

## Seconds out, Round two.

The Express Windows / Severnside Motorsport backed Peugeot 106 Rallye has once again been out in the woods, with a visit to Minehead for the Somerset Stages Rally. The week up to the event was a case of getting the tyres sorted, cleaning and generally organising bits and bobs, but having the tow car smashed up a few days before the event caused a few moments of panic, but after a few calls a van was sorted and picked up on the Friday morning.

The trip down had a few hold-ups with road works on the M4, but we got there with plenty of time to unload the car and get over to the scrutinizing area. No problems and off to get some food and a couple of glasses of water, for me and Steve, but the service crew let their hair down a bit, but I am sworn to secrecy to protect the innocent!!!

Graham from Express didn't realise that 6 O'clock came twice in a day, but after a full breakfast all of the crew were well up for a day of damp wet and very foggy motorsport. The day started with a problem of misty windows and no screen blower. We thought that it was a blown fuse, but no such luck, so off we went with a roll of paper and a demister pad.

The run to the first stage was quite interesting. I think a 4 wheel drive would have been a better choice. The route notes said rough, but that was an understatement!

The more we went up the hill, the closer the fog got in, and by the top the sight distance was very, very short. First time of driving competitively in the fog and wet for Steve. The fog hampered us quite a bit and we had a few hairy moments, but overall the stage was good. Stages 2, 3 and 4 were again foggy and wet, but no real moments apart from the hold up on stage 4 for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour.

Stage's 5 and 6 were up Porlock Toll road which for the second time in the event was a first for Steve, as he hadn't driven a tarmac stage before. Tyres were a real gamble as the wet and slippery conditions were changing all of the time. We had a new set of intermediate's, but forest tyres were chosen. I don't think anything could have accounted for the fog at the top. We were talking to the crews running with us and the local crew running in front of us had commented that the top of the stage was flowing and quick, but when we got up there, the car was upside down in a bit of a state. It turns out they wrote off the car, so much for flat out!!

The run of third stages were a re-run of the first four, plus a double run of the spectator stage but in reverse. The second run of the spectator stage was a very good run, and we made up a bit of time on the car in front of us in the class. Also some of our sponsors were up on the bank watching, and have commented that the second run as much better.

On the road section to stage 10, we started hearing a noise from the front of the car, and decided to take it easy for the next two so that we could get a finish. We took it easy, but not that easy!

The scores on the doors at the end were 72<sup>nd</sup> overall and 6<sup>th</sup> in class.

A great day was had by both of us and our sponsors enjoyed himself by getting involved in the management car and helping out in service.

Thanks go to Andy at Severnside, Graham at Express, Leigh for servicing and the two wives for letting us play with our toys. Where to next? Maybe Wales for a change.

*Mark and Steve.*