

**MINTEX  
NATIONAL**

# **RALLY SERIES**

CHAMPIONSHIP  
CHATTER

after

Round 5.

***MORGANNWG***

***FOREST*** NATIONAL RALLY



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# Roger's Ramblings

## Morgannwg Maunder.

Well – Swansea with scorching sunshine again, with any luck Wales will lose its image of “its raining it must be Wales”.

The week started with the Schools initiative at Cwrt Sart Comprehensive arranged by Clerk of Course Peter Nedin. Geoff Smith and the Priority Airfreight Team Ford Escort Cosworth supported the day and as usual some 120 children were entertained and educated in English, Geography and Science & Technology. The Headteacher and Staff were delighted with the project and are keen to be involved in any future projects.

Thursday saw the Press & PR day organised to produce TV. footage for the BBC. and Chan. 4. We were delighted that so many of the invited competitors were able to support the day. One of the guests was Matthew Meynard the Captain of Glamorgan Cricket Club who had developed a muscle strain I, this prevented his appearance at Sofia Gardens against the South Africa Touring Team. His first experience of rallying was to be strapped in alongside Chris Mellors in the Texaco Escort, duly filmed by the cameras on the day, however the first take produced some unusable comments when asked what he thought of the experience I. he also said that facing the West Indies fast bowlers would be a dawdle compared to his experience. We are grateful to all the teams who attended in particular Steve Smith & Carl Dolan who ensured that the marshals were not left out at the end of the day. I understand that Tony Davies was glad of the chance to put some mileage on the car, as this produced a failure which would have surely spelt early retirement on Saturday morning. Likewise Geoff Smith who had a wishbone shear, again terminal if on the event. This project produced television coverage on Thursday night, Two slots on Friday Night, Two slots on Saturday and one Monday. Our thanks to Peter Hughes and Allistair Miller for the coverage.

Thursday evening saw a bus leave Swansea bound for Port Talbot Motor Club- Club House at Neath where the Club entertained the crews who had been at the Press day . Yours truly tried to emulate Parkinson with a Chat Show, where much banter entertained all. Our oldest registered competitor- Mike Hinde, surprised us all when he informed us that it was he who started the long list of 23 class wins for SKODA on the RAC, with a class win in a Skoda i000 Mb all those years ago. It seemed that the local night clubs did extremely good business that evening, and many strange faces washed up at the bar in the Rally HQ. much later that night, don't worry chaps my silence can be bought even if you cannot remember what happened I. “Honest Geoff Dewitt” decided to run a book on the proceedings, but was bought off by the more affluent competitors who decided that publicity was not required on the matterI.

Friday dawned with many pale faces and sore heads, and talk of a £5 bet which remained unpaid, I think we should be told!. Steve Hill was now a little happier having overnight solved his lack of boost pressure on his new engine. The talk all day was of the heat and the dust which was to be expected on the long stages. The organisers had arranged a secure park with guards at Makro where a repeat of last years attempted thefts was hopefully to be avoided.

The Renault Dealer Team entourage with the exiting Maxi Megane rolled into town. The Team in Swansea to put some test mileage on the car with its new sequential gearbox.

“Honest Geoff Dewitts” book of runners and riders had two unknown challenges to Chris Mellors for outright victory, Murray Grierson last years winner making his first appearance in the championship this year, and a now up to full power Steve Hill the Mitsubishi with the correct engine at last. This coupled to an on form Mark Perrott, a fired up Tony Davies fresh from some match practice in Scotland, add a late entry from John Roberts, coupled with series regulars like Steve Smith et all, FIREWORKS! were expected on Saturday morning.

Saturday - Blue skies and hot at 6.50 am I most dreaded the heat in prospect none more than the heat of the competition to be expected.

Port Talbot Motor Club had again arranged for a super special at Singleton Park 3/4miles of asphalt to be tackled twice. Tony Davies proved once again to be the master on short Tarmac stages with a 4 second lead from Murray Grierson who also showed his hand. The Maxi Megane of Serge Jordan also on the pace. From Singleton via service and the regroup control at Port Talbot Civic Centre where the cars were parked for a few moments. It was here that a funny incident occurred with an old lady looking to buy a ticket for the raffle, on closer questioning

She thought all the pretty cars were for a charity raffle and she wanted to buy one for "the nice black car" (someone likes it Chris). So onward into Margam for the serious start to the proceedings, heads shook in disbelief at the time for Chris Mellors, some 2 seconds a mile quicker than any of his rivals, it seemed that there would now be a battle for 2nd place onwards, such was the authority of the Mellors Escort. Early leader Tony Davies was on the pace in Margam however the crew were wilting with the heat in the Group B car without the customary roof vents and reckoned that they were starving of oxygen by the end of the stages, however a fine drive netted them 5th place and a bagfull of points to keep series hopes alive should any of the other front runners falter. The Series return of Murray Grierson in the Impreza was impressive with 4 second fastest times however cruel luck sidelined him on the final stage, a fuel leak causing a small fire whilst holding a strong second place. Steve Hill with a now sorted engine promised much, however the gearbox selector mechanism rendered 5th&6th gears difficult to engage, a must in the fast forests of South Wales, a late charge bringing him within 2 seconds of young Mark Perrott. Mark again finished in second place with his Group N & a bit Escort, he is surely the find of the 1996 Mintex Series and we look forward to 1997 if funds permit. Steve Smith in the Lancia finished again in fourth place and was grateful to his new sponsor Camelbak, who had fitted the car out with a hands free drink dispenser which saved the day in temperatures of over 100° in the car. The Group N battle seemed to be settled early with Marcus Dodd breaking a gearbox and rear diff, Geoff Smith was out of the box quickly taking 10 seconds off Jeremy Easson who was a further 9 seconds up on Steve Petch, it was in that order they finished Group N with Andrea Hall again finishing a fine fourth in the class 14th O/A with new left hand seat partner Sean Kelly. The Ford Bonus money was shared by Geoff Smith, Jeremy Easson, Tony Jardine ( making a welcome visit to the Series when GP Duties permit) and John Lay . The Morgannwg saw the first 1996 Class Champion in H16. Peter Lumsden in the faithful SAAB 96 who scored another set of maximum points thus securing the class this year. The other SAAB who continues to impress is the 900 of Dave Wood who has steadily improved his overall finishing positions since joining the Series at Bournemouth, his performance in the big car netting him 13th O/a his best Mintex finish to date. In Formula 2 a good battle was in prospect, with Paul Dyas in the RS 2000 looking to show front runner Roger Davies the way home however Davies had not read the script and held Mintex F2 honours until SS6 where it all started to go wrong with gearbox trouble, this ended in tears on SS7 with total failure, this cost him the RAC prize drive. It was a delighted Charlie Exton guided by the ever lovely Susie Emilliani being the recipients of the valuable prize for 1996 as the leaders of F2 after 5 rounds. "Overseas Crew" Steven Quine/ Richard Skinner in the Cotcomp Astra were the winners of N3 having a relatively untroubled run for a change, keeping hopes alive for the class at the end of the year. Dave Blades/Shawn White again picked up the generous bonus for the Two Wheel Drive Challenge supported by Peter Lloyd Rallying winning B9.

All the competitors were delighted with the carnival atmosphere at the finish ramp where the crowds had been entertained by local bands before the cars arrived, the organising team of John Henderson, Pete Nedin, Alan Stoneman and all at Port Talbot Motor Club had worked extremely hard to promote the event in the town and despite the dust the event was a fitting round of the Mintex Series.

## NB Department.

### Annual Thrash at Kenilworth. December 14th 1996.

Booking forms will be issued shortly for the Awards Presentation and Ball. This year a deal has again been struck for a competitive package for the usual high standard of evening. The rooms will be allocated on a strict first come first paid basis. Please remember to book early. It has been suggested that as the hotel now has a sports complex and other new facilities, that the event becomes a two night affair. Sue Smith (Southern C.C.) has offered to organise a Ladies Xmas shopping trip on the Saturday to Leamington Spa , and it would be possible to arrange a Mintex National Series Golf Tournament at the local course if enough people are interested. Please let the series office know NOW so that arrangements can be made.

And so to bed said zebedee!.