

MULLMURMURSMULLMURMURSMULLMURMURS - Chapter 1

Well hullawrerr chinas, an' howzitgaun? Welcome all youse yins to the 32nd Philips Tour of Mull Rally here on the unique Atlantic kissed piece of rockery known affectionately the world over as the Island of Mull. Or as it's even better known, the home of the 'best damn rally in the world!'

And for those of you new to the island, a word to the wise. It has it's very own eco-system. Forget biospheres and Cornwall, we had it first without a big greenhouse! First-time visitors should also be aware that it doesn't actually rain here, not ever. It's just that the islanders like to wash the fresh air fairly frequently!

More advice - the essential PHILIPS TOUR OF MULL PROGRAMMES are on sale in the Aros Hall with full entry list and spectator guide along with all sorts of other exclusive 2300 Car Club goodies.

And just before we get started, what is this here scrap of paper you are endeavouring to read? 'MULLMURMURS' is the offishul on-event newsletter and propaganda sheet. Over the course of the weekend, this periodical will attempt to inform and enlighten so look out for it around the island. And it goes without saying, we never let the facts get in the way of a good story!

Last night was Forum night in the Aros Hall where that cheery chappie John Fife, aided and abetted by Callum and Del Duffy, John Cressey and Ian Grindrod and Wild Willie Bonniwell regaled an over-capacity audience with tales of talent and bravery.

The evening kicked off with the usual Mastermind quiz for flying tee-shirt prizes for correct (or nearly correct) answers. But in another unique first, we had some high-value prizes for the first time. In addition to the Burmah tee-shirts, Hyundai Cars gave us some top quality polo shirts and Volkswagen GB some really tasty goodies. Thanks guys you made a good night, great.

Over at Scrutineering the MSA tyre-kickers and wheel shooglers are in fine form and warning all competitors that there will be spot checks during the rally as well as post-event Scrutineering - you have been warned.

As for the gap in the No.2 slot, that has been filled. 9 times winner Neil MacKinnon is using a full Group A Impreza in his bid for a record-breaking ten wins. Local rival Calum Duffy is returning to an Escort MkII for this year's bid to score his third victory, but he's been up to his elbows in greasy bits already. The new car broke its clutch earlier this week and while the gearbox was out they noticed a problem. Both Calum and new co-driver Del (his younger brother) are grateful to Graham Hargrave (car 75) who lent them his spare 5 spd dog box. Who says sportsmanship is dead? Nice one boys.

Another local burning the midnight oil is Eddie O'Donnell. After last year's exploits they have replaced the dyke-vaulting shell with a 4 door left hooker acquired from one Ronald Dunsmore who arrived with it and was put to work installing Eddie's oily bits under the bonnet.

John Cope's got a new motor. It's the ex-loan Pritchard, Dennis Osborne built Group A Escort which is a bit more serious than the Group N and a bit car he had last year. 7 spd gearbox, big diffs and big brakes - all he needs now is big ba**s to drive it.

Mark Jasper's got a new motor too. A brand new Metro 6R4 built from an unused brand new shell and parts. Had a shakedown on the Three Sisters (the racetrack, not the Beverly sisters!) where the car had a bit of a misfire but that has been sorted now - hopefully.

Rob Barry is sporting a worried frown. The Mitsubishi is on its fourth alternator this week alone, it has blown three already and they can't find the fault, so it's fingers crossed for to-night.

Ian Colman is back with the Sunny for its first run out since he cowped it on the Christmas Stages last year and the four wheel drive machine looks a treat as usual.

Another car which looks fine and tasty is Dougi Hall's 2.4 MkII, but sponsor Scott Bainbridge is out for blood. He's after the person responsible for the rally programme and who used a photo of the car when it was bent rather than pristine. He's also none too chuffed about the words 'he should have stayed in bed' but this was a reference to Dougi's luck not his ability. Remember this was the guy who finished runner-up to the 4WD Subaru of Chris Griffiths two years ago.

Peter Smith (45) has hired Grant Shand's absolutely minted ex-Russell Brookes works MkII complete with 2 litre BDG and fully floating rear axle with Watts linkage. It sounds just as good as it looks.

And speaking of minted MkII's, John Swinscoe (18) has got more power from his engine this year and has tightened up the diff hoping to improve on last year's 6th place.

The Rally starts to-night at 8:00 pm from the car park in Tobermory alongside the Philips Exhibition unit, but if you're intending to spectate on the stages, remember to get there early - before the Road Closure Orders come into effect. Also please do as the Marshals tell you for safety's sake, and take care out there and please comply with all provided Foot & Mouth precautions that the 2300 CC organising team have provided around the island.

And finally, anyone noticed an ol'man on crutches? None other than former Mull CofC, Nigel Worswick. Well I have to tell you, there's nothing wrong with him. Rumours of leaping out of first floor windows in his birthday suit clutching his trousers are untrue. It's a ruthless attempt to get folk to buy him drink in the Mish and the two Macs when he claims he can't fight his way through the throng to buy his own drink!

That's yer lot meantime, more guff to come. Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, Friday mid-day.