

MullMurmurs – Chapter 5

Provisional Top Ten after SS8 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Mike Stayte (Subaru Impreza WRC) 54 Minutes 20 Seconds
- 2 Calum Duffy/Iain Duffy (Ford Escort Mk2) 54m 58s
- 3 John Cope/Tony Cope (Subaru Impreza WRC) 55m 21s
- 4 Paul Kirtley/David Jones (Subaru Impreza WRC) 56m 04s
- 5 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 56m 50s
- 6 Paul MacKinnon/Kirsty Riddick (Mitsubishi Lancer) 57m 33s
- 7 Denis Biggerstaff/Graham Thomson (Subaru Impreza WRC) 57m 39s
- 8 John Price/Caroline Price (MG Metro 6R4) 57m 41s
- 9 John Swinscoe/Bill Robertson (Mitsubishi Lancer EVO9) 58m 22s
- 10 Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Hyundai Accent WRC) 58m 36s

(Please Note: These times are provisional pending confirmation by Rally HQ)

"MullMeister" Neil MacKinnon and Mike Stayte lead the 37th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally at the end of Leg 1 of Britain's longest and toughest national rally, but there was slight concern as he booked into the Final Control in the early hours. "I've got no 5th gear," said Neil, "it's not meshing properly so I haven't been able to use it over the last few stages. We're going to have to change the 'box for tomorrow."

And after a valiant start John Cope has slipped back into the clutches of Calum Duffy. "Neil's got the 'wedge' now, and I'm battling with Calum," said John, "but it's great fun out there, and it's nice to see most of the front runners still running!" Calum slipped ahead of Cope on the far side of the island after stunning times over Gribun and through a very slippery Calgary: "It's really bad in Calgary, slippery and sh*tty," said Calum, but when asked how hard he was trying, back came that impish smile, "It's on the door handles!"

Paul Kirtley has really got the bit between his teeth: "I had a big moment in Calgary, we got out of shape approaching a crest, landed with two wheels on the grass, and it was one of those moments, you were either off on one side or the other, but we survived." Closing the gap is James MacGillivray. He raised the front ride height at Service and the car is handling better, but when he went for the handbrake on the Dervaig hairpins, he knocked off the electrical Master Switch and that cost him 20 seconds while he and 'Fraze' fumbled about in the dark looking for it. In sixth place and going well is young Paul MacKinnon: "I'm trying to save the car and just see where we are in the results at the end of this Leg. We're steady away."

Denis Biggerstaff is 7th and struggling a wee bit in the dark stages, John Price is 8th despite one hard landing that cricked his neck, John Swinscoe is just pleased to have completed 'Mission 1' i.e. get to the end of the first Leg in one piece. Rounding off the top ten is Tony Bardy moving up the order as he gets to grips with the Hyundai but as for who is in control? Tony reckons it's 50/50 between himself and the car!

But missing from the running order as they booked in was Dougi Hall. So out there in the dark October night is a lost red Lancer – we'll try and find out for later today. And despite his earlier wheel shedding incident, Daniel Harper is still going and still fighting despite an ill handling car that's trying to steer from the back as well as the front and Ian Colman reckons that the Nissan is going better than him, despite suffering from a 'whistling and wheezing' turbo which is going to need some attention before tomorrow.

And if the hunger pangs are biting, the bacon butties at PoshNosh in Tobermory Main Street are just the business in these early hours.

That's yer lot for now,
Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Aros Hall, Tobermory, 3.00 am, Saturday