

March Hare 12 Car Rally - 15th March 2005.

A brief Clerk of the Course Report (Hopefully we will get some other reports from crews inc the winners??!!)

Starting and Finishing at the Parks Pub just outside Uttoxeter, this was to be the only Eastwood 12 car of the current season and as such, I had deliberately decided to make things as easy as possible for the crews - and in doing so, make things as easy as possible for the organisers!

Therefore the route was a mixture of 1/3 plot and bash and 2/3 preplot - the emphasis being placed a little more on the driver than the navigator this year, and ensuring that the navigator found all the tiny yellows first time, otherwise time would be lost.

Last years winning navigator (Richard Hage) was this year paired up with his brother Roger in Rogers Imprezza - who said that they were taking things seriously and Richard wanted to make sure that he retained the March Hare/Peter Brayne Trophy again for the 4th year on the trot!? They then led away a field of 7 starters of which 4 were EDMC members and 3 were HRRC members.

Shame that we couldn't attract more entrants - especially as I was trying to gear it so obviously to the Novices and first timers - but the fine line is hard to draw between getting some more crews and struggling for marshals; plus I know that one or two other possible crews could have been interested but it would have meant stage rally cars and/or well prep'd road rally cars going out and the very tiny lanes would have made things tricky regarding PR issues.

This is something that EDMC as a whole has to think about this year - how do we want to run 12 cars, if we want to run them at all?

Answers please to any Committee Member.

Anyway, back to the report - all crews arrived nice and early to sign on and get their plotting done and most of the marshals managed to come to the start which always makes things easier as an organiser.

We had paired up Adrian Drury and Bob Marshal to run RTC2 - this is the first TC where the plot n bash is handed out and the crews have to come in one at a time. I had also asked Adrian to put out the first PC boards as they were just in a fairly small loop around his TC and Bob was still running a bit late.

As many will know, a "Wagstaff 12 car" never runs smoothly - and this was the bit where it became a little "ruffled!" Poor Adrian was struggling around this small loop of route putting out the 4 PC boards on his own, and he got a bit lost. Indeed, one of the 4 we gave him never appeared again (!) and when he had doubled back to where he thought the TC was, he was a bit too early down the lane.

Further up the lane, Rich and I had driven to the RTC as Course Opened to find no one! Then Bob M turned up (WD) saying he had seen a PC board at the first triangle so he knew that Adrian was out and about - but no sign of him.

We waited and waited and still no sign; we tried calling his mobile - no use and no reply; I decided to put in a 5 min delay and drew the route onto Bob's map so crews could copy it onto theirs to enable them to get round the plot and bash bit (as Adrian had the handouts!) and they could then rejoin the preplot bit and carry on as normal.

We left in a hurry knowing that car 1 was literally 10 secs behind us, still didn't see Adrian but found the 3 (1 missing) code bards and found Stuart Richard with his usual smile on his face at TC3 with Richard Shelmerdine in the car keeping the checksheet.

As far as we can then report, not much more to report from now on - the marshals were all in exactly the right places and all the PC boards were in the right places as requested.

After about the first few sections, I got call on the mobile from Bob to say that Adrian had turned up; there had been a bit on confusion with him being a bit too early up the lane, but all crews had started okay and were driving around the route okay.

I then got a call from Andy G to confirm that all had left the start okay and they had left RTC2 ok and were following around as Course Closer picking up boards etc. I called him back to advise of an extra arrow I had put out to stop crews driving up a private farm lane, where the route looked liked it would go up there.

We ran around the route pulling back time with no hurry at all and as we neared the final section, I hoped that everyone had enjoyed the little run and was sure that the drivers would have enjoyed the roads/lanes as Rich had a big smile on his face with a few of them!

Back at the finish, crews arrived at good intervals, all seemingly smiling and claiming to have enjoyed it. A tiny issue that arose during the event was quickly sorted by myself and the mobile phone - and the food was soon available for serving. This year it was a curry. This seemed to meet most folks approval although I will admit that curry alone does not suit all tastes and next 12 cars, we need to talk about food and what the budget is for buying food etc at the finish.

With less than 12 cars starting an event plus the MSA now charging for waiver of permits (in 2005 it will be £15-50 for starters - which, if we retain the £5 entry fee, needs at least 4 cars to cover that cost alone plus food for crews and marshal totalling some 38-42 folks - meaning costs of at least £55 these days; you can see that these 12 cars don't make us any funds these days).

Winners - well, no surprises in that it was Car 1 (Roger and Richard Hage) although they had been pushed hard by 1st Novice Crew of Phil Stone / Nathan Marriott (well done chaps) and but for the confusion at RTC2 and some CofC decisions having to be made to sort out a few things at this control, the result might have been slightly different!

Venue? Was plenty big enough for us although the food was not 100% as discussed above. The route? Well, very different this year and the lanes were challenging in places - but perhaps just too far away from Nottingham for many so next year will see a return to somewhere closer and maybe another map? The crews? Well behaved (for a change!) and a delight to have although a few more would have been better. The Marshals? Simply can't be faulted! Always friendly, helpful and supportive - I could not have done it again without your support. SO many thanks! March Hare always gets the best ones!! And final thanks - to Andy G and Brian for Course Closer and sorting out the marshals and getting the equipment from JC's - to Stuart Richardson for getting and sorting out the clocks for me (ta mate) - and to Rich for doing (yes, he wrote) the route instructions and driving me around as usual.

Names in the frame? See the separate Entry List, Results and Marshals details sheet.

And that's it for another 12 months.

Cheers everyone.

Mark Wagstaff.