

## EMCOS Stages Rally 2006

The Severnside Motorsport / Express Windows rally team decided that after the few problems on the Somerset Stages rally that we needed to get some testing mileage into the car to get used to the small quirks of the car. After a few calls we decided that it would be more beneficial for us to do a local round of the CMSG Championship as this would be competitive testing, so an entry was put in and the car was made ready. Between the two rallies, the rear suspension and bodywork had been modified to cure the rubbing problem, so we hoped that the problem had disappeared.

Forgot how early we had to get up to do these local events, as normally there is an overnight stay on our 'normal' events. The last time that most of us had gone to Down Ampney airfield was over 8 years ago, so off to see if things had changed. It was like stepping back in time, as not a lot had changed. We all think that the caravan was the one from long ago!!!

Scrutineering went all ok and off we went to mark up the map with some sort of note like scribble that Steve would understand. A bit of a discussion then took place over what tyres were to be used, so off came the tarmac tyres and on went the soft forest tyres. This proved to be a good move, as it was wet and muddy all day.

Stage one was quite a learning curve, but the little yellow Saxo proved to be quick and very nimble. Things were going swimmingly, and I mean that literally as the water was deep in places, until the first split, when I shouted left but the driver had brain fade and went right. We had to go out of stage and take the penalty, so we took a stage maximum. Steve was annoyed, but these things happen and on with the show.

Stage two was a lot better and we got the split right. We stopped the clock dead on 6 min's, so we know roughly what time we should have got. Not too much to say about the stage except that there was some very deep holes off line, so no cutting corners today.

Stage three and four went very well, with a few incidents including a few spins and a small incident with a fence when we were catching an Astra down the long straight. The Astra took the chicane out meaning that we missed our braking point and were just too fast into a square right. We just kissed the fence with the rear bumper. We were slowed in a few places by the marshals, as there were a lot of incidents around the stage.

Stage five was held up with a big incident, which meant that we were sat in the car for about an hour, which was a pain, as it was chucking it down with rain, and couldn't get out. Managed to sleep though!!

No more real problems or spins happened during the rest of the event, but due to the delays the organisers cancelled the last two stages.

The end of the day saw us finish 28<sup>th</sup> overall and 3<sup>rd</sup> in class, so with gained a trophy on our first real event with the car. We all went home happy that the car worked so well after the problems on the Somerset Stages. If only we hadn't had the penalty at the start, who knows.

Off to the Dukeries Rally next for us, so let's hope that the car is as good on the loose.

Mark and Steve

*Severnside Motorsport Rallying team*  
*[www.smrallying.co.uk](http://www.smrallying.co.uk)*