

## PATRICK WATTS – BRITISH HISTORIC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP CONTENDER

DRIVER	CLASS	RD	RD	RD	RD	RD	RD	RD	TOTAL	OVERALL
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7/9	POINTS	POSITION
Neil Calvert	B4	25	29	25	30	25	23		157	1
Steven Smith	C3/C4	30	30	30	31	31	1		153	2
Patrick Watts	B5	26	31	1	31	31	26		146	3
Philip Atkinson	B4	30	24	30	1	30	29		144	4
Dessie Nutt	B5/C4	11	26	31	25	1	31		125	5
Mark Solloway	C5	31	29	31	22	1	0		114	6

**Patrick Watts is storming through the Armajoro British Historic Rally Championship and is in a good enough position in the standings to take the overall Championship crown along with a well deserved 'Historic' Category victory.**

The following profile, Championship press release extracts & quotes are partly reproduced courtesy of BHRC and Mike Hally ©

For a longer read go to [www.hrcr.co.uk](http://www.hrcr.co.uk) (Ed.)

### The Championship

The 2006 BHRC is running over a nine event season in three categories:

1. Historic – up to 31/12/1967
2. Post Historic 01/01/1968 – 31/12/1974
3. Classic 01/01/1975 – 31/12/1984

In 2006, the Classic Challenge (category 3) is running in parallel to the BHRC over a nine-event season. In 2007 Classic cars will compete fully in the MSA BHRC, making the BHRC a three-category championship. But for 2006 the overall BHRC champion will come from either category 1 (historic) or category 2 (post-historic). In 2007, the overall BHRC champion could come from any one of the three categories.

#### Round 1. March - The "Alternative Sign Centre" Robin Hood Historic Stages (1)

Patrick Watts/Elgan Davies had a rather easier time winning the historic category, their Sunbeam Tiger easily outpacing a bunch of Lotus-Cortinas

#### Round 2. April "Astra" Historic Forest Stages (1)

Watts/Davies started with three fastest times in a row but a mile from the end of the fourth stage a ball-joint came out of the Tiger's front upper suspension arm and they staggered to service, still in the lead. Generous help from rival service crews saw them on their way but with a 1-minute road penalty after a discussion with the scrutineer over a noisy exhaust manifold. Eventually the penalty was scrubbed leaving them the winners

#### Round 3. April. Welsh Historic Rally (DNF)

In the historic Patrick Watts/Elgan Davies opened out a 48-second lead on the first day, and were fortunate to have the third stage cancelled just as they found brake fluid all over one of the Tiger's front wheels. That was fixed overnight but the next day they hit a sheep doing a lot of damage to the front suspension, retirement soon becoming unavoidable.

#### Round 4 June "Severn Valley" Historic Forest Stages (1)

Patrick Watts/Elgan Davies blitzed to victory in the historic category. Running first on the road gave them a clear run on the dusty stages of Crychan and Brechfa. The early challenge came from Rolt's Porsche 911, but when the BRDC chairman went off the road Watts knew he was safe. "After that it was a matter of enjoying the classic sweeping Welsh stages, although the dust in the car threatened to asphyxiate us,"

#### Round 5 24/25<sup>th</sup> June ."rally Marketing" Mid Wales section (1)

There has been a tendency to describe rallies as "a Tiger event" or "a Porsche event" according to which make dominates, but this year Watts/Davies seem to have decided that every event is a Tiger one. Again running first on the roads in the historic section they hardly needed the advantage of a dust-free run, opening up a 23-second lead over the first two stages and reaching the finish to win by a minute and a half.

#### Round 6 - August 'Conister Trust' Manx Historic Rally - Isle of Man. (2)

Having been struggling with a misfire from the start, Watts was in survival mode for his first time on the Isle of Man, but took second place after a solid run. "I like the place now, but I didn't like it in the dark," he also admitted to having "No lock and no hand brake and chicanes too tight to get around without three-point turns!"

Patrick Watts battles on with the Tiger.

## Patrick Watts – A profile.

Patrick Watts is a Racing & Rally driver who competed successfully in the British Touring Cars Championship for many years then in the Australian Touring Cars. He is now competing up front in the BHR championship. Patrick has been a STOC member but presently seems to have allowed his Membership to lapse !

Patrick runs his own successful business, his company designs and manufacturers tailor made storage equipment. He has also found time to support the charity Motorbilty, making personal appearances to help raise funds. Patrick started in club saloon racing and progressed to the most popular and competitive saloon car championship – 2.0 litres British Touring Cars. He has inspired and encouraged lots of young would be touring car drivers, including sponsoring a driver and offer advise and experience.

### Career History ( Partial Ed.)

- 1979 – National Mini 850 Champion
- 1980 - 1275 GT Mini Runner up.
- 1981/82- Metro Challenge runner up
- 1983 – Works driver BTCC Metro Turbo
- 1984 -Leading BTCC when Austin Rover withdrew
- 1985 – Essex Motorsport Escort RS1600 in BTCC
- 1986 – UNO Turbo National SC Championship
- 1988 – Honda CRX Champion
- 1989 – Works Honda driver
- 1990 – Honda CRS Champion and MX5 Champ



1991 – Esso Saloon Car Champion Group N Peugeot 309 GTI.

This was Peugeot's first experience of Patrick. His performance and attitude impressed the factory team, which was pleased to welcome him back to take Peugeot's number one seat in the 1994 BTCC driving a 405 M116. Finished 8<sup>th</sup> in championship



taking four podiums in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. He continued driving for Peugeot until 1998

1998 – Australian touring cars. Patrick led their championship after 4 rounds then came home happy !

2004 – With S.E.A.T he ran the BTCC "Masters" at Donnington ... and to quote Patrick ahead of the rac "I never won a race in the BTCC, but then I never had the car. This time we're in equal cars so it's my big chance. I've been doing a bit of rallying and have learnt a few techniques that will help me win. I have a special line planned for the Craner Curves on the first lap – from the first bit across to Schwanz Curve it's a straight line and figure if I can drive a rally car sideways on gravel, then a bit of grass will be easy. Photographers are advised to stand well back." In the event Patrick went from 2<sup>nd</sup> to last thanks to Jason Plato and back to 4<sup>th</sup> before being finally shunted off by Jason Plato !  
*(Nothing new there then Ed.)*

Rallying began in 2004 having modified his road Tiger but he only managed 4 rounds, fetching up mid-table. In 2005 Patrick entered 7 of the 9 rounds and took 3 wins with co-driver Elgan Davies before finishing the season 9<sup>th</sup> Overall.

And to finish. Two excellent quotes: " Today it was flying", "I was just seeing how many post-historics I could beat"; and "Elgan was concerned about the number of sheep when running 1st but the spin up the hill from Four Ways bent the steering rack, which dislocated the washer bottle which in turn dislocated the fan belt which in turn dislocated the water in the engine." !!