



www.evo-challenge.ie

THE 2009
MITSUBISHI RALLIART
EVOLUTION CHALLENGE
IRELAND
IS SUPPORTED BY:



PROMOTIONS

Press Information

MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE IRELAND ROUND SEVEN REPORT



- Todds Leap Ulster International Rally 21st & 22nd August 2009.
- First Irish Evo Challenge win of the season for Alan Carmichael, who also claims UK Evo Challenge victory.
- Keith Cronin takes early lead until sidelined by first-day accident.
- Determined drive by William Mavitty nets him second place.

24th August 2009

Alan Carmichael and co-driver Ivor Lamont recorded their first Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland victory of the season on this weekend's Todds Leap Ulster International Rally, round three of the Irish Mitsubishi series. They took the lead in the latter part of the first day and were never challenged for the remainder of the rally after British Championship front-runners Keith Cronin/Greg Shinnors crashed out.

The event, which was also a round of the MSA British Rally Championship, marked a first in the history of the Evolution Challenge, as it formed a round of both the Irish and UK Mitsubishi Championships.

Starting from Antrim on Friday afternoon, the event featured three stages, each ran twice, before the overnight halt. A further four stages ran twice made up Saturday's itinerary, with the finish back in Antrim that evening after a total of 127 competitive miles.

Taking into account their pace this year in the BRC, it was perhaps predictable that round-one and two Irish Evo winners Cronin/Shinnors would initially head the Mitsubishi field following the first stage. Living not far from the rally in nearby Ballymena, Carmichael/Lamont put their local knowledge to good use and were second, two seconds ahead of recently crowned 2009 UK Evo Challenge Champions, Daniel Barry/Martin Brady, who had registered for the Irish series especially for this event.

But for the winners on the last two occasions, John McGlaughlin/Crawford Henderson, it was a disappointing start. At the end of stage one their pace-notes described a brow, followed by 100 yards into a 90 degree right hander. However, in reality only 50 yards separated the crest from the corner, which meant they entered the bend too fast, slid wide and beached the car on a small bank.

After losing five minutes before getting going again, a rear driveshaft snapped at the start of stage two, in no doubt weakened due to their off road excursion. Because of this McGlaughlin/Henderson lost a further three minutes and therefore decided to retire at the first service halt.

Cronin/Shinnors had now extended their lead to a minute ahead of Barry/Brady, who had since passed Carmichael/Lamont to claim second place. However, the newly-crowned UK Evo Challenge title-holders were not comfortable with their pace-notes and road positioning – a factor that became even more than apparent on stage four.

After travelling at speed over a series of bumps on a fast, narrow section of road, the back of the car stepped out and clipped a bank, damaging the near-side rear suspension too badly to continue. Two stages later it was Cronin/Shinnors's turn to be caught out by the technically demanding roads, when their car under-steered into a bank, the impact damaging far too many mechanical components to allow them to continue,

At the overnight halt the results showed Carmichael/Lamont now leading both the Irish and UK Evo Challenges, but they were far from happy with their car's inability to select fourth gear, due to a problem with the linkage mechanism.

continued...

William Mavitty and stand-in co-driver Barry McNulty were now second of the Irish Mitsubishiis and enjoying the stages, although reporting a number of spins and overshoots which had interrupted their progress and meant they were over two minutes behind the leaders. They were followed by Stanley Ballantine/Donnacha O'Callaghan a further 35 seconds behind, with Liam Egan/Mary O'Kane in fifth place.

Saturday dawned dry and bright, a factor which pleased most drivers, as the unpredictable nature of the road conditions on Friday had led to a lottery as far as tyre choice was concerned. Behind them, Mavitty/McNulty were aware that one false move would see their regular sparring partners Ballantine/O'Callaghan be right behind and therefore were concerned that an overshoot on SS7, followed by contact with a straw bale on SS8, may have slowed their progress. Egan/O'Kane also had cause for concern during the day, when their car sprung a mysterious water leak, but thankfully it didn't develop into anything serious.

Still plagued by their transmission troubles, Carmichael/Lamont battled on, by now having to change directly from third to fifth and missing fourth gear completely. Adding to their issues during the day was a reduction in performance when a securing bolt in their car's turbo-charger came loose. However, it did nothing to break the local crew's stride and, after a near perfect performance, they crossed the line in Antrim to win their first round of this year's Irish Evo Challenge, as well as record their first win in the UK Evo Challenge and finish a credible ninth overall.

"It's fantastic to have won my first round of the Irish Evo Challenge this year", said Carmichael. "This was a really tough event. Although some the roads are local to me, they really are very demanding to drive. Added to this, the gear-selection problem made things difficult on occasions. However, it was an excellent event and a double Evo Challenge victory is just the result I was hoping for."

With the current series leader Neil McCance away on holiday, second place for Mavitty sees him move ahead in the Irish Evo Challenge standings, before the final event, the Wexford-based Riverside Hotel, Dick Baily Stages Rally. Taking place on 12th & 13th September and with an equal amount of stages on Saturday and Sunday, the rally hosts rounds eight and nine. Therefore, with two points scoring opportunities and competitors having to drop three rounds, there are no less than five drivers and four co-drivers that could be crowned 2009 Irish Evolution Challenge Champions.

The Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland is supported by: Pirelli tyres, Sunoco Racing Fuels, James Foley Rallysport, Carbone Lorraine, Murray Motorsport, Speedline Corse wheels, PIAA lights, Pacenotes, Sparco racewear and Mitsubishi Motors Ireland.

Round seven results

1 Alan Carmichael (Ballymena)/Ivor Lamont (Ballymena)	2:01:10.1
2 William Mavitty (Eniskillen)/Barry McNulty (Eniskillen)	2:05:42.4
3 Stanley Ballantine (Strabane)/Donnacha O'Callaghan (Mallow)	2:06:44.8
4 Liam Egan (New York)/Mary O'Kane (Maghera)	2:15:47.1

Retirements

SS3 John McGlaughlin (Cookstown)/Crawford Henderson (Magherafelt)	Driveshaft
SS4 Daniel Barry (Enniskerry)/Martin Brady (Navan)	Accident
SS6 Keith Cronin (Cork)/Greg Shinnors (Limerick)	Accident

Series standings after round seven

Drivers		Co-drivers	
1 William Mavitty	42	1 Donnacha O'Callaghan	43
2 Stanley Ballantine	40	2 Sean Ferris	34
3 Liam Egan	39	3 Keefe Kilcoyne	33
4 Neil McCance	34	4 Ivor Lamont	32
5 Alan Carmichael	32	5= Greg Shinnors	24
6= Keith Cronin	24	5= Crawford Henderson	24
6= John McGlaughlin	24	7 Mary O'Kane	22
8 Geoff McMahon	20	8 Robert Graham	21
9 Tom White	11	9 Colin Harkness	18
10 Brendan Cumiskey	8	10 Robert Murphy	11
11 Michael Murray	5	11 Brian Daniels	6
12 Alan Burrows	4	12 Gavin Burrows	4

Photo: Alan Carmichael and co-driver Ivor Lamont won round seven of the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland on the Todds Leap Ulster International Rally. They put their local knowledge to good use to record their first victory of the season in the Irish Mitsubishi series and added to their success by also being first home in the UK Mitsubishi series (copyright free image).