

March Hare 12 Car - Tuesday 21st March 2006

Clerk of Course Report

Start & Finish: Roebuck Inn, Draycott in the Clay
Maps: 128

The 2006 running of the longest running 12 car for Eastwood & DMC was very nearly called off with only hours to spare, simply due to the fact that I was struggling for confirmed entries. I know that this is a state of affairs for all types of events these days; and I know that these 12 cars are really more of a social affairs type of thing than anything else - but it has made me think long and hard about the 2007 event.

Back to the 2006 one though.

Eventually a field of 8 cars lined up for the off with two Experts (car 1 and 2) heading the field away - the remaining Novice crews all collecting their fully marked up maps at MTC1.

By the time the course closer had left RTC2, it was evident that marked maps for the Novices were still a bit tricky to help find your way and 5 of the crews had dropped time form between 1 and 8 minutes. Between RTC2 and TC3 the crews had to find 2 PC boards including the lovely cut through near Bushton - Car 2 struggled to find this one and despite going back to try and find it - still no luck and pressed onto TC3 to drop 5 mins and a dreaded Fail.

So at this stage we had just two cars clean - Car 1 and Car 8.

Several of Novices decided to make up time at NTC4 (despite the Time Card saying DO NOT - quick lesson number one; read the time card) and so picked up Fails for that - then off again to TC% and looking for 8 PC boards enroute. Car 1 used their experience to drop a few minutes at this Neutral to plot the remainder of the route (which was what I had intended the Experts to do) - before leaving Richard Shelmerdine.

Cars 6 and 7 were now struggling to follow the route from their marked maps (told you it would still be a little tricky!) and had entered a 'Fails War' between themselves. Car 5 was determined to find all the PC boards and thus dropped OTL by TC5 but ploughed on regardless round the route - something that would set them in good stead at the Finish, knowing that PC 's were Fails and thus just as important as TC's to get right.

Car 2 was now in the swing of things and joining battle royal with Car 1; Car 4 doing very well indeed and but for an error on the route finding between RTC7 and IRTC8 (where they dropped some 10mins) would have really been in the mix at the finish!

Car 8 was still doing very well, collecting all the PC's and dropping 1 minute at TC5 and 4 at TC6 but still hanging in there!

So at the crucial IRTC8 control, a pattern had emerged with order looking like:-

Car 1	0.02secs
Car 8	9.08secs
Car 4.....	11.53secs
Car 2	1F 5.02secs
Car 3	1F 23.33secs
Car 5.....	5F 16.00secs
Car 6.....	13F 23.00secs
Car 7.....	18F 25.00secs

All that was left was a quick section to IRTC9 and a slow run back to the Finish venue, just around the corner.

But as we often see in rallying, there has to be a twist in the tale for some crews and poor crew Car 4 booked into the IRTC9 too early and picked up a Fail, meaning that they dropped a place from 3rd to 4th and Car benefited by gaining a place at the very end. But still rueing their Fail for the missed PC1 board that they never found!

To summarise? The Experts seemed to find the route to their liking and the navigation was very very easy with no shockers there at all. The Novices were split between those who had a bit of "previous" in the car and knew some of the ropes and coped very well with both the route finding and getting all the PC boards correct - and those who admitted this was their first ever 12 car and struggled somewhat to cope with reading a marked map on the move in a dark car at night.

My thoughts? I was delighted to see so many really YOUNG folks giving the navigation a go! I thought they did brilliantly! For the record we had two 12 year olds boys (the minimum age !) and one 16 year old girl Tremendous !!

As ever, the infamous EDMC marshals came from everywhere to help out - my sincere thanks to you all again!!

My thanks to Rob Bateman (Staffs RLO) whom I get on with very well and we understand each other so well for so many years! The idea of absolutely no spots at all on any car, worked very well with no complaints at all from anyone (Public or crews) and I will do the same again from now on and lights and noise are the two main things that will drive our rallying motorsport from the lanes.

The Start/Finish Venue was very good with a nice buffet laid on at the end that everyone enjoyed - except me of course! Always too busy to get anything; but hey - that's what organising is about!

My thanks to Andy and Stuart for sorting out the Marshals and being Course Closer. Thanks to Mr PD for being my ever usual smooth, comfortable Course Opener (heated everything, electric this and that - and so quiet - real comfort for us oldies eh Paul!) - and thanks to Cathy the missus for once more putting up with me shooting off to check a piece of route, see the Finish venue, collect the equipment, spend hours doing the route instructions etc !! Plus being the "March Hare telephone answering service" when I am not there!!

As for 2007 well, we shall see! If I get more paid for entries at the Natter Nights that proves it is worth doing, I will give it a go - or it might just be a scatter event..... means a lot less work for me and no marshals required so they can have a go instead!

Mark Wagstaff

Ps a full set of results and entry list including all the marshals names are included in this report and should be seen inside the magazine/website.