

## **March Hare 12 Car Rally - 9 March 1995**

**The traditional EDMC map 119 12 car saw quite a few changes from previous years - some planned and some not!**

**The first "not planned" change was the need to find a fresh start/finish venue at very short notice due to the usual one being suddenly unavailable; in other words Cathy and I had to go into the depths of Derbyshire two nights before the event ran. However, I think that everyone would agree when I say that the Hanging Gate at Shottlegate proved to be every bit as good a venue as the last one.**

**Following much debate within the EDMC Committee, it was agreed that all route instructions would be aimed very much at the Novices and therefore I did try very hard to make them as easy as possible - at the end of the night, I managed to talk to most of the crews and the overall feeling was that although the instructions were easy enough, the fantastic Derbyshire territory proved simply too much for some. If you stopped to plot all the instructions and then drive off, hoping to keep to the 30mph average set, these lanes and roads would be a totally different kettle of fish to those around Belvoir or on map 120 that Paul D used on his 12 car - little stretches of straight, quick road and plenty of hills, bends, junctions and twists to keep your speeds down. To crack this, you HAVE to try and plot on the move. This may seem far too difficult at first, but car 1 (Roger Hage and Bob Marshall) managed to get round a lot of the route whilst doing this "plot and bash" technique - so it does show it CAN be done.**

**From the start, crews set off north to Shottle, right at the Xroads to turn first east then back westwards to Dannah Farm to pick up the first of 20 passage checks on this route of 47 miles and 10 time controls. Many find out just how slippery the lanes are on the tight 90' right just the other side of Shottle! From here, the route looped anticlockwise passed Lawn Farm, south to the B road and right again to find Steve Webster hidden in a grass triangle at 293.479. This proved a little tricky for some of the Novice crews who merrily sailed past Steve and collected an early fail. The junction was clearly marked as holding a PC - a silly fail to collect be never the less easy to do. Onwards to TC2, using a few more long ways round grass triangles to make you slow down a little and concentrate. Leading at this point, was Dave Steggles and Ian Atkinson with 1 min dropped, followed by Colin Mellor/Paul Davis (4mins) and Barry Thompson/Russ Jones and Glyn Lowth/Pete Byron both on 5 mins. Leading Novices were Bill Redfearn/Ade Carnil on 6 mins, then Roger/Bob a further 2 mins down, following a lot of time dropped whilst they looped twice round Shottle looking for a code board they had already got.**

**A brief neutral skirting Kirk Ireton and starting just west of Blackwall, saw several cars missing the slot right to NTC3 and continue over the new Carsington Resvr road, much to the amusement of Roger Ashmead who was marshalling there!**

Already the Course Car was running rather late (for a change!!!!) and when they got to Callow, road works meant much thinking, back tracking and an overall increase in "JC enjoying the traction and power of an Audi Quattro!", in order that we remained in front of the first car. A traditional route via Millers Green, Alton Hall and up to Spout followed, with the great loop round Alport Heights before dropping back down hill to finish at TC4 just short of the B5035, north of Gorsey Bank. Tucked away at this control was Neil Read, fresh from finding quaint Derbyshire Inns, and exclaiming that we were running a little late - AGAIN! Here, the leadership changed hands, with Steggles/Atkinson taking a 9 mins time penalty but more importantly, the wrong route and missing 2 passage checks. They knew things were amiss and tried to back track to find them - to no avail. This left Colin/Paul in the lead with 10mins total but pulling fast through the field were Roger/Bob now on 11 mins - proving to the class of the field over this section and dropping only 3 mins, some 3 mins quicker than the next car. A few more fails had started to appear now, as crews missed junctions and took a shorter route and thereby missing out PC'. Richard Hage/Louise took a further 17mins to get round this section, but with only 1 fail to date (Steve W control!), this stood them in great stead for a fantastic result. Phil Stone/Tracy Barnbrook got the right route, as did K Salmon/A Illott, but with 7 and 10 mins dropped resp, it did put them a little down on time.

A regularity run through Bolehill, Cromford and Starkholmes, saw most crews through okay - although the Course Car was now in great danger of being caught by the flying car 1 behind, as more "manoeuvring" was required in order that the route remained open!

RTC5 ran from Derek and Rose, passed Riber Castle entrance, two tight PC triangles and eastwards, crossing the A615 and turning north over the B road to Tansley Moor before turning south to Butterley and Highoredish - via the hard to find picnic site (pc15) and Mike Smith at pc16, on the infamous Highoredish hairpin loop. A few antics were shown at this point but suffice to say that most found these checks ok before moving on to TC6 where Richard Shelmerdine was eagerly awaiting the crews. The navigation at RTC5 to TC6 was a simply straight-line herringbone, showing all roads and all whites - these included all the tiny farm entrances, drives the lot. If it was shown on the map, it was shown on the instruction. This required careful plotting but again was easy enough to understand - you just had to be careful. This section saw many crews finally succumb to the pressures of OTL and with the lanes being sufficiently tight enough not to allow too much speeding in order regain time lost whilst stationary and plotting, once more the leadership changed.

We now saw car 1 (Roger/Bob) holding a clear lead, even if they did drop some 13 mins on this section. Most of the time dropped was due to the fact that Bob, whilst plotting on the move, became unsure where they were and they had to trace their steps for some miles before realising that they were correct afteral! Such is road rallying! By now, all other crews had dropped 2 fails, with Colin/Paul trying to keep

in tough but still dropping 1 fail at TC6 by going OTL. Second car on the road was car8 (Steggles/Atkinson) who were going very well and dropped some 8 mins on this section and rueing their 2 earlier fails.

TC7 (Andy Stinchcombe/Pete Smith) was reached via a anticlockwise loop towards Dethick and then south to finish short of Crich Tramways. Quick roads that saw car 8 clean the section (pulling some time back in the process), along with leaders car 1, but all other cars now suffering from OTL and collecting more Fails. These crews continued around the correct route, collecting all the PC's, but could never regain time to get back within OTL.

This left car 1 comfortably in the lead with 0 Fails 25mins followed by car 10 on 2 Fails 12 mins and car 8 third on 2 fails 22 mins.

A short neutral run down the hill from Crich, over the A6 and restart at Mark Coulton/Andy Peels NTC8 control, with car 1 having a wrong slot that was to drop them no penalties but several more mins off their OTL time - something they were to regret later!

From NTC8, the route went on a loop round to Alderwasley, handbrake hairpin right at 308.529, over Broadgates X roads (with Roger Ashmead waiting for them at pc19, before turning north round pc20 towards Packhorse and TC9. It was at this point that car 1 finally caught up with the Course Car; indeed the CC driver was actually hammering the pc board into the ground as they arrived! In their excitement on catching the CC, Roger overshot the pc and VERY nearly went into the TC9 - what a fail THAT would have been! However, Bob caught him, they reversed back and got the board but by the time they got back into the control, they had gone 1 min OTL! Remember that wrong slot between TC7 and NTC8? See what I mean about a costly error whilst in a neutral section?

At this point, confusion reigned inside car 1; they had got their time card signed up, but with the CC in front of them, should they go or not?! The CC Navi leads out of said Audi, shouts that they should pass and get onto TC10!

As they disappear up the lane, the CC is promptly turned round and races off south at 180' to the correct route, but aware that we will beat them to TC10, where poor Steve Webster is now wondering where we have got to!

We arrive before car 1 with a minute to spare, deposit the control watch and leave to race back to the finish to see who has made it. Both car 1 and car 8 easily cleaned this last section, the remaining crews by now well OTL and heading for the pub.

Overall result ..... see the result sheet printed elsewhere.

As to how it all went?

**Well, for the marshals, at least they all saw most of the crews all night. For the crews, another tough reminder of just how much harder Derbyshire lanes can be to average 30mph on! Surely the instructions were the easiest yet seen on a Wagstaff 12 Car - perhaps he should just pack it all in or perhaps move onto an easier map and leave map 119/Derbyshire to just the real Experts on Championship events? Answers at the next Natter Night.**

**As for JC - well, suffice to say that it takes some doing to get a modern 4x4 Audi Quattro 20v sideways on a slippy surface - but it does go like that - I can vouch for that!**

**And me? Well, I really do not know why I bother to run 12 cars anymore, since they seem to contrive more grief and aggro and sheer "don't panic - keep calm - how am I going to get us round this obstacle" that all the Cossack Championship Road Rallies put together; but perhaps that's just WHY I still do them! And anyway, where else am I going to get a lovely trash, in such comfort, in such a fantastic sounding car!!?**

**It goes without saying - my sincere thanks to you all for marshalling, competing and helping - NEVER forgetting my trusty (everyones trusty) Course Closer ..... Ade Ancliffe. Cheers Ade - thanks for keeping it all together at the rear!**

**Mark W**