VITAL EQUIPMENT PRIZE

Premier competition fuel suppliers Vital Equipment Ltd and ETS Racing Fuels continue their initiative to support Britain's most popular national rally series. On every round of the 2026 Protyre Autocare BTRDA Rally Series two competitors each receive **25 litres of Carless Racing Fuel** to be redeemed on the next round of the championship.

On the Plains Rally the prizes were awarded to: -

- The winning driver in class H6: **Ben Friend**
- The winning driver in class 6: **Max Utting**

The two awards on the Trackrod Forest Rally will be for **Class 7 & 10**

At the end of the 2026 season the highest placed Junior Driver who returns to the 2027 Protyre BTRDA Rally Series will receive a fuel deal for each round they enter.

MINTEX / QUESTMEAD BONUS SCHEME

The winners of the Mintex Awards on the Nicky Grist Stages, each of whom receive a FREE set of competition brake pads from Questmead Ltd, are: -

Randomly selected starter in the Bronze Star: **Ed James**

Randomly selected starter in the Gold Star/Silver Star: **Jeremy Harris**

Steve or Alan Brown from Questmead can be found in the Service Area at most events but to **claim your reward, please contact them in advance on 01706 363939.**

ON EVENT BTRDA REPRESENTATION

On the Trackrod Forest Rally it will be Neil & Pete Cross, Sarah Jones & Ian Arden, the BTRDA Eligibility Scrutineer will be John Cooper.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

Trackrod Forest Rally – Saturday 26 September

Held on the legendary forest roads of North Yorkshire, including Dalby, Langdale and Cropton, the event offers a spectacular blend of technical challenge, high speed action and scenic beauty that only Yorkshire can deliver. The event is offering BTRDA crews 43 stage miles and they can enter the longer 55-mile rally and score points. Entries fees have been frozen at the 2025 rates. Regulations for both events will be published on Saturday 1 August (Yorkshire Day!) and entries will open on Friday 7 August. Visit www.rallyyorkshire.co.uk for further information.

DECALS

Competitors are reminded that they **must** display the BTRDA Rally Series decals on each qualifying event to be eligible to score points in the Protyre Autocare BTRDA Rally Series and the Kingfisher Insurance Motorsport UK 2026 English Rally Championship. These include a **sponsor panel on each side of the car** and a **championship screen strip** which must be displayed on the windscreen, not on the roof. Checks will be carried out to ensure compliance with this.

We allow some latitude on the first round but from round 2 this will be strictly enforced.

Co-drivers with non-registered drivers must carry 2 x BTRDA club decals on the car.

Decals are available from the BTRDA Championship Co-ordinator Neil Cross Tel: 07767773862 or the Championship representatives at each of the qualifying events in the Protyre Autocare BTRDA Rally Series.

ON EVENT FUEL

Vital Equipment are the recommended fuel supplier for the BTRDA Rally Series and will be providing a re-fuel service at all the events. They supply both a Motorsport UK compliant Super Unleaded fuel and a FIA spec ETS turbo fuel. We strongly emphasise the convenience, safety and organisational benefits that using the Vital Equipment facility brings to competitors. To order your fuel please use the on-line order facility listed in the Competitors section of the BTRDA Rally Series website. www.vitalequipment.co.uk/pages/btrda-rally-series-fuell-order-form

SPECIAL STAGE FILMING

Once again Special Stage will be **live streaming** from the Stages on every BTRDA Rally Series event this year, bringing all the action to our screens across several media platforms. For more details follow them on X or check out their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/specialstage

Scan the QR codes to access the Facebook Page and YouTube Channel

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Championship Team

The 2026 **Championship Co-ordinators:**

Neil Cross	Email: trec1.nec@btinternet.com	Tel: 07767 773862
Bryan Hull	Email: hqmsport@gmail.com	

Neil will be at every event supported by other members of the BTRDA Rally Series

https://webapp.sportity.com/channel/BTRDA2025

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