

Elsmore Flies onto the Podium at WyeDean Rally...

Nik Elsmore and Nigel Gardner secured a podium finish in their Klarius sponsored car at the WyeDean Rally.

'Green Innovation' CAT award winners, Klarius, teamed up with 'Motor Factor of the Year' winners GMF to sponsor the WyeDean Rally; the event, held on Saturday 13th February, featured 45 miles of forest rallying held over several stages and is a round of the BTRDA championship. On the day 163 cars competed from numerous categories ranging from historic classics to modern WRC cars.

The rally has been a regular feature in the British rallying calendar since 1975, when the Forest of Dean Motor Club first ran it. Set amongst the picturesque Lower Wye Valley and Forest of Dean, the course offers drivers a number of fantastic hairpins, chicanes and jumps and regularly attracts one of the largest numbers of spectators for any rally event in the UK.

This year the event was sponsored by CAT magazine's 'Motor Factor of the Year', GMF Motor Factors. GMF was joined by their suppliers, Klarius, who recently received the 'Green Innovation' award for a racing catalytic converter that was developed for another race series it sponsors, the first commercial catalytic converter of its type.

Bill Godfrey, UK Sales Manager for Klarius, comments: "Klarius and GMF Motor Factors have an exceptional working relationship; the two companies are also involved in other motor racing events together, so when they approached us to partner them in the sponsorship of the WyeDean Rally we were eager to help support the event. The WyeDean Rally is one of the most popular rallies of the British season and this year was no disappointment. It was a rare treat to watch such a varied number of cars competing on the challenging timed stages of the course."

The day was packed with thrilling racing and close results in all of the categories. Steve Perez and Paul Spooner won the event overall in their Kick Energy Ford Focus WRC. This was Perez' first victory at Chepstow, a result that he has been chasing for some years; he managed to keep his lead throughout the day and, after 45 miles of racing, finished half a minute ahead of second place - 2007 winners Hugh Hunter and Andy Marchbank, also in a Ford Focus.

As well as sponsoring the event Klarius and GMF were the sponsors for last year's champions Nik Elsmore and Nigel Gardner. A WyeDean local, Nik has competed at international level and won the WyeDean Rally twice previously. Despite heroic driving throughout the day Nik was unable to chase down the Focus's and finished the day in third place.

Nik Elsmore said: "The WyeDean Rally is my local event so it has always held a special place in my heart. While it would have been nice to have secured my third victory today I am over the moon with a podium finish. It is a great honour for me each year that I race this event and it wouldn't have been possible without the support of Klarius and GMF.

Finishing just shy of the podium was a trio of Herefordshire drivers with a mere three seconds separating Roger Chilman, Shaun Gardener and Damian Cole respectively. They were all cheered on by large home crowd, clearly elated to see local drivers representing so strongly.

Former British Historic Rally Champions David Stokes/Guy Weaver brought their Ford Escort RS1600 to a popular win in the Historic section. The Dursley driver was equal fastest in his class on the opening stage in Mailscot with fellow Escort driver Dick Slaughter, but then moved ahead on the next to assume a lead he maintained for the rest of the day.

Irishmen Adrian Hetherington & Gary Nolan finished one place behind Stokes/Weaver in their Ford Escort MkII to take maximum points in the Silverstone Tyres BTRDA Silver Star Championship for two-wheel drive cars. Jon Ballinger/Jonny Evans (Opel Manta) were only a handful of seconds behind in second place.

The 1400cc category was won by Julian Wilkes and Will Rutherford in their Vauxhall Nova VXR190. However, the Westcountrymen did not have things all their own way and, for the first half of the event, had to give best to the Proton Satria of former 1400cc Champions Darren Pinchin and Karen Watts from Bream. After the rally's one and only service

halt and armed with some new front tyres, Wilkes put in a charge to reverse the deficit and take the win by half a minute, while Pinchin/Watts had to be content with maximum Millers Oils 1400 Championship points. North Walian Matt Edwards, partnered by Sam Collis, was three seconds behind Pinchin in his MG ZR to take 3rd place.

The WyeDean Rally is traditionally a tough challenge for both the drivers and the cars; this year out of the 163 entrants over 30 cars didn't make it to the finish. Retirements included five-times WyeDean winner Andy Burton, co-driven by his son Josh, who went out when his Peugeot Cosworth's engine developed problems and 2009 Silverstone Tyres BTRDA Gold Star Champion David Wright whose defence of his title started badly after his Mitsubishi Lancer was forced out with an oil leak.

Bill Godfrey continues: "Britain has a rich motor racing heritage. Events like the WyeDean Rally give local enthusiasts the chance to compete alongside international figures. At Klarius we believe that motor racing is important to the motor industry as it fuels the need for continuous development of technologies. We are proud to have sponsored such a well run and enjoyable event; hopefully we can play a part in future rallies."

About the KLARIUS Group

Klarius Group is the largest European manufacturer of aftermarket car parts today. The Klarius Group operates five high-volume Manufacturing Plants, a Research & Development Centre, four European Technical Centres, eight International Logistics & Distribution Hubs, and eighteen national and regional Stock Warehouses based across Europe. Klarius Group Headquarters are located in Manchester (UK).

The Klarius Group employs 1,200 personnel across Europe, and has an annual turnover of 200 million Euros.

The two current major market brands within the Klarius Group are Klarius Emission Control Products and QH Automotive parts. Both the QH and Klarius product brands represent a range of OE quality replacement automotive products. Klarius Group companies now offer over 100,000 parts, covering the majority of the European Car Parc, supplying over 80,000 parts every day, to over 5,600 delivery points in more than 136 countries.

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