

Guy Butler interview: Cheshire rally star on competing in his own backyard at Cholmondeley's RallyFest stage

Not many drivers get the chance to compete on Dayinsure Wales Rally GB, Britain's round of the FIA World Rally Championship. Fewer still get to compete and then drive through their own back garden. But that's precisely what local rally star Guy Butler will be doing when the event comes to Chester later this month.

Butler, 41, lives on the Cholmondeley Castle estate. And, for one day only, the world's finest rally cars and drivers will, quite literally, be in Guy's backyard when they arrive at Cholmondeley's RallyFest stage on Saturday October 28.

Dayinsure Wales Rally GB is based just across the Welsh border in Deeside, but includes action in and around Chester. Chester's Eastgate is the first stop on the evening of Friday October 27, when fans have the chance to come into the city to collect autographs from rally heroes around the world.

The following afternoon, after a day of driving flat-out through the Welsh forests, the stars and their cars arrive at Cholmondeley Castle, where Butler boasts the biggest of home advantages.

Driving his Ford Fiesta ST rally car up and down the country in national competitions, Butler admits to a slightly surreal feeling when he goes home and drives his rally car flat-out along the roads he uses every day.

"It's really strange," said Butler. "Last year, we had a regroup – where we stop and wait before we go in and compete in the Cholmondeley stage – and it was outside my local shop, the Cholmondeley Farm Shop. I go and collect my milk and newspapers every morning and then here I was sitting there with rally drivers from all over the world. It was very surreal! "The road we compete on goes about half-a-mile from the front door of the house, so we'll be looking to put on a bit of a show and do some skids for all the family and friends out watching. It's an amazing day and a really unique opportunity."

Butler has been a rally fan since he was young and worked hard to help bring Britain's biggest motorsport event to Chester.

"The event has been in Wales for a long time, obviously because of the Welsh government funding," he said, "but last year it came across the border and came into Chester. That was something I'd been working with the organisers for some time on and it was a real achievement. The atmosphere in Chester when the cars go through the city and all the drivers are out meeting the fans is just superb. And when we come through Cholmondeley, it's even better!"

Cheshire's Cholmondeley Castle is the most family-oriented of the Dayinsure Wales Rally GB stages. This year's event comes with day-long entertainment and the free Dayinsure Family Fun Zone, which features a climbing wall, caving, Segway riding, bungee running and much, much more.

