

## **The Fred Byatt Trophy**

**Noteworthy acts of marshalling not covered by any other awards.**



**The Award is presented to John Aston & Adam Smith.**

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that this year's Fred Byatt Trophy is being shared by two BRMC North members, after an extraordinary two days on the Roger Albert Clark Rally (RAC).

The full story of the weekend would go on for a bit, however, to precis.

On the RAC, these two marshals helped to set up the Falstone stage, just to the east of Kielder reservoir. The stage ran on the Friday of the event, and during the day, Storm Arwen blew in and started to cause chaos, after a big effort, all the competitors were got out of the stage, then these two marshals helped sweep the forest to ensure every retired competitor, marshal, and spectator was clear, all in very high winds and snow, complicated by trees starting to fall. Then they assisted in going to the top of Monkside Fell, the highest point of Kielder, where the event radio controllers were trapped by the extreme weather conditions.

The way to the top of the fell was barred by fallen trees that had to be cut, then dragged clear, and driving snow drifting across the road. Eventually, progress was stopped half a mile short of the summit as driving became impossible in whiteout conditions. At this point, John took over the role of radio control as other stages were trying to clear marshals and competitors from the forest, this gave the radio controllers chance to try and clear the summit, one of their masts had been carried away in the wind. The radio controllers needed to disentangle one of their cars, they tried to drive off the summit, but in the whiteout, drove off the road and became stuck.

Meanwhile, John was co-ordinating efforts to get the stage commander of a different stage clear as they were trapped by fallen trees, it was now 02.00am. By 02.30am it became apparent that the radio controllers, and the Stage Commander were going to have to spend the night in their cars until the weather abated. Adam and John then headed back to their accommodation, cutting through more fallen trees, abandoning Johns' car when it too fell in a ditch, before getting to bed at 04.30am in a cold dark cabin with the electricity having been taken out by the storm.

At first light, they re-climbed Monkside Fell, dragged the Radio Controllers car out of the ditch, helped de-rig and recover the radio equipment, then towed the other car that was up there down to the public road, and contacted the stuck Stage Commander to make sure they were OK. (It took 3 forestry teams 3 hours to cut their way to them).

I think everyone will agree that their efforts were outstanding and our very worthy winners of this award