

# Press Information



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## MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE UK ROUND 3 - REPORT



- Jim Clark International Rally  
28 – 29 May 2010
- Alastair Fisher scores convincing maiden victory and finishes second overall.
- Jonny Greer's second in Evo Challenge and fourth overall sees him continue to lead Mitsubishi series and British Championship.
- Daniel Sigurdarson records first ever asphalt event finish to claim third.

30th May 2010

A stunning performance this weekend saw Alastair Fisher and co-driver Rory Kennedy claim their first ever Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge victory on this weekend's Jim Clark International Rally, their pace good enough to see them finish second overall and even lead the event outright at one point. Jonny Greer/Dai Roberts were second and therefore continue to lead the Mitsubishi series, whilst Daniel Sigurdarson and Asta Sigurdardottir were third and delighted to finish their first ever all-asphalt rally.

The event, which was also the third round of the Dulux Trade MSA British Rally Championship, celebrated its 40th anniversary this year and began with a spectacular start in Duns at 7.00pm on Friday. The first of the evening's six stages featured a spectacular run from the centre of the town and through its closed streets, Fisher/Kennedy fastest of the Evo Challenge crews – but only just – with Greer/Roberts just 0.1 second behind.

Next were Owen Murphy/James O'Brien, who were aiming for a trouble-free run after a non-finish and then power issues in the first and second rounds. However, luck was still not on their side, when their car's clutch started slipping almost right from the start.

Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir were trying to remain calm before the start, as this was only the second all-asphalt rally for the Icelandic driver, his first being a short-lived affair when he crashed on the Isle of Man two years previously. Added to this, it was the first tarmac event for his co-driver.

Their nerves were not helped when seconds before they were due to leave the start line a wild Deer ran down the street in front of them. Fortunately, the stray animal didn't stay around long enough to cause a hazard, but their momentary loss of concentration caused them to spin at the very first corner.

All Mitsubishi crews made it through SS2 and SS3, with Fisher/Kennedy pulling out a comfortable lead of 41 seconds before the loop of the same three stages was repeated. Following this, competitors entered the service area and over-night halt at Kelso Racecourse, with the time sheets showing that Fisher/Kennedy had extended their advantage by another 30 seconds and now held third place overall.

Greer/Roberts were still in second, but disappointed not to be closer to the leaders. Having been advised that the weather was going to change they had opted for wet pattern tyres, which had hampered their progress greatly in the dry conditions.

Murphy/O'Brien had retained their position, although they were not comfortable with the feel of their car through the bumpy Berwickshire lanes, although the clutch was now behaving itself. Following them, Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir were just relieved to get through the first part of the event with no problems whatsoever.

Saturday provided a further eight stages, each run twice, with a service halt after SS8 and SS10. Fisher/Kennedy carried on from where they left off on the previous day and proceeded to extend their Evo Challenge lead. They even went onto first place overall after SS10, when cars ahead of them collected punctures or had mechanical problems.

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Even though Greer/Roberts were now on the right tyres and their pace was closer to that of the leaders, they could realistically only consolidate their position. But for Murphy/O'Brien SS8 was to be their last, when a loud bang from their gearbox signalled they had a problem and, although making it to the end of the stage, the car would go no further.

With the final loop of four stages to go, the podium positions in the Evolution Challenge looked unlikely to change unless bad luck intervened. Having got to this point in the last two rallies and then retired due to transmission troubles, Fisher/Kennedy took a deep breath and aimed for the cleanest run they could, staying out of trouble and away from punctures – especially as light rain had now started to fall.

Their strategy and the onset of an intermittent misfire from stage 11 onwards was to allow eventual rally winners Gwyndaf Evans and Chris Patterson through and into first place overall. However, after an excellent drive 21-year old Fisher went on to record his best result to date by taking second place overall, finish runner-up in a round of the British Rally Championship and secure his first ever victory in the Evolution Challenge.

"I am extremely pleased with the way things have gone this weekend and I must thank the team for all they have done", said Fisher at the finish. "I was bit worried towards the end when the engine started to misfire, but it's great to get to the finish of a British Championship event this year and to record my first Evolution Challenge win. My season starts now!"

Greer/Roberts did what they needed to do and, with a trouble-free run throughout the day collected second place in the Evolution Challenge and fourth overall, which was enough to ensure they maintain their lead in both the Mitsubishi series and the British Rally Championship.

Sigurdarson/Sigurdardottir were both relieved and delighted to finally lay the spectre of completing an asphalt rally to rest and, in doing so, recorded a highly respectable third in the Evolution Challenge and seventh place overall.

The fourth round of the British Mitsubishi series is the second of three consecutive asphalt-based events, when the series heads to the infamous land mass in the Irish Sea for the International Rally Isle of Man, which takes place on 9th & 10th July.

The 2010 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge UK is supported by: Mitsubishi Motors UK, Pirelli tyres, Sunoco fuels, JRM, Cyprus Automobile Association, Fairways Mitsubishi, Speedline Corse wheels, Murray Motorsport, CL brake pads, Sparco racewear and PIAA lights - who sponsor the junior award for under 25-year old drivers.

For the first time this season the winner of the Evolution Challenge in the UK, Ireland and Sweden, will win the same prize: A supported drive in the FxPro Rally Cyprus, the final round of the IRC (Intercontinental Rally Challenge). Then, whichever of the three teams are first home on this event will be crowned European Evolution Challenge Champions. Added to this, the winning driver in the UK will be a guaranteed nomination for the Pirelli Star Driver shoot-out.

### **Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge UK - Round 3 Results**

1	Alastair Fisher (Trillick)/Rory Kennedy (Letterkenny)	1:55:04.6
2	Jonny Greer (Carryduff)/Dai Roberts (Carmarthen)	1:57:17.7
3	Daniel Sigurdarson (Iceland)/Asta Sigurdardottir (Iceland)	2:00:57.0

#### **Retirements**

SS8 Owen Murphy (Cork)/James O'Brien (Cork)	Gearbox
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#### **Series standings**

##### Drivers

1	Jonny Greer	58
2	Daniel Sigurdarson	52
3	Alastair Fisher	20
4=	David Bogie	16
4=	Owen Murphy	16
6	Peter Horsey	15

##### Co-drivers

1	Dai Roberts	58
2	Asta Sigurdardottir	52
3	Rory Kennedy	20
4=	Kevin Rae	16
4=	James O'Brien	16

ENDS

#### **Photo caption**

After a stunning performance, Alastair Fisher and co-driver Rory Kennedy recorded their first ever win in the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge on round three, the Jim Clark International Rally (*Copyright free image, but please credit Jakob Ebrey*).

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