

## Last minute win for Alfa Romeo in the Rally of the Tests

Paul Wignall and Mark Appleton claimed the first place of the Rally of the Tests in an 1959 Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint after taking over the lead in the final section from Jan Ebus and Iain Tullie's 1964 Porsche 356.



The event, which is organised by the Classic Rally Association (CRA), was the final round of the FIA Trophy for Historic Regularity Rallies and the fifth qualifying round of the HERO Cup, in association with EFG International.

The 12th Rally of the Tests saw 81 classic cars set off from Chester on Thursday 31st October on a route that took them across North Wales, Lancashire and Cumbria, to finish in Harrogate, Yorkshire, on Sunday 3rd November – 69 made it across the finish line.

Jeremy Dickson, CRA Event Director, said: "It was a fantastic and tough event. The new route created by Clerk of the Course Guy Woodcock took competitors through some great roads and test venues."

He added: "We had bad weather on Friday and Saturday so competitors and marshals had to contend with torrential rain and high winds, but these didn't demoralise the crews. The rain also made Oulton Park extremely difficult to handle, the circuit was very slippery and drivers struggled to keep the cars on the track."

This year was the fourth time that Paul Wignall and Mark Appleton have won the event. They didn't have an easy run though and had to overcome electrical problems in their Alfa on the prologue and first day. However, they managed to recover and come first across the finish line at the Old Swan Hotel, in Harrogate, in front of a cheering crowd.

Jan Ebus and Iain Tullie in their Porsche 356 led for much of the event but a few uncharacteristic mistakes in the final sections allowed the Alfa Romeo to take the lead. A slight consolation for Iain was that he received the trophy for the best "timekeeping" performance and was also confirmed as the top co-driver in the FIA Trophy for Regularity Rallies.

Ryan Pickering and Andy Ballantyne completed the podium in their 1962 Triumph TR4. Ryan also received the trophy for setting the fastest times on the Driving Tests, which are the sections of the event that take place off the public highway.

Patrick Burke, joint managing director of the Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation (HERO), said: "The test at the military Swynnerton Training Camp in North Staffordshire was extremely well received and is becoming a 'testers' favourite venue. It is not usually open to the public but we were allowed in for 20 minutes of action."

He added: "It was also great to see local residents out in the streets and at the publicised spectator points, waving and cheering for the cars as they passed."

Next year the 13th running of the Rally of the Tests will run from Buxton to Bristol and have two nights at Llandrindod Wells.

The next event and last qualifying round of the much coveted 2013 HERO Cup, in association with EFG International, is Le Jog, the toughest event of its kind in Europe. Le Jog will see drivers battling it out against UK's fierce weather conditions on an epic 1,500 mile route between Land's End and John O'Groats from December 7th to 10th.