

## **March Hare 12 Car Rally - Wednesday 11 March 1998**

**It has been two years since I last ran an EDMC 12 Car Rally – and I have to admit that three things have not changed in that time:-**

- (1) You always underestimate how much work goes into organising it and the time it takes to do it!**
- (2) You always forget to leave the start early enough to allow plenty of time to get all the code boards out and make sure all the marshals are there!!**
- (3) You always get a great buzz when things work out well!!!**

**So – I shall not ask the question of “how was it for you?” – I will await to read any such tales in the Magazine – but will pass on a few tales of my own regarding this small event!**

**Water, Water every where! This was very nearly the tale of no 12 car rally, as the River Dove had managed to surpass many records and flooded vast parts of the route. I had planned to re-route where possible, but the final straw was the Police closure of the main A515 road which was my only Neutral link between TC8 and NTC 9.**

**I HAD to use this road in order to get back north of the new A50 road and thus complete the last part of the route – but with the river some  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile over flowing the road and two bridges, it did look a lost cause.**

**Luckily the river level dropped just as quickly as it rose and by the Sunday night before the event, things were looking better. A final run round the route the night before (Tuesday) confirmed that all was well – we had a 12 Car !**

**Marshals – we need them – but where are they???**  
**Thanks to a full entry, the majority (9 crews) coming from EDMC and the remainder from Nottingham University MC – it did mean that I might well be short of marshals. It took a great deal of calling around both club members and friends, to get all the Time Controls manned. You may have wondered what that Vauxhall Frontera was doing following me around – well the occupants of Paul Gray and his work colleague (also Paul – both of Castle Donington Car Centre {plug, plug!!}) had very kindly agreed to come straight from work and help with the marshalling.**

**Since I realised on the night that, so long as all those who said would go direct to their controls, did; I would just be alright. However, I am never very happy with this idea as it is always a risk that someone cannot make it**

or they get lost or they break down on the way – and then I shall be short of a control, with nothing to do about it.

So I asked these two chaps to follow me as a back-up marshal crew ,ALA Cossack Rally style. This idea worked well apart from 2 things – (a) this car is just not up the task of a Course Car. Although Paul Gray is an experienced, quick yet safe Stage Rally Driver, the car simply could not keep up with my Mazda on the twisty stuff and (b) the other Paul, who had fancied a go at this rallying lark – was quoted as saying to me, when I asked how they were doing at TC3 “I’m hanging on in sheer dread for my life in this thing! OK,I have got a marked map, but I have no idea where we are!!!!”

Paul Gray simply chuckled and remarked that the brakes were cooked and the petrol tank needed a few more drops in it!

It looked like I needed to think about this one a bit!

However, when poor Phil Stone (who went direct to the TC5) was a little out of place, the two Paul’s stepped into the breach well and after being relieved by Phil and his Team – they rejoined route at NTC9 to await me and Justin in the Course car. So the plan did work after all.

What else happened? Oh yes – much amusement was had inside the Mazda at the antics of poor Justin (Richard Hage’s mate) who was taking a crash course in Course Car duties. He took it all in his stride, the poor lad, with me barking instructions in one ear and he managing to hang on, grab the watches, check which watch was required next, what time car 1 was due at the next control, how many code boards did we have to put out, write them down in full and correctly whilst I hammered the stake in the ground, check the marshals were filling in the specimen time card correctly and knew what to do with the PC check sheet, get them to sign on,get them to sign etc the time card ..... and all without a swear word!

Oh yes – when we took off from PcA in a hurry, he did remark “Bloody Hell – its like being in a car with Richard Hage!”

Another funny ditty for you ..... Simon Hunt of MidDerbyshire MC CofC of the Drystone Road Rally, enters the 12 Car with Neil Beardsley as a Novice! Nice one Simon! Don’t know which was redder – your face when I saw you for the first time and put two and two together to realised that you had moved house and that you WERE THAT Simon Hunt ..... or Roger Hage’s face when I informed him that Simon had entered as a Novice!

How about a quick thought for Iain Truman’s new Novice Navigator, Brian, who manfully agreed to have a go and the only correct slot he got all night

was ensuring that the correct car body panel was ... “marked!” .... In just the right place for Paul Davis to wipe clean with his trousers! Welcome to the “Hughie Club” Brian.... As I said on the night, we have ALL been there before!!

Before I finally say my big thanks – a word about that tyre!

When I left our house in a hurry on Wednesday night, on the way to the Start, I did think that the car was handling a bit funny. I put it down to excess silt on the lanes from the flooding. When I suddenly skidded sideways a bit on the Toyota Burnaston roundabout, I realised that it was a rear tyre puncture. I went to the petrol station next to the start and pumped in up and it appeared to take the air okay – so perhaps it would be okay, I thought.

Wrong! Whilst priming poor Roger Ashmead (who was manning TC4 for me) to act as a sudden Course Car with me, should the tyre go down again – I just hoped that everything would work out okay.

We got as far as leaving TC5 (Phil’s control) when I felt the tyre start to go down again. Rather than worry poor Justin next to me, I kept quiet and knowing that so long as I took things steady on the twisty stuff, the tyre would stay on the rim and we would be okay. Anyway, the tyre was still 2/3 full of air, so it may well last. Just tell Justin that I will be taking things steady and tidy to ensure that we stay on the road etc and thus not worry him!

A rather loud bang from the tyre just before NTC9 did unsettle us a little, but I blamed the truck who was in front, rather than the tyre on our car! With Car 1 due in 2 mins, we HAD to leave NTC9 straight away and with the 4x4 hard on my heels, we managed to get in all the remaining PC boards, arrows and dip / Q boards in time before being caught! Mind you, looking at the Time Cards, it was a close thing – AGAIN!

So, the big thank you’s .....

To all the Marshals who turned out for the night (Andy & Daryl; John/Sandra/Joy & Mark/ Roger Ashmead / Phil Stone & mates / Richard Shelmers / Kieran & mate / Neil & mate – amusing tale here! Where Neil at TC8 was situated, I was very nervous that the cars would shine bright lights straight into the front rooms of a very imposing house and spoil the champers by their tyre squeal at the SGW. So I asked Neil to ensure a Q board was put out straight after their TC position. In fact, Neil & co had a word with the owner of said house, who, upon being told what was happening, advised that he had a Subaru Imprezza and he had had it airborne over the yump straight after the TC! “So he would be no problem

**Mark", came the response from Neil! After that, thanks to Russ & John S / Paul D & Co and finally Andy & Daryl again!**

**Big thanks to the two Paul's for a fun night for all! In the 4x4.**

**VERY big thanks to Ade and Mick Smith who manfully filled the task of Course Closer and general signing on persons.**

**VERY big thank you again to Roger Ashmead who so ably assisted me at the Finish with the collation of the Time Cards etc – thanks Roger, a great help.**

**A VERY VERY big thank you to Justin for stepping into the unknown with me all night. A very brave or foolish thing to do ! Also for helping to change the wheel in the car park afterwards!!**

**A VERY big thanks to all the crews who took the time to come out and have a play. By the sounds of it, the event went down quite well with you all – I intended it to be a bit of a play; I told you all of my intentions; I just hope that it worked out to your satisfaction!**

**And most finally of all – to Cathy W .... The usual very big thank you for putting up with my late nights; telephone calls and letting me play with the Mazda. When we had it serviced recently, we were told that we needed to look to replace two tyres soon – unfortunately they were talking about the two front ones – NOT the back ones! Looks like more expense soon!**

**That's it for now.**

**I have outlined the results on a separate page – I will bring a full set of results for everyone who competed, to the next Natter Night.**

**Cheers,**

**Mark**