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Historics will head the main field in September's Merrick Forest Stages Rally in Galloway.

Organisers of the Newton Stewart-based event hope the move will encourage more entries.

The winning historic on September 8th will receive the coveted Higgins Quaich, presented by Ian and Catherine Higgins.

Rally Manager Allan Marshall said: "We consider the historics to be an integral part of the event, and I'm delighted that they'll be running as a group at the head of the main field. It's hoped the Merrick will become a firm favourite on their rallying calendar".

The Merrick Forest Stages replaces the Park Systems Furniture event of recent years, following the ending of a long and successful partnership with the Glasgow firm.

This year's rally will feature a new purpose-built central service area in the heart of the famed Glentroll forest complex - so greatly reducing road mileage between stages.

The event will count as the penultimate round of the County Saab MSA Scottish Rally Championship.

Further details can be obtained from www.merrickforeststages.co.uk, or contact Allan Marshall on 0786 211576