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MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE UK ROUND SEVEN REPORT

- **ToddsLeap.com Ulster International Rally**
21st & 22nd August 2009.
- **Alan Carmichael makes the most of his local knowledge to takes maiden UK Evo Challenge win – and also claims Irish Evo Challenge victory.**
- **Crash sidelines 2009 Champion Daniel Barry whilst in the lead.**
- **Nik Elsmore looses time in early stages and finishes second.**



24th August 2009

Round seven of the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge UK, the Todds Leap Ulster International Rally, saw Alan Carmichael and co-driver Ivor Lamont record their first British Mitsubishi series win. They took the lead in the latter part of the first day when 2009 Champions Daniel Barry/Martin Brady crashed out and were never challenged for the remainder of the rally.

The event, which was also a round of the MSA British Rally Championship, provided the Evolution Challenge with its second asphalt rally of the season. It also marked a first in the history of the series, the event forming a round of both the UK and Irish Mitsubishi championships.

Starting from Antrim on Friday afternoon, the rally 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.

Living not far from the stages in nearby Ballymena, Carmichael/Lamont put their local knowledge to good use and went fastest on the first stage by two seconds ahead of Barry/Brady, who admitted that they were perhaps a bit too relaxed having wrapped up this year's Mitsubishi championship at the previous round. As Barry/Brady upped their pace for SS2 and SS3, Carmichael found that engaging forth gear was becoming more and more difficult and, at the first service halt, the time sheets showed Barry/Brady ahead by six seconds.

However, the 2009 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.

Unusually, Nik Elsmore and Craig Drew appeared to be off the pace, their progress hampered when they went to change tyres after stage two and a jacking point broke away. They then booked into stage three four-minutes late and consequently collected a 40-second penalty.

As car's returned to Antrim for the overnight halt, Carmichael/Lamont were now enjoying a comfortable lead of one-minute 40 seconds. However, they were far from comfortable with their car's inability to select fourth gear, due to a problem with the linkage mechanism.

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.

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Now happy with the handling of his Mitsubishi, Elsmore vowed to fight back during Saturday's eight stages, but try as he and Drew might, whatever they did they could not make the impression they were hoping for on Carmichael/Lamont.

Still plagued by their transmission troubles, the local front-runners battled on, 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 Carmichael/Lamont's stride and, after a near perfect performance, they crossed the line in Antrim to win their first ever round of the UK Evo Challenge, win their first round of the Irish Evo Challenge this year and finish a credible ninth overall.

"It's fantastic to have won my first UK Evo Challenge round", 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."

The eighth and final round of this year's Evolution Challenge takes place on 26th September, when the Mitsubishi series again joins the MSA British Rally Championship, this time on gravel forest roads, for the International Rally of Yorkshire.

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.

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Round seven - results

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 Alan Carmichael (Ballymena)/Ivor Lamont (Ballymena) | 2:01:10.1 |
| 2 Nik Elsmore (Coleford)/Craig Drew (Bream) | 2:02:42.1 |

Retirements

| | |
|--|----------|
| SS4 Daniel Barry (Enniskerry)/Martin Brady (Navan) | Accident |
|--|----------|

Championship positions after round seven

Drivers

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| 1 Daniel Barry | 70 |
| 2 Simon Hughes | 50 |
| 3 Nik Elsmore | 43 |
| 4 Alan Carmichael | 30 |
| 5 Owen Murphy | 29 |
| 7 Daniel Sigurdarson | 17 |
| 6 Andreas Magnusson | 8 |
| 8 Neil Armstrong | 4 |

Co-drivers

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| 1 Martin Brady | 70 |
| 2 Craig Drew | 43 |
| 3 Craig Parry | 40 |
| 4 Dai Roberts | 29 |
| 5 Ivor Lamont | 18 |
| 6 Patrick Walsh | 10 |
| 7 Henrik Hulterskog | 8 |
| 8 Isak Gudjonsson | 7 |
| 9 Max Ferri | 4 |

ENDS

Photo: Alan Carmichael and co-driver Ivor Lamont won round seven of the Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge on the Todds Leap Ulster Rally. They put their local knowledge to good use to record their first ever victory in the UK Mitsubishi Championship and added to their success by also being the first crew home in the Irish Evo Challenge (*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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