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Barrie Parker – BTRDA® Car Trials Champion

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## **BTRDA®** CAR TRIALS CHAMPIONSHIP

*Please check [www.btrda.com/about-car-trials](http://www.btrda.com/about-car-trials)  
for the current calendar*

The Championship comprises events run by experienced motor clubs around the country from North Yorkshire down to East Devon and Somerset, followed by an end-of-season Grand Final Trial. Drivers are graded by previous successes into Gold Star®, Silver Star® & Bronze Star® Championships, these being contested in addition to Class and Overall Positions on events. Championship Rules and Membership Forms are available from the BTRDA® contacts and can be downloaded from our web site:

[www.btrda.com/about-car-trials/](http://www.btrda.com/about-car-trials/)  
[www.btrdamembership.com](http://www.btrdamembership.com)



## CAR TRIALS CHAMPIONSHIP

A short guide to  
Car Trials  
and the  
**BTRDA®**  
Car Trials  
Championship



Mark Hoppé – 2018 Gold Star Champion

[www.btrda.com](http://www.btrda.com)

## THE SPORT EXPLAINED

To set the scene for a Car Trial you need to imagine a grassy hillside. The object of the sport is to go from point "A" to point "B" without stopping and without external assistance, in your own time, for this is not a speed motor sport. Point "B" is higher up the hillside than point "A", so the effects of gravity and a slippery surface have to be overcome. To make things even more challenging, the route between the 2 points (known as a "Section") will have been designed by the organisers to make reaching point "B" a real challenge, often by forcing the car up a weaving course and having to overcome natural undulations and features of the hillside.

A Car Trial will typically be held on a Sunday, 1000hrs to 1600hrs, and comprise some 8 to 10 sections over 4 rounds, with changes to the sections between rounds to maximise the element of competition.

Competitors' ability is measured by how far they get up each section with decreasing penalty points awarded the further you get – the absolute ideal being zero points upon reaching the top. Thus, lowest total score on the day wins, but you do retain all points awarded – none are discarded – so concentration is paramount. However, recognising the inherent difference in climbing ability of (say) front wheel drive cars vs rear-engined rear wheel drive cars, cars actually compete directly in one of three classes, in effect to provide a "level playing field" for competition. Current classes are: 1: road-taxed cars first registered on or after 1 January 1998, unmodified and unballasted; 2: fwd cars not eligible for class 1; 3: rwd cars not eligible for class 1 plus kit cars and modified production cars.

By tradition, all cars had to carry a front seat passenger and it was their role to support the driver, pointing out the intended route and sometimes bouncing the car to nudge it over some difficult terrain. A recent relaxation in this regulation can be exercised by event organisers but the driver can still carry a "bouncer" if so desired.

## START COMPETING FROM THE AGE OF 14...

In the relatively safe environment of Car Trials, where speeds are low, there is no better place to learn car control and gain an understanding of trialling techniques. This is permitted from the age of 14, although drivers not holding a full RTA driving licence must have a front seat passenger experienced in Car Trials or Sporting Trials.

## THE CARS

The origins of this sport are in production cars rather than specialist cars (although some kit cars are now eligible to compete). This all adds to the interest and introduces further difficulties that have to be overcome. Needless to say, some cars will always be more competitive than others, so you do need to give careful consideration to your choice of competition car. As mentioned later, we recommend going along to a few events to see at first hand a variety of cars in action.

## CAR PREPARATION

You will need to study the Motorsport UK Competitors' Yearbook for the detailed rules and regulations that govern the sport; this book comes f.o.c. with the motor sport competition licence which will be required when competing in above club-only status events. Contact details for Motorsport UK appear on the Contacts page of this leaflet.

Car preparation can, of course, be to the extremes of the Regulations but equally can be as simplistic as checking the usual levels for oil, etc, and removing any clutter from within the car. The configuration of the car will dictate whether to run with a full or very low fuel level, all to aid grip by having weight (or lack of weight) in the right place.

Historically, Car Trials cars used to carry added weight (ballast) over the driven wheels to improve traction, but as described earlier there is now a very competitive class for road-going cars carrying no ballast.

Decent tyres are a must but they do have to be of normal road pattern and specifically not winter or off-road types. Our Championship Rules are quite specific on this element of the sport. Now it's time to...

## LET YOUR TYRES DOWN!

Tyre pressures on the driven wheels are let down to prescribed limits dependant upon class entered and engine size. This provides a marked increase in grip by putting a larger contact area on the ground and enabling the tyre to better follow irregular surfaces. *We should state that some cars, usually lightweight sports cars, may have to increase their road pressures in order to comply with the Regulations!*

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## HOW DO I START?

We recommend offering to passenger, or spectating and/or marshalling, at some of our events. Any of these will provide an opportunity to see the sport at first hand, see what sort of cars compete and to discuss your intentions with seasoned drivers.

Attending one of our Training Days will give you an insight into the techniques involved. You will receive one-to-one training in your own car by our acknowledged experts, including demonstrations in a variety of current competition cars.

Apart from your car and maybe a passenger, you will need to be a member of a car club and have available your club membership card; for higher status (Championship) events you will also need a Motorsport UK Competition Licence (minimum RS Clubman) and your passenger will need to be a member of one of the event's invited clubs. The next step is to find an event, again through local car clubs, the BTRDA® or Motorsport UK, complete an entry form and submit it to the organisers prior to the event. The final step is to compete, and the rest is up to you! We look forward to seeing you.

## DRIVER PREPARATION

- Ask!
- Have a positive attitude!
- Study other competitors' attempts;
- Walk each section (test), noting obstacles and features that will unsettle the car; plan your attempt in minute detail and consider various "what-ifs";
- Be ready to start when it's your turn.



Steve Courts – ex BTRDA® Car Trials Champion