

Wellhullawrerrchinasandhowzyertarmactastebudsanticipatinthisteacakealicious 40th Tour of Mull Rally? Welcome one and all to the 2009 international world centre of rallying, Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. Every year is special over here, but this year is more special than ever, it's the 40th Tour of Mull. Who would ever have thought it way back in 1969, eh? 40 years of rallying on God's gift to tarmac sniffers everywhere. And the icing on the cake, or chocolate on the biscuit so to speak, is that internationally renowned snack maker to the gentry and royalty (as well as the likes of us), Saint Tunnock's of Uddingston is supporting the rally again this year. An especially warm and tasty welcome to the carameliciously delicious baker and purveyor of the world's finest treats.

As usual, the fun and frolics kicked off in the Aros Hall last night where that helluva nice big chap John Fife hosted the annual rally forum. On the panel last night were the MacKinnon twins, the Paton/Cabena twins, John Cope, John MacCrone and Steve Davies. The Hall was packed (standing room only!) and the banter was guid, even the jokes were passable. Our grateful thanks once again to the supplier of the 'flying tee-shirts' and to Peugeot who donated six Scalextric models of Kris Meeke and Paul Nagle's Peugeot 2007 as prizes for the quiz. And our congratulations to Kris and Paul on winning the International Rally Challenge this year. Marvellous, absobluidylutely marvellous.

Apparently someone said to Kris at the Colin McRae Rally last week in Perth that it was a pity he didn't clinch this world title on next month's Rally of Scotland but as wise old sage, Ian Grindrod, said last night: "It's better to take the fight to the continentals and stuff them on their home ground. That way they will take more notice!" I couldn't have put it better and more politely meself.

As for the credit crunch, forget it. Get yourself along to the Aros Hall before it shuts late this afternoon to get your commemorative programmes and buy some rally gear. 2300 Club have done a sterling job once again on the production of this 40th Prog and colourful apparel for the wearing of!

As usual, the Prog has a full entry list, maps of the stages and a timetable to ensure you get to chosen vantage points before the Roads are Closed. Remember, get there early, park up safely and don't move till safe to do so. Drive carefully when moving around and park sensibly when going spectating. Badly parked cars will mean cancelled stages!

And so to the rally. Friday dawned cloudy and cold, bitterly cold, which is not what the Scrutineers were wanting because they were all wearing kilts for a bet. Their wee nuts were frozen – wheelnuts I'm talking about, what do you think I meant?

First car into Scrutineering at Tobermory Distillery this morning was Willie Bonniwell's Albar Subaru. The boys were telling me he was out last night setting up the lights, and each time he was telling them "higher, higher" so if you see a car tonight with spotlights looking for Lancaster bombers in the dark night sky over Mull, that'll be Willie. Neil MacKinnon's Subaru is the same as last year, only blue. It's Kenny McKinstry's own car, so it's the same spec as last year but has a different dashboard display so Neil is having to relearn all the instructions.

According Daniel Harper, Chris is "shaking like a sh*tt*ng dog" ahead of tonight. Last time out on the Jim Clark the MINI disappeared through a hedge. I don't reckon he was nervous, just shivering standing in the draughty distillery yard. John Cope's car was looking well. He broke a driveshaft on the Lindisfarne last month but admitted it was his own fault, giving it a bootful of welly when it was on full lock after a hairpin. Silly boy! James MacGillivray's Ralloy MkII was looking minted as usual. He managed to have a shakedown on the Pendragon last month and finished 8th despite claiming to be taking it easy to ensure that car was in one piece for his home event.

Dougi Hall looked as fit as a butcher's dog at Scroot Palace. He had been cycling the long stage again to raise money for the Bear Cubs. His target was under an hour this year, and he was on target when he turned into the Calgary stretch and struck a headwind. How bad was it? He achieved a top speed of 47 mph last year, this year it



was only 37 mph- but he still took a minute off his time, doing 1 Hr 4m 27 secs. Maybe next year, eh? He's fit for the rally too. He was leading the Pendragon (and beating a WRC car) last month till he got a puncture.

You won't miss John Swiscoe's Lancer. It's got shiny chrome panels along its flanks and bootlid. It's got more bling than a footballer's xmas tree, but Paula says its to check her lippy and her hair before she puts her crash hat on and steps inn the car. Mind you, the car needed a few cosmetics of its own. They re-modelled it on the Jim Clark! Doug Weir was looking remarkably cheerful after rebuilding the engine. He gave co-driver Duncan Brown a shot at the Rockingham Stages and the engine blew after 7 miles. Even so, Duncan was so energised by the experience, he's bought his own rally car now!

Calum Duffy went back to school the other day. He took the Escort up to the primary at Salen and the kids had a ball. They were into everything. It's a good job Calum checked the brake bias knob afterwards, or he might have gone into the clock on Tobermory main street tonight with nothing but rear brakes! Big concern is the weather. If it's wet he reckons he'll lose 5 seconds per stage on both the 'city centre specials' tonight just getting wheelspin up Back Brae – guess where I'll be watching then?

And what of twice winner Andy Knight? In a car that weighs less than 800 kgs and two skinny blokes in it! He reckons the 1400cc Corsa is quicker than the 1600 car he last used in the 90s – and look what he managed with that. In a somewhat different FWD car is John Cressey, he's trying out different back brakes to those in the Harper MINI. Iain 'Ogg' MacKenzie has his eyes on the class and has 'tickled' the wee Peugeot since its last outing at Crail. He says he's got a new top gear for Mull, and his Dad's eyes rolled skywards! 10th overall last year Wayne Sisson is back and hoping to improve – "We've been working on the Notes, especially over the crests!" Stand well back tonight folks. Guy Woodcock was last here in '97 with an Astra, and has brought the original ex-Gwyndaf Evans Ford works Escort Maxi this time, a mean looking machine if ever I saw one. Tony Bardy could spring a surprise this weekend. The 4WD Nissan Sunny scored a win on the North West Stages in February, so he's still a bit rusty, but the potential is there.

And what about James Hoseason's Darrian. Looking at it, you'd never think it was a 10 year old car with a whole dose of events under it's belt. It's a tribute to Metro running Jon Ingram who looks after the car. It's seriously quick too, it's got a 2.5 Millington under the plastic but James says he's only going for a finish on his first visit here. Sensible bloke, eh? But in a Darrian? Nutcase if you ask me. Jimmy Christie was last here in 95 and finished 13th getting the top newcomer award but on his second visit retired on the first stage. That kind of sums up Mull, don't it? The Lancer is still on forest springs but he's put bigger brakes on it. Tristan Pye says his new hatchback Impreza is totally different from his previous model but this is only its first run out on tar. John Rintoul is giving his new EVO9 its first run. Testing it the other night, he said: "It's so smooth and quiet its like driving a taxi." Brother Jim retorted: "He's full of sh*t* isn't he?" Also in a brand new car is Tim 'Timo' Stell and Stevie Brown is using the Fiesta ST which is still for sale. So no heroics tonight, this is a demonstration run only. Yeah, that will be right. He'll be out to beat Dad's times in car 17.

Alan Gardiner has had a hectic time these past few days. He wiped the lights out and the front corner on a fence straining post but the Escort is looking fit an well again today. He'll be back out to set up the lights later – only more carefully this time.

And a special warm (cold?) welcome to the Hinley family. Margaret and Mike contested this rally in a Hillman Imp in 1980, but what they didn't know at the time was Mags was preggers. And they're back this year for the first time since then with Rachael who's now a wee bit older, but does that make her the youngest ever competitor on the Tour? The whole family is marshalling down at Scridain, nice one folks. And welcome to Daniel Croy a visitor from the Czech Republic who runs the Nostalgia Rally Championship in his homeland – Mull's fame has reached some far flung places, eh?

Rod Brereton was up to his old tricks in the Mishnish on Wednesday night. His music quiz raised over 200 quid for the RNLI. Fixed? I should think not, but when asked if he would take 50 quid to swing the results – guess who won? Oh, and by the way, Happy Birthday Alan Cameron. He's running car 75 but he's 60 today, or should be car 60 and he's 75? Only kidding.

That's yer lot for now,
Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Friday, Noon, Tobermory.

Well, that's Scrutineering over for another year. The Scroots have shoogled, tyre-kicked, checked and measured everything mechanical, but who's checking the crews. There are some bleary eyed blokes amongst them after a few all-nighters to get ready for today.

Shortly the main street will be cleared for the 40th Tunnock's Tour of Mull to blast off into tyre melting, gut wrenching action, so a final word of warning to all you spectators. Take care out there and if you don't use your own common sense, used somebody else's. Park sensibly, drive carefully and spectate responsibly.

Back at Scrutineering I had to laugh at Grum Willcock's idea of 'international' rallying. He broke a brake disc on the Opel Manta at the Lindisfarne last month and needed to replace them. So he fitted a pair of German Merc S class discs to the front for the princely sum of 66 quid. And they go well with his Jaguar front callipers, Volvo rear callipers, Vauxhall engine, Ford gearbox, Opel Manta body and a back axle sourced in the USA from a Jeep 'thingy' (he couldn't remember what) when the £ was weak against the \$. That's what I call resourceful rallying on a budget.

Former Scottish Tarmac Champ, Ricky Wheeler was last over here 13 years ago and is hoping for better luck. He was off for 12 minutes in the first stage and set a top 20 time on the last, so even then, progress was in the right direction. Ian Chadwick is back for more. The 106 was new for last year and he's done 3 events since then. He was actually on course for a 10th place o/a on the Munster Stages earlier this year till he started catching cars, so let's hope he's not catching more tonight.

Reay MacKay was looking a bit apprehensive. He's not really done a proper tarmac event before and he's never driven the Metro on anything but gravel tyres, so the Snowman Rally winner will be tackling the unknown tonight. He's very professional though, I saw him taking his racing ovies out of an Asda carrier bag! John Morrison is hoping to improve on his highest placed newcomer award on the '05 Mull. He was running car 41 then and is running 41 again this year. Is that a good omen?

A welcome sight at Scrutinising was Steve Davies. He's got a new engine: "Half of the old one is still lying scattered over Ensay Steps from last year," he quipped. It's hard to believe 'Sid the Parrot' Fleming contested his 1st Mull in a Mini in '75, but here he is back in a Fiesta ST: "We're calling it the Corgi Car – it's so quiet and small inside compared with the MkII's I've been running". And sitting alongside is Fergus Loudon - from Tunnock's - so doff your cap, tug your forelock and call him sir. I will.

Curly Haigh has fitted new seats to his MkI, you know the kind, the fancy ones with the big wings round the crash helmet position, but they're so wide he nearly can't get the Escort doors shut. Still it's better than his recce car. It had to get towed on to the ferry! Matthew Tarbutt's Nova appeared at Scrooting with a large lip-smacker shape on both driver and co-driver doors, saying Holly with three 'xxx's. Apparently this has come from co-driver's Joff Haigh's best friend's wife who reckons this is a good luck ritual – funny folk, wimmen, eh? Duggie Ingram got a 4th in class on last month's Pendragon with the Mini, and that was despite a 'dink' in the rear end when he slid wide on a corner and hit a roadside rock. The car was new for last year and suffered teething problems so it should be fit for tonight.

Alan McLaughlin's Ford Puma looks rather different to the way it finished the 2007 Mull when he parked it upside down on the beach! He got the class win last year, so progress is in the right direction. Callum Bendall's Ford Ka may look like Ford's smallest machine, but it's got a 1400 Puma engine on throttle bodies under the bonnet. Sort of like a real Ka, but after a night on the vodka and red bull. After breaking a driveshaft at Kames, three months back, David Johnston has splashed out on two brand new ones for the Golf – after checking and finding that his spares were twisted!



Euan MacKay has been busy this week. The wee Peugeot finished last week's Colin McRae Stages with bent rear panels, arches, tank guard and a burst exhaust, so a lot of midnight oil was burnt, but when he took the big hammer to the tank guard at 2.00 am in the morning he got a severial verbal roasting from his Mum who was violently awakened from her peaceful slumbers by this hammer wielding nutter. Still he got the job done, and he's here. Donald Brown has forsaken the Sunbeam for a Saxo: "I've driven a FWD car before only once – badly!" he said. Let's see what tonight brings.

Dave Thomas is back in a 'brand new' 40 year old Mini Clubman. Mind you I was surprised to see him. He is half way round a world tour in a Mini van. He'd done all the provinces of Canada and after this 'holiday' on Mull he's going to tackle Russia - I wonder if he's told the Russians yet?

Shaun Sinclair is back, after crashing out last year when a brake pipe burst. But he finished 5th o/a in the Scottish Rally Championship this year, so the car should be right for this. It's good to see young Alex Brown out in John MacCrone's 205 Championship winning car, this was to thank him for all his help this past year. Pierre Newton's 205 looks tidy and tasty. Built in 2005 he finished Mull that year and finished again in '06 but when he couldn't get an entry in 07 and 08 he did two airfield events and crashed in both. The moral of this story is, don't do airfields unless you fly a plane!

I had to laugh, Eddie O'Donnell Jnt appeared at Scrooting with a smart jacket emblazoned 'with the word AutoFashion' Well, I'm sorry but the words 'O'Donnel' and 'Fashion' sit as comfortably together as a hedgehog at a balloon party, or a fish supper at an anorexics' night out. But the car has a new sequential shift 5 spd box and it was ready before Scrooting closed so that's a positive. Third generation Steven O'Donnell had his Mk1 there after 4 years of getting it ready. He bought the car in 2005 and it was just about finished when he got to the Distillery – typical O'Donnell time keeping!

John Easson Scholarship winner Mark McCulloch was another burning the midnight oil this past week. He managed to shorten the Corsa by two inches on one side on last weekend's McRae but with only one portapower tool he was struggling. So he wedged the car in the garage on one side with fence posts and attacked the other side of the bodysell with the tool. Result? Perfection.

It was nice to see Paul Darlington back with the V4 Saab. Like the rally it is 40 years old. He did the rally in 2004 and then got married in 2005 – so he missed the rally that year. I wonder why. Kevin Charles has watched Mull a few times, but this is his first behind the wheel. He did the Jim Clark National earlier in the year in the Fiesta but snapped a driveshaft on the last stage, although he finished. That's what's needed for Mull too. Never give up. And didn't David Holland's MkII look grand. The Palletforce MkII has done three Mulls, and one event in Anglesey, which is somewhere near Englandshire apparently.

Speaking of professional preparation, I had to laugh when Matthew Fox came through in the wee Peugeot. He had his fag packet velcro'd to the door panel. It was beautifully done, stuck to the door. Apparently at the end of the longer stages, his co-driver can't pass him a fag quick enough to help soothe his tattered nerves. What some folk will put themselves through for their sport!

And doesn't it just make you feel old. Young Alasdair MacCrone and Robbie Duncan appeared at Scrooting with the Bear Cubs Nova. They both look as though they are just out of school. Young? I think they shave with Johnsons cotton wool buds! Just jealous, that's me.

By the way, look out for Bulletin Bill in the MullMurmurs distribution Subaru Impreza tonight. He will be appearing at various locations around the route – hopefully.

Now, if you are going out drinking and driving tonight, just make sure it's nothing stronger than Irn Bru, and if you fancy a snack there's only one name on everyone's lips – a Tunnock's caramel wafer a day, helps you pace, race and rally away. OK, so what did you expect? Poetry?

That's yer lot for now,
Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Friday, 5.00 pm, Tobermory.

(Very) Provisional Leaderboard after SS (of 17)

1 MacKinnon/MacGillivray	12 Mins 15 Secs
2 MacKinnon/Stayte	12m 33s
3 Hall/Hall	12m 33s
4 Cope/Fagg	12m 49s
5 Harper/Campbell	13m 01s
6 Pattison/Whittaker	13m 03s
7 MacGillivray/Fraser	13m 05s
8 Pye/Falconer	13m 10s
9 Bardy/Smith	13m 12s
10 Bonniwell/Ewing	13m 20s
11 O'Donnell/O'Donell	13m 26s
12 Duffy/Duffy	13m 56s
13 Biggerstaff/Wyllie	13m 59s
14 Kirtley/Jones	13m 59s

(Note: These positions may change as more Time Cards come in)

It's dark, wet and cold out there. It must be Mull. After five years of remarkably docile weather I suppose it had to happen, but here we are on the 40th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally and it's business as usual. The route is different this year which has had an impact on the MullMurmurs Bulletin Service. We can't get to where we usually like to be and distribution will be even more tricky than normal. However, we'll do our best, so please bear with us. For those of you new to the MullMurmurs operation, this highly factual and informative gossip and scandal sheet will endeavour to keep you up to date during the rally so look out for it as Bulletin Bill runs ahead of the rally distributing this free newsheet.

Anyway, this year's event started with a bang, reverbrating around the walls of Tobermory Bay with the first of two 'city centre special stages' in the city of Tobermory.

At the end of that opening blast, young Paul MacKinnon said: "That was the slippiest thing I've seen in my life. I nearly swapped ends at the hairpin when the handbrake seized on." Slippiness was a point echoed by Dougi Hall: "Tyres cold, wet and slippy, but it was alright." Neil MacKinnon added: "I thought it was so slippy that at first I didn't think the diffs were working, and then I thought it was the tyres." John Cope summed it up: "It is what it is, a bit of fun."

Calum Duffy was a bit more succinct: "Cheeses (or words to that effect) there was no grip at all, it was wheelspin all the way up the hill." Daniel Harper chipped in: "It was just a bit of fun, what else on cold tyres, wet weather and wet tarmac." Tony Bardy was expecting the test to be a bit quicker: "It was slower than I thought it would be, but there was a lot of people there." James MacGillivray enjoyed it too. "Slippy but good fun," he reckoned.

Tristan Pye was a bit more realistic in the new shape Impreza: "There was everything to lose and nothing to gain in those conditions but it was good fun". Dave Miller thought it was: "Smashing, just smashing." Doug Weir was taking it seriously but co-driver Duncan Brown was tooting the horn all the way, so much for reading the Pace Notes then!

Dave Hopwood had a last minute panic: "The battery was flat at the start. We had to get a jump start at MacKay's Garage and did the first stage without spotlights, but we were OK for the second run." Paul Kirtley thought: "Going through Tobermory was a real hoot." Tugs Sherrington said: "It was so slippy it was like driving a MkII, it was sideways everywhere," and he's driving a Lancer.

And the best quote of the night (so far!) came from the O'Donnell twins in car 15: "It wasn't easy passing the MacDonald Arms without going in for a pint!"

STOP PRESS: Looks like John Cressey is out on SS3 with a broken gearbox in the MINI and heartbreakingly, young John MacCrone has gone off in SS3 in the Honda Civic, and it looks as though he is out too. Also in trouble, but not quite as bad as those two is Calum Duffy. The Escort picked up a puncture and he was passed by Dougi Hall in the stage.

That's yer lot for now,

Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Friday, 10.00 pm, At the foot of Glen Aros

MullMurmurs – Chapter 4

Provisional Leaderboard after SS5 (of 17)

1 MacKinnon/MacGillivray	37 Mins 40 Secs
2 Hall/Hall	38m 44s
3 MacGillivray/Fraser	38m 49s
4 Cope/Fagg	38m 19s
5 Pye/Falconer	38m 19s
6 Duffy/Duffy	39m 22s
7 Harper/Campbell	39m 23s
8 Bonniwell/Ewing	39m 30s
9 Pattison/Whittaker	39m 34s
10 Sisson/Stone	39m 42s

(Note: These positions may change as more Time Cards come in)

The big news is that the boys are OK. Neil MacKinnon and Mike Stayte went off near the start of Stage 4 in Glen Aros. The Subaru suffered a heavy impact to the rear end and the boys were shaken and well stirred. The rescue services were called in as a precaution and the crew were taken to the hospital where they will be detained over night for observation, although they both walked into hospital at Salen unaided.

Meanwhile, the rally was delayed for an hour because of the incident but it's now back on with vengeance. After his front puncture on the Lochs, Callum Duffy is back up to sixth place already having dropped back to 24th, but Paul MacKinnon and Ewan MacGillivray still lead: "Just steady away", said Paul.

It was wet over the Lochs but it's drying a bit and there's more grip out there now. Dougi Hall is second but says: "I'm just not going quick enough, we'll see what happens next."

Willie Bonniwell is having a bit of trouble. He's having to keep the Subaru running because the starter motor has failed, while Tony Bardy says he's getting too old, and going quickly – backwards! Daniel Harper says there was standing water in Calgary but the front runners are dissipating (good word that) it and it's drying out for the later runners. Dave Pattison lost time when a fuel pump failed and it took him a few minutes to suss out the problem and switch over to the spare. Tristan Pye is slowly getting to grips with the new shape Impreza. "It's faster in a straight line and it's deceptively quick on corners, I'm just trying to find its limits."

Paul Kirtley was in bad trouble: "A turbo pipe blew off in SS3 and I lost power, but there's something wrong with the suspension at the rear. When it lands after crests, it's diving to the right or the left. It's been a lively night so far!" Dave Hopwood says the standing water has gone – and been replaced by mud dragged on to the road by the front runners cutting corners. Denis Biggerstaff lost a chunk of time in SS5 when he clipped a rock and punctured a front tyre just 3 miles in so he had to stop and change it. Eddie O'Donnell has a slipping clutch but no time to change it at Craignure so he's going to have to try and get through the next two stages and change it overnight.

John Swinscoe has bruised ears. He got a right telling off from the wife - for going too slow! Andy Knight has brake problems. Inconsistent. When the brake pedal goes long it shifts all the bias to the rear and the car is oversteering everywhere, but he never knows when it's going to do it. Stuart McQueen spun on the Lochs but got away with it, reversing into a soft banking. Reay MacKay's exhaust is getting noisy on the Metro – all these high revs are blowing the insides out of it! Stevie Brown broke a driveshaft in that last one but limped out OK. John Rintoul is losing power and doesn't know why. Guy Woodcock had an electrical fire when the wiper fuse blew but is still going. Billy McClelland's windscreen misted up in the Lochs and had a slight off when he couldn't see and then had a big moment in Glen Aros. Cameron Maclean is worried about a noisy back axle and has brake problems and Jimmy Christie says: "It's only slippy in places – but there's LOTS of places!" And Dave Thomas is out in the Mini. It developed a serious misfire after he was playing to the crowds in Tobermory!

PLEA FOR HELP: Can anyone help out Car 53, Paul Daniel with a Peltor intercom or Peltor helmet (small) – he's desperate!

That's yer lot for now,

Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Friday, 10.00 pm, At the Salen Hotel (in the lounge!)



Provisional Leaderboard after SS7 (of 17)

1 MacKinnon/MacGillivray	48 Mins 04 Secs
2 Hall/Hall	49m 36s
3 MacGillivray/Fraser	49m 52s
4 Duffy/Duffy	50m 00s
5 Harper/Campbell	50m 22s
6 Pye/Falconer	50m 45s
7 Cope/Fagg	50m 45s
8 Pattison/Whittaker	50m 53s
9 Bardy/Smith	51m 01s
10 Sisson/Stone	51m 13s

(Note: These positions may change as more Time Cards come in)

At the close of play on Friday night at the end of the first Leg of this 40th Tunnock's Tour of Mull, Paul MacKinnong and Ewan MacGillivray still lead the rally. For the moment, Paul has picked a pace he is happy with: "I'm not really bothered what the others are doing at this stage. I've stiffened the suspension up a wee bit but it's still skipping a bit on the bumps."

Behing him Dougi and Sam Hall are holding station in second place. "I've softened the suspension up a bit," said Dougi, "but these boys are flying tonight." Ewan MacGillivray is still in third place but the fast closing Calum Duffy has designs on higher positions: "I was pretty steady in Scridain," said Calum, "but I pushed a bit in Gribun."

John Cope dropped back a bit: "I stalled on the startline of Scridain," he admitted sheepishly, but the car appears to be bottoming out too much for his liking and this will need to be checked overnight. Tony Bardy is cursing himself for being too smart: "I changed the steering rack for this event as I thought the new one would be a bit too nervous over the Mull bumps, but if anything it's worse!" Daniel Harper is still going well, despite: "I know it can't be helped, this is rallying after all, but I just can't get going with all this stopping and starting."

So as the top seeds head off to bed, the 2300 Club organisers were still working on the notional times for stages 3 and 4. The top seeds managed to get through them all, but after the accident they were forced to run the later runners around them and they would all get a notional time for the tests. Anyway, that will all be sorted out.

Meanwhile, further back in the field, Euan MacKay (99) was worried about some smoke appearing inside the car but it didn't seem to slow him down and Callum Bendall (82) had a wee spin in SS5 when the Ka got a wheel on the grass verge. Mark Borthwick (101) exclaimed: "I thought Otterburn was bad, but this takes the biscuit." (I wonder if he meant that as a pun? Think about it. Oh please yourselves, I'm tired and it's late).

Jim McDowall's (97) gearknob came off in his hand, David Johnston (102) is worried about his clutch pedal sinking to the floor and David Calvert reckoned he lost the Notes somewhere in Loch Tuath but it didn't slow them down. Martin Page was planning a precautionary underside inspection at Service after a really heavy landing on one of the Tuath jumps and Graham Brown was worried about heavy landings too. All his electrics cut out, but came back after some frenetic wire waggling but he had Gribun ahead with even more jumps! Ross Hunter (112) was slowed when he caught a car and Haydn Williams (111) caught a deer. It was so close it knocked a door mirror glass out. Bruce Hosie is worried about excessive play on his power steering but is carrying on at unabated pace and David Steggles has concerns about his brake pedal 'going long' at all the wrong times. Alex Brown in the MacCrone Peugeot is taking things steady, it's his first real rally in the wet and Gordon MacFadyen (126) arrived at the Salen Control with smoke reeking out of the back brakes.

First time out in a 4WD car, Iain 'Fuey the Fireman' Noble is getting on fine but he's never driven a car with so many switches and buttons. Aye this new technology catches up with us all Fuey. When the back end of the Sunbeam stepped out on him, it made James Fairbairns (129) wake up smartish and Shug Rutherford (124) is concerned about his low oil pressure. It might be John Hislop's (130) first time on Mull but co-driver Gareth Williams has been around here a few times with Dougi Hall. Kevin Charles (132) was just dead chuffed to have caught and passed a car and Norman MacPhail (134) was struggling to get back on the pace after the long wait before Stage 5, but he was looking happier as he headed towards his home stages in the south of the island.

That's yer lot for now,

Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Friday, 4.00 am, At the Sea Life Centre in Oban



MullMurmurs – Chapter 6

Provisional Leaderboard after SS12 (of 17)

1 Hall/Hall	1 Hr 24 Mins 11 Secs
2 Duffy/Duffy	1h 24m 49s
3 Cope/Fagg	1h 25m 02s
4 Harper/Campbell	1h 25m 10s
5 MacGillivray/Fraser	1h 25m 20s
6 Bardy/Smith	1h 25m 33s
7 Sisson/Stone	1h 26m 02s
8 Pye/Falconer	1h 27m 01s
9 Sinclair/Hamill	1h 27m 37s
10 Sherrington/Bould	1h 28m 29s

It's all change at the top of the leaderboard after the five daylight stages on this 40th anniversary Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally. Dougi and Sam Hall now lead the rally after 12 of this year's 17 stages but they are coming under severe pressure from the Dervaig Dervishes, Callum and Iain Duffy.

Hall has had his troubles today though: "We did a driveshaft on Tuath. It's banging and clattering away, and it feels worse on lefthanders than righthanders. We nursed it through the first two stages, pushed a bit on Calgary, and then said **** it, and went for it over the last two. But we'll need to see what exactly is wrong before tonight. It feels like three wheel drive at times and I'm not sure at others."

Duffy was in trouble too but not of his own making. After changing the crown wheel and pinion in the axle last night, the MkII is flying today. "I got hit by Paul MacKinnon," he said, "Paul had gone off and was reversing out helped by Marshals. They were telling him when it was safe but whatever happened he started coming out just as we were going past. We were lucky, he hit the tail of the car but missed the wheel,. Otherwise we might have got mechanical damage as well."

A close call, but it means MacKinnon is out as he didn't make it to the final Control this afternoon. That puts John Cope back into contention. He was on fire over the second Hill Road setting fastest time and has moved up to third place, but he was lucky too: "We were on slicks when that downpour hit us on Calgary!". Daniel Harper had a fright too when the hub came loose from the strut: "The pinch bolt worked loose and the hub was clattering against the strut, but we fixed it at the end of the stage." James MacGillivray was beaming at the end of the Lochs: "I was cursing. I thought I had picked too soft a tyre, but it rained in Calgary and my choice was perfect. I also got held up a few seconds at Paul's off."

Tony Bardy is now happy with his steering: "It feels like an ERF but it's not darting left or right as the other one did." Wayne Sisson is picking up pace now too, and had a spin on the Hill Road, but Tristan Pye dropped back with a front puncture half way through the final stage of the afternoon. Outside the top ten last night, Shaun Sinclair is on a mission today. He's up to 9th now despite spinning on somebody's oil on the Hill Road: "It was a full 360 and then some, but I lost 30 seconds getting it turned round and on its way again," he said. Tugs Sherrington rounds off the top ten despite the wipers getting themselves knotted during the downpour in Calgary and he couldn't see.

Denis Biggerstaff came out of the Lochs with a huge grin, "I just love that stage", he said. Steve Cressey's new Subaru has a crumpled front corner courtesy of a huge deer in Gribun last night: "We were flat in sixth and there was this big deer right in the middle of the road!" Doug Weir spun on the Hill Road: "It was my own fault – I missed a gear." Iain Mackenzie has the wee Peugeot well wound up but is losing time to the bigger cars now that conditions are drying later in the afternoon. Dave Pattison is toiling. A string of good times has been ruined by three punctures this afternoon alone. Curly Haigh is heading straight to service, his gearbox is grumbling and due a change before tonight. Jonathan Mounsey is enjoying himself: "It's slicks all the way, the wetter the better!" Bluidy masochist! Stevie Brown forgot to Note the shiny tar during the recce – he found it today, but you just can't faze these youngsters these days. John Rintoul's lack of pace last night was explained in daylight, a turbo pipe was leaking. Grum Willcok is going better, he's got his confidence back, the brakes are working well. Tim Stell was having a good run till it "dowsed it down on Calgary" but he's still inside the top twenty. Ian Chadwick is 2nd in class but doesn't think he can get 1st because of the notional times, so he's just out for the 'craic' now. Cameron MacLean has cured his brakes troubles from last night with new front calipers and the noisy back axle was only a rattling leaf spring! John Morrison got caught in the heavy rain on the Hill Road but at least it was washing the mud off it a bit. Stuart McQueen didn't need a fag at the end of the Lochs – he must be getting cocky now, and Paul Kirtley is struggling with an intermittent turbo problem. One minute no boost and the next plenty, and usually when he doesn't want it. And the grin is back, Andy Knight was smiling so hard it was stretching his helmet. "We got the brakes sorted out last night," said Andy, "that was good in there," he said referring to the Lochs. But he needs a good skelp and a severe talking-to. A wee 1400 shouldn't be cuffing turbo motors.

That's yer lot for now,

Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Friday, 3.00 pm, At Island Bakery, Oban



Provisional Leaderboard after SS14 (of 17)

1 Duffy/Duffy	1 Hr 53 Mins 01 Secs
2 MacGillivray/Fraser	1h 53m 46s
3 Cope/Fagg	1h 53m 54s
4 Harper/Campbell	1h 53m 56s
5 Bardy/Smith	1h 54m 39s
6 Pye/Falconer	1h 55m 43s
7 Sisson/Stone	1h 56m 07s
8 Sinclair/Hamill	1h 57m 06s
9 Sherrington/Bould	1h 58m 04s
10 Hall/Hall	1h 58m 11s

He's been there before so often and he was there again tonight. Dougi Hall was leading this 40th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally, but tragedy struck, not once, but twice. The red Lancer punctured on the long 23 mile Tuath/Calgary test and then it punctured again on the Mishnish Lochs stage, and he dropped from the rally lead to 10th place. It looks very much as though this event has denied him yet again.

That however was good news for Calum Duffy who has swept into the lead with two stages to go. James MacGillivray is up to second John Cope was looking a bit dis-chuffed at the end of the Lochs "What did I do? I put slicks on for the Lochs, the wettest stage of the night!"

Daniel Harper is up to 4th now: "If I can get to the end 'll be happy. I'm sick of not getting to the end. The last two or three stages always seem to get me."

And for those of you wondering why Stage 16 at Gribun was cancelled, it's easy to answer, but not so easy to understand why. After trouble last night with cows wandering on to the road, the farmer was contacted ahead of tonight's re-run of that stage. Despite pleas from the organisers to move his cows to higher pasture he said he was unable to guarantee that his cows would not be left to their own devices tonight again. On that basis, and on the grounds of safety, the organisers really had no choice but to cancel the stage.

And finally, an apology to those eagle-eyed viewers who spotted a slight geographical error in the previous two MullMurmurs when I mistakenly reported my location. Put it down to long hours, lack of sleep, or stupidity, but it's correct this time!

That's yer lot for now,

Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet – Saturday, 11.00 pm, Riverside, Tobermory



Provisional Leaderboard after SS17 (of 17)

1 Duffy/Duffy	2 Hr 09 Mins 25 Secs
2 MacGillivray/Fraser	2h 10m 30s
3 Harper/Campbell	2h 11m 05s
4 Cope/Fagg	2h 11m 18s
5 Bardy/Smith	2h 11m 38s
6 Pye/Falconer	2h 12m 50s
7 Sinclair/Hamill	2h 14m 31s
8 Hall/Hall	2h 14m 58s
9 Sisson/Stone	2h 15m 39s
10 Sherrington/Bould	2h 15m 49s

There was just no stopping Calum and Iain Duffy tonight. They were not to be denied their 5th win on this 40th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally. Over the final two stages Duffy led from the front consolidating and extending his winning margin to just over a minute from James MacGillivray and Ian Fraser.

John Cope was holding third place going into those final rain dampened stretches of tarmac, which weren't exactly wet, more greasy was the feel. In other words, it was uncertain underfoot, or more precisely, treacherous undertyre. Cope picked his pace and made his choice: "I had 3 on Harper going into that last one, I wasn't going to try any harder." Daniel was in two minds. Finish, or go for it. He did both.

Tony Bardy scored a remarkable 5th in the Nissan while Tristan Pye earned the Group N win with 6th place as Wayne Sisson dropped back into the clutches of Shaun Sinclair, the number 50 seed who finished in 7th place ahead of the hard charging Dougi Hall, demoting Sisson to 9th.

At the finish, Dougi looked quite resigned to his fate. "Yes, I've led the rally a couple of times in the past but I've been lying second more often, before trouble struck. That's rallying, eh?" If it hadn't been for those two punctures, who knows? Duffy was closing, but Hall is a fighter, as he showed battling back to finish 8th.

Rounding off the top ten was Tugs Sherrington after two nights and one afternoon of high drama and even higher excitement.

But they were the lucky ones. Paul MacKinnon went off while leading. Neil MacKinnon crashed while in contention, Willie Bonniwell retired with gearbox failure and Dave Pattison called it a day after fuel pump troubles and finally a worsening gearbox.

And just outside the top ten there were a few more surprises. Iain MacKenzie won the 1600 class with 14th place and Andy Knight took the 1400 class with 16th place and Stevie Brown was on course for a result till fate intervened and the Fiesta went for walk on the beach at Scridain.

As ever, the Tunnock's Tour served up a feast of surprises and shocks, heroes and heroines, and a healthy dose of drama and disaster, but that's what makes this the 'Best rally in the World.'

Note: A full report will be served up in the final issue of the 2009 MullMurmurs sometime on Sunday – now I'm off for a Tunnock's pie and my bed.

That's yer lot for now,
Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet
Sunday, 3.00 am, The Sea Life Visitor Centre, Tobermory



MullMurmurs – Chapter 9

Results after SS17 (of 17)

1 Calum Duffy/Iain Duffy	Ford Escort MkII	2 Hr 09 Mins 25 Secs
2 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser	Ford Escort MkII	2h 10m 30s
3 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell	MINI	2h 11m 05s
4 John Cope/Rob Fagg	Subaru Impreza	2h 11m 18s
5 Tony Bardy Bardy/Reg Smith	Nissan Sunny GTI R	2h 11m 38s
6 Tristan Pye/Andrew Falconer	Subaru Impreza	2h 12m 50s
7 Shaun Sinclair/Chris Hamill	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO9	2h 14m 31s
8 Dougi Hall/Sam Hall	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO9	2h 14m 58s
9 Wayne Sisson/Daniel Stone	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO9	2h 15m 39s
10 Tugs Sherrington/Sam Bould	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO4	2h 15m 49s

Class Winners:

A – Andy Knight/Drew Sturrock	Vauxhall Nova	2h 19m 02s
B – Iain MacKenzie/Angus Mackenzie	Peugeot 106	2h 18m 00s
C – Doug Weir/Duncan Brown	Ford Escort MkII	2h 17m 55s

The 40th Tunnock's Tour of Mull was like the Scottish weather. Unpredictable, unexpected and full of wind, at least when the competitors are describing their antics to me! Don't believe me? Look at those results again. The top three cars are two wheel drive, two of them drive from the rear, and one of them pulls at the front. And not a turbocharger in sight. Progress, eh? Dontcha just love it?

In theory, and looking at the opposition, they shouldn't have been there, but that's the appeal of rallying. Despite all the technology and all the gizmos there is still a need for flesh and blood behind the wheel and on the pedals. Which brings me to the winners of this anniversary tour. Neither of them have either flesh or blood. Calum escaped from a Terminator movie and Iain escaped from Madame Tussaud's.

The pace of that MkII last night, in wet, dry, greasy and grippy conditions was unbelievable. Those were not mere mortals inside that car last night, they were robots, programmed for heroic deeds. Far-fetched? I don't think so. Think back to Friday night and the end of the third test, when the Escort limped out with a puncture. They were in 24th place after that one, and there they were in the early hours of Sunday morning battling for the lead. If you read that in a comic, you'd look at the cover to see if it was Superman or Batman, not Dervaigman.

Just over a minute behind were James MacGillivray and Ian Fraser. The 2005 winner was back on form scoring his third runner-up position in one of the world's toughest events (the Safari is just a stroll in the park after this – Ok so it's a big game park, but Haggis can be pretty fierce in their natural habitat!) after one of those typically canny drives that doesn't look dramatic but carries the speed well through the bends.

And scoring their best result for some time, Daniel Harper and Chris Campbell. Daniel of course scored some pretty heroic results in the past with a real Mini, but he achieved something pretty unique last with the German sausage tin derivative. Third overall after nearly losing a wheel took a bit of doing. After a fright like that, normal folks with real red blood would have the heebie-jeebies for weeks after an incident like that. I'm just not sure whether he's got brake fluid or 15/40 running through his veins.

So, what of 'the rest'? John Cope and Rob Fagg were top 4WD runners. And if anything proved just how critical tyre choice was, John's progress highlighted the need to get it right. He was in contention all the way but suffered a Simpsons 'Dohhh' moment late on Saturday night when he chose slicks in a moment of pure guesswork (he claimed divine inspiration) – for the wettest stage of the night! The result? He dropped from third to fourth.

Tony Bardy and Reg Smith had a good run in the 4WD Nissan. It may be old technology these days but it was fit for the changeable conditions that the 150 crews experienced this weekend. First time on tar with the new hatchback style of Subaru Impreza, Tristan Pye and Andrew Falconer were a superb 6th overall and top Group N runners, but perhaps the most unexpected visitors in the top ten were Shaun Sinclair and Chris Hamill. Shaun finished 5th overall in this year's Scottish Rally Championship and was regarded as something of a forest specialist, and which no doubt contributed to his Number 50



seeding, but has now proved he has a liking for the black stuff. Tarmac that is, not the other black stuff – although he has a liking for that too, allegedly.

And what of Dougi and Sam Hall in 8th place. This was the third time that Dougi has led this rally at some point, but as he pointed out at the finish, he's been lying second more often when disaster has struck, sometimes mechanical sometimes of his own making, but two punctures at crucial moments late last night was just sheer sporting cruelty.

Wayne Sisson and Daniel Stone were 9th and Tugs Sherrington and Sam Bould rounded off the top ten after two nights and one afternoon of high speed dashes, bashes and crashes.

But they were the lucky ones. Paul MacKinnon went off when he was in the lead and Neil MacKinnon crashed out on the third stage after sharing the lead with Paul and Dougi Hall after the two short, but memorable, opening blasts around Tobermory City Centre. Willie Bonniwell retired with gearbox failure and Dave Pattison was setting encouraging times till his fuel pump stopped pumping and his gearbox stopped selecting.

Paul Kirtley had his troubles too, with an ill handling Subaru and a bad tempered turbocharger while Eddie O'Donnell could write a much bigger book about his non-finishes than this pamphlet on finishing. Even after an all-nighter on Friday, the Escort was finally coaxed back into life ready for the Saturday afternoon run, only to strike a large stone which damaged a strut and punctured a tyre.

Just outside the top ten there were a few more surprises. Iain and Angus MacKenzie won the 1600 class with 14th place overall while Andy Knight and Drew Sturrock took the 1400 class with 16th place. Doug Weir and Duncan Brown took honours in the 2 litre class although Dougs son, Stevie Brown went for a stroll on the beach at Scridain – but took the Fiesta with him at the time, just when a finish and a result was on the cards!

There were nice tales too, and a not so nice one. Neil Morgan was out of the rally on Friday, but did the Trophy and couldn't help playing to the packed grandstands at Dervaig junction. He took pity on the wet, cold and bedraggled assembly and executed four doughnuts just to cheer them all up. And cheer they did – just don't tell the cheerless MSA!

And there was the farmer on Friday night who lost a coo in Gribun which was found by Gordon Halley. The result was messy but could have been nastier. The coo finished second and the Peugeot finished second-hand but Gordon was remarkably upbeat about it afterwards and reckoned his 'victory' was down to him using Matador Tyres. Oh please yourselves, I thought it was funny. But when the farmer refused to move his coos on Saturday night, the organisers were faced with the unpopular, but highly understandable decision, to cancel the Gribun test on the grounds of safety. Hitting a butcher's shop on four legs is not funny, it's dangerous.

Grant 'Sid the Parrot' Fleming, with Fergus Loudon of Tunnock's in the left hand seat, finished but avoided the ritual dunking in Tobermory Bay, perhaps because of his advancing years, or perhaps because his service crew are now only too well aware that parrots are less graceful in the water than swans. Whatever, they were lucky to finish. When the bonnet blew open in Glen Aros, it and the lamp-pod crashed back into the windscreen crazing the glass and bending the roof. Fergus could see very little, and Grant could see little more but the Fiesta made it back in more or less one piece.

As ever, 2300 Club's grateful thanks are due to a whole host of folks including, Mull Community Council, Argyll & Bute Council, Strathclyde Police and all the rescue and recovery services, Tobermory Distillery for the most unique Scroot venue in the world, and everybody else on the island, except one farmer - and the stag who made the ultimate sacrifice when 'taking out' one of the Polis motors on Friday night.

Thanks too, to Bulletin Bill - with Daniel Krob from the Historic Rally Championship in the Czech Republic, for their help in distributing this drivel around the island. Daniel's English wasn't very good, and his Scottish even worse, but he had a ball all weekend, thanks to all of you, the traditional island hospitality and the sheer eccentricity of this unique event. And a special thanks to Saint Tunnock's of Biscuitry. Their dedication to the welfare of the nation's tastebuds is matched only by their enthusiasm for this event. And the pies were just the icing on the cake, or should be ballast in the belly, before the arrival of much beer tonight.

And finally, our thanks to one other. Did you notice those racing clouds scudding across the weathered sky last night? Given the amount of cloud you might have expected more rain than we actually got, but they weren't all rain clouds, a lot of them were simply pipe smoke. Thanks Brian.

That's yer lot for this year,

Yer Auld Pal, Jaggy Bunnet

Sunday, 12 Noon, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, Scotland, (in the middle of the world map near the top!)