

# Crowds out in force for rallying's big weekend

By Phil James  
lep.sport@lep.co.uk  
@LEPonline

The weekend weather brought thousands of fans to Garstang and the surrounding area for the Legend Fires North West Stages Rally in partnership with Simpson's Skoda and ND Civils as closed-road motorsport returned to the Lancashire lanes.

The rally raises thousands of pounds for charitable causes is the biggest event of its kind in the North West.

Spectators filled Garstang's High Street on Friday evening for the ceremonial start.

The High Street was packed with fans again on Saturday evening to see 2019 European Rally Champion Chris Ingram and co-driver Craig Drew spray the champagne having taken victory in their Skoda Fabia Rally2.

Whilst their victory was widely predicted it wasn't without incident. A high-speed spin on the Long Knots stage near Chipping ended with the Skoda nose diving into a hedge.

Earlier in the day a number of incidents occurred on the first Nicky Nook stage, the most notable involving the VW Polo of Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke.

By the finish Ingram had a 52 second lead over the second placed Ford Fiesta Rally2 of Scots duo Paul McKinnon and Paul Beaton while Leyland's Mark Kelly and co-driver Neil Colman from Darlington finished third in their Fiesta R5.

Hambleton duo Simon



Legend Fires North West Stages Rally winners Chris Ingram (right) and Craig Drew (photos: Phil James/Quentin James)

Bowen and Richard Robinson claimed the bragging rights amongst the strong contingent of Blackpool South Shore Motor Club members who contested the event.

They brought their Ford

Fiesta S2000T home sixth, three places ahead of the VW Polo GTi R5 of John Stone and Tom Woodburn. Fleetwood's Mark Holmes and Craig Simkiss finished 13th in their Fiesta S2000two places ahead

of Pilling's Neil Wearden and co-driver Mark Fisher who took the top Class C Award in their Hyundai i20 F2. Another Hambleton crew, Paul Murro and Callum Cross finished 19th in a Fiesta R5.

Blackpool's Benson brothers, Dave and Steve won the second in Class B Awards in their Honda Civic but it didn't end well for all the Fylde Coast entrants.

Thornton's Adrian Atkin-

son and co-driver Dave Riley from Blackpool were forced to retire their Mitsubishi Lancer Evo6 and an ignition issue halted the Ford Escort Mk1 of Lytham St Annes duo Roy Wadsley and Steve Wilson.

## Old Trafford clubs join forces to promote women's sport

Lancashire Cricket and Manchester United have joined forces to highlight their continued commitment to changing perceptions and attitudes towards women in sport.

The Thunder squad, who have returned from a tour to Dubai – a first undertaken by any first-class county – were at Old Trafford last Sunday for Manchester United Women's Super League fixture against Everton.

Later in the summer, the Manchester United Women's squad will return the favour and support Thunder in a T20 double header at Emirates Old Trafford when they take on Southern Vipers on Wednesday, June 1.

Both clubs will work together throughout the summer to encourage women's sport and to push the boundaries to improve the environment for our players, whilst

also providing a platform to inspire the next generation to take up sport.

Wicketkeeper Ellie Threlkeld, who captained the Thunder squad during the recent pre-season tour, said: "It's amazing news that Lancashire Cricket and Manchester United have teamed up to promote women's sport and to challenge the stereotypes that exist in football and cricket – both on and off the

pitch.

"We look forward to welcoming them (United) at Emirates Old Trafford in June. Hopefully we'll put a show on in front of what we are hoping will be a good crowd."

Katie Zelem, Manchester United Women's captain, added: "We are delighted to be teaming up with our peers down the road at Lancashire Cricket to work together to

celebrate women's sport in Manchester.

"It is so important that we maximise opportunities like this to continue to develop women's sport and work collaboratively in our city to inspire a new generation of supporters and athletes."

Mark Chilton, Lancashire's director of cricket performance, commented: "This a great opportunity to showcase women's sport and

it's brilliant that two sporting institutions such as Lancashire Cricket and Manchester United are working together on this.

"Here at Lancashire Cricket, we are committed to growing the women's game as much as possible and giving our professional and pathway players the same opportunities as our men's squads – as shown by our joint pre-season Dubai tour recently."