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Press Information

MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE UK ROUND TWO REPORT

- **Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally**
20th & 21st March 2009.
- **Daniel Barry takes second victory of the season.**
- **Simon Hughes finishes second after leading the first leg.**
- **Owen Murphy overcomes problems to claim third.**



23rd March 2009

Daniel Barry and his co-driver Martin Brady recorded their second Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge victory in as many events, when they won round two of the Championship for production-class Lancers on this weekend's Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally.

Based in Jedburgh, the event featured seven stages on the eastern side of the infamous Kielder Forest, renowned to contain some of the most demanding rally stages in the world. For the first time in the event's history – and to spice things up – organisers ran the first two stages in the dark on Friday evening.

Fastest of the Evolution Challenge crews through the first stage were the eventual winners Barry/Brady, who stopped the clock 3.7 seconds ahead of Simon Hughes/Craig Parry. Nik Elsmore/Craig Drew were third and not happy with their pace, whilst Owen Murphy/Dai Roberts and Alan Carmichael/Ivor Lamont were both caught out by the fog that had rapidly appeared for the first two miles of SS1 and both went straight on at a junction due to the poor visibility.

Hughes was the only driver who reported getting into any rhythm in SS2 and shot into the Evo Challenge lead ahead of Barry by 2.9 seconds, who admitted he was a bit ragged and had lost time by going sideways too often. Elsmore had a better stage and maintained third, whilst Murphy, although hanging onto fourth, had lost third gear due to a selector problem, which was consequently fixed during the overnight halt.

Hughes maintained his advantage on SS3 the next morning but then momentarily visited a ditch in stage four and dropped to second. Elsmore caught another car in SS4 which slowed him a little and, with Murphy's gearbox fixed he was now catching up the time he lost during the two night-time stages. Carmichael admitted he was now cruising, having lost too much time in the dark to make an impression on the leaders.

After the first service halt crews tackled the longest stage of the rally: 15 miles in Harwood Forest. Barry was now flying – even with no clutch for the last 3.7 miles due to a broken joint on the master cylinder. But for Hughes it was a different story when he out-braked himself going into a chicane and, with a 10-second penalty for hitting the cones marking the man-made obstacle, he came away with a 40-second deficit for collecting four of them.

Elsmore also lost time when he had to stop and change a puncture and dropped to fifth. Murphy then inherited third, but was lucky to do so, as his engine was running on three cylinders throughout the stage – the problem traced to a faulty spark plug at the following service halt.

Barry now was almost a minute ahead of Hughes, but it nearly all went wrong for the young Irishman on the road section to stage six, when the car's fuel pump cut-out. Luckily, he had a spare and was able to get going again, but not before a few worrying moments.

Hughes knew he could now only win if Barry had a problem and consolidated his second place, whilst Murphy had a good final pair of stages and finished third. Carmichael took fourth, whilst Elsmore was just relieved to make it home in fifth place.

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At the finish Barry said: "It's never easy! We had a few problems and so I'm pleased to get to the finish, especially as this is my second victory in the Evo Challenge and means we've had a 100% success rate so far this season. I feel that we needed to win this weekend, as we may not be so lucky on future events and things could get tougher from here on."

As well as winning the Mitsubishi series, Barry also won Group N and finished fourth overall, which means he now has a four point lead in the Evolution Challenge and tops the tables in MSA National Gravel Rally Championship, with Hughes second.

The third round of both Championship takes place on 18th April, when competitors return to Kielder Forest – this time the western side – for the Pirelli Tour of Cumbria.

The 2009 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge is supported by Mitsubishi Motors UK, Ralliart, Pirelli tyres, Sunoco fuels, JR Motorsports, Speedline Corse wheels, Carbone Lorraine brakes, Walkinshaw Performance, Sparco racewear and PIAA lights - who sponsor the junior award for under 25-year old drivers.

Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge - Round Two Results

1 Daniel Barry (Enniskerry)/Martin Brady (Navan)	59:09.9
2 Simon Hughes (Abergle)/Craig Parry (Llanymynech)	59:56.4
3 Owen Murphy (Cork)/Dai Roberts (Carmarthen)	1:03:22.4
4 Alan Carmichael(Ballymena)/Ivor Lamont (Ballymena)	1:05:08.4
5 Nik Elsmore (Coleford)/Craig Drew (Bream)	1:05:53.0

Championship positions after round two

Drivers

1 Daniel Barry	24
2 Simon Hughes	20
3 Owen Murphy	14
4 Nik Elsmore	13
5 Alan Carmichael	12
6 Andreas Magnusson	8
7 Neil Armstrong	4

Co-drivers

1 Martin Brady	24
2 Dai Roberts	14
3 Craig Drew	13
4 Ivor Lamont	12
5 Patrick Walsh	10
6 Craig Parry	10
7 Henrik Hulteruskog	8
8 Max Ferri	4

ENDS

Photo: Daniel Barry and co-driver Martin Brady won round two of the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge, the Jedburgh-based Brick & Steel Border Counties Rally, to record their second victory of the season (copyright free image).

For media enquiries and copyright free images please contact the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Coordinator & Press Officer Simon Slade: Tel: 01935 424873 | Mob: 07966 153555 | E.mail: simon@rpmprmo.com

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