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Special Stage Rallying comes to the Royal Automobile Club

For the first time in its history, the Royal Automobile Club's Woodcote Park estate played host to a competitive motorsport event when the Mini Britannia rally took place there on Saturday, May 10.

Beginning at 8.31 am, cars were flagged away from the front of the main building at one minute intervals. Heading out of the main gate, the diverse field, which included a Jaguar XK120 and C-type, a 1965 Ford GT40, 1970 Camaro, 1969 Morgan Plus 8 and many Porsche 911s, made its way to Dunsfold Park, home of the BBC Top Gear track, to compete in the first, three-mile, high-speed competition stage.

Heading north, the next challenge was at Brooklands with its famous test hill, as well as cone-marked sections of the steep banking, after tests and careful car control, competitors were able to stretch their legs on the Mercedes-Benz World test track. After lunch, it was back to Dunsfold Park, where competitors were able to do what so many 'Top Gear' viewers have wanted to do in taking on the iconic speed stage made famous by the show's 'star in a reasonably car'. Driver Howard Redhouse set an impressive lap time of just 1 minute, 28 seconds in his Porsche 911 and maintained his pole position on the leader board at each stage of the rally.

The Club's Woodcote Park played host to the final stage of the rally within the grounds of the elegant 17th Century mansion where Howard Redhouse and his co-driver Scott Nicholson won the Mini Britannia cup.

Like its big brother the Tour Britannia, Mini Britannia comprises Competition and Regularity categories and runs on asphalt roads. Following the format of Tour Britannia, crews in the Competition event tackle a series of asphalt special stages, while the Regularity competitors follow the same route with straightforward average speed tests on the same stages. Regularity entrants are fully fledged competitors, but competition licences are not necessary. The regularity competition was won by driver Andrew Brodie and Richard Payne driving a 1972 Citroen SM.

'It is such a great honour for ours to be the first competitive motor race to be held at Woodcote Park in over 100 years,' said Alec Poole, founder of Mini Britannia. 'We are so fortunate to have been granted permission by the club and are grateful for their hospitality and support. We would also like to thank special guest Paddy Hopkirk for presenting the trophies at the prize giving.'

'We are delighted to have hosted the final competitive stage of Mini Britannia rally at Woodcote Park, what an incredible sight to see Captain's Drive roar into life' said Ben Cussons, Chairman of the Royal Automobile Club's Motoring Committee.

Notes to Editors:

About The Royal Automobile Club

The Royal Automobile Club was founded in 1897 and its distinguished history mirrors that of motoring itself. In 1907, the Club was awarded its Royal title by King Edward VII, sealing the Club's status as Britain's oldest and most influential motoring organisation.

The Club's early years were focused on promoting the motor car and its place in society, which developed into motoring events such as the 1000 Mile Trial, first held in 1900. In 1905, the Club held the first Tourist Trophy, which remains the oldest continuously competed for motor sports event. The Club promoted the first pre-war and post-war Grands Prix at Brooklands in 1926 and Silverstone in 1948 respectively, whilst continuing to campaign for the rights of the motorist, including introducing the first driving licences.

Today, the Club continues to develop and support automobilism through representation on the Motor Sport Association (MSA), Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and RAC Foundation, while continuing to promote its own motoring events, such as the free-to-attend Regent Street Motor Show and the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run.

The Royal Automobile Club also awards a series of historic trophies and medals celebrating motoring achievements. These include the Segrave Trophy, the Tourist Trophy, the Simms Medal, the Dewar Trophy and the Torrens Trophy.

About Tour Britannia:

Since its inception in 2005 Tour Britannia has established itself as the UK's only Race Tour and is reminiscent of racing and rallying of the Fifties and Sixties. Designed primarily for historic cars with the Competition and Regularity events open to vehicles up to December 1981, a new invitation category, Targa, was introduced in 2011 for cars of any age.

Each day of the event sees the Competition and Targa cars doing a number of rally special stages based at stately homes and other notable venues. In addition they also race at circuits such as Croft, Mallory or Silverstone. Competitors are issued a road book to get from one venue to the next. Whilst quiet traffic free roads are chosen, occasionally it is necessary to use main routes to maximise the number of stages used during the day. Cars in the Regularity Category use the same route, but make detours to take in a couple of road regularity sections each day (run under the jogularity style). They use the special stages as a regularity – the emphasis being not how fast you can go, but how well you can keep to pre-set average speeds!



A Royal Automobile Club Event

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