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News release

## **Slaughter delivers a dream and raises cash for local hospice**

Maidstone rally star James Slaughter had a busy day on Saturday (January 20) – he made a dream come true and raised £2300 for Heart of Kent Hospice.

Slaughter, one of Britain's leading national rally drivers, raffled off the chance to co-drive in his cutting-edge Ford Fiesta R5 when he competed on Saturday's Brands Hatch Winter Stages.

As well as raising thousands for charity, Slaughter gave Jack Hanley an experience he won't forget in a hurry. Hanley won the raffle and found himself strapped into a car capable of near Formula 1 levels of acceleration.

"I think he enjoyed the day," said Slaughter. "I did this raffle for charity last year and the co-driver didn't get past the second stage without being sick. Jack looked a bit green from time to time, but actually managed quite well with telling me where we had to go."

Slaughter, who finished the event 10th overall and third in class, admitted the inside of a rally car can be quite a hostile place.

"For the uninitiated it's really not easy," he said. "It gets very warm and, of course, there's a lot of movement in the car even though you're very firmly strapped into the seat. The good thing for Jack was that conditions were really wet and the lack of lateral grip meant there wasn't as much movement as there might have been if it had been dry.

"That wasn't so good for me; the weather forecast had been dry until the day before the event, so the car was set-up for these conditions. When the rain came, the car was too low and too stiff and not giving the best grip at all – especially not on the two-year-old wet-weather tyres we were using!

"At the end of the day, we were there to raise money for a very, very good cause and we did that. Jack's a real rally fan and, before the event started, he was telling me how much he wanted to be a rally driver – but by the time we got to the finish he wasn't so sure. But he had a great day, a fantastic experience and I had a lot of fun in an exceptional rally car."

James will now turn his attentions to challenging for this year's British Historic Rally Championship title at the wheel of a Ford Escort RS1800. He is, however, hoping to be back in the Fiesta for Britain's round of the World Rally Championship (WRC) in October.

"I did our round of the world championship for the first time last year and finished just outside the top 20 in our class," said Slaughter, "it would be nice to go back and beat that result, but we'll have to see how the year progresses."

James' next scheduled event is Rally North Wales on March 24.

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