

News release

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Cholmondeley: 10 days to make and it's gone in 60 seconds

- The story of a castle's big day out
- What it takes to make the most family-friendly stage of this year's Dayinsure Wales Rally GB

For one day each year, Cholmondeley Castle takes on a global significance beyond being the home of the 7<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Cholmondeley.

That day is next Saturday. On October 28, the eyes of the World Rally Championship will be on the estate roads of the land the Cholmondeley family has called home since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Cholmondeley Castle becomes SS14 of Dayinsure Wales Rally GB.

It becomes a RallyFest stage and a mile-long dash to glory for the world's fastest and finest drivers and cars.

And preparation for that day is already underway.

The first official vehicles from the rally moved into Cholmondeley on Thursday (October 19) and the team will now work flat-out to turn the beautiful Cheshire parkland into a chapter in the story of Britain's round of the 2017 World Rally Championship.

And here's the incredible bit... ultimately officials and volunteers numbered in their hundreds will work on the site across the next 10 days preparing it for the leading drivers in the World Rally Championship, who will be through the test in less than 60 seconds.

Shrewsbury-based co-ordinator of the rally Andrew Kellitt admits the Cholmondeley Castle stage, just north of Whitchurch, is one of the most time consuming to organise. But the 10,000-strong crowd expected on the day make that effort more than worthwhile.

Kellitt said: "The stage itself is only 1.80 kilometres or 1.11 miles – a very small part of the overall competitive distance (304.36km/189.12 miles) – but it takes considerable resource to plan and execute. The time spent in the planning of Cholmondeley is disproportionate to the competitive distance it provides for the overall route. Things are different in a forest where the route is naturally defined by the trees, at Cholmondeley we have to physically build the spectator areas ahead of the event and that's what's happening now.

"The Dyfi test, the one the crews tackle immediately before Cholmondeley, is 20 times longer, but *only* takes five or six days to put together. The difference with Cholmondeley is that we're not just running a stage of the rally, we're running a day of entertainment at a RallyFest stage.

"One of our officials moved into Cholmondeley on Thursday and he will stay there for the next 10 or 11 days overseeing the construction and the dismantling of every aspect of the

stage. We will leave Cholmondeley as we found it, but in between times we will build one of the most exciting stages and entertaining days out for families across Cheshire and Shropshire.

“The actual course is the first thing to be marked out. Once that’s done, the safety fencing can start to be erected. This is followed by the commercial elements, including the astonishing number of activities for families such as caving and rock climbing. Over the next week, shops, toilets, eating areas, autograph signing facilities, car parking areas, access roads and everything needed for what is the most accessible and family-friendly stage of this year’s Dayinsure Wales Rally GB will be put in place.

“Then a driver like Sébastien Ogier will come and go through the stage in about a minute. But it’s absolutely worth the effort for Cholmondeley. For many, this is their first impression of a rally car and a rally and we have to get this right. We want these people to have the best time, then next year we want them to come back and go to Cholmondeley on Saturday and head out in to the forests on Sunday.

“Watching these cars in a place like Cholmondeley is absolutely astonishing. They accelerate at near-enough the speed of Formula 1 cars, but they’re capable of driving over rocks the size of footballs and are equally at home on snow and ice as they are in the searing 40-degree heat on rallies on Mexico and Australia. This sport is amazing and it’s an absolute pleasure to wrap it up into a great day out and deliver it to families from across the region.”

Further details and tickets (adult tickets are priced at £23 when purchased in advance – and include a programme priced at £9) for Dayinsure Wales Rally GB and the Toyota RallyFest at the Cholmondeley Castle stage are available at [www.walesrallygb.com](http://www.walesrallygb.com).