

Somerset Stages 2008

The trip to Minehead is one of our favourite events of the calendar but, this year's proved to be a very hard event for us.

We had ordered new front springs for the car 3 weeks before the event, and was give a delivery date of the week before the event, but we ended up fitting them the Friday morning! When we went to start the car it refused to turn over. We bumped the car to start it, and left it running on the trailer to charge the battery up. It didn't work. The car still refused to start to get into scrutineering.

When we got back to the B+B, we jump started the car, and we thought that the starter motor was playing up, so off with the sump guard and out come the starter. After stripping it and cleaning it out, whilst refitting it, we found that one of the lower arm bushes had exploded! A change of lower arm followed and we were ready to restart the car. The battery was flat, but with a jump start, it spun over the best it ever had. We left the car on a charger and went for a curry.

Saturday morning came, and after breakfast we tried the car but it still wouldn't start. Bumped it, and off we went. We adjusted the tick over and started the event, and prayed that Steve didn't stall it. We had problems starting the car in service, and gained road penalties before we started by booking in late at the start.....

Steve was complaining that he didn't feel well after his recent holiday, but said that he would carry on. The road section to stage 1 was as rough as ****! Let's hope the stage is smoother. It wasn't. We had a small overshoot and a slightly late called note on a down hill hairpin, but felt we went OK.

Stage 2 was not quite as rough and went according to plan with no dramas. We also set the class quickest time.

Stage 3 was again a good run for us, but Steve commented that the rear felt a bit loose, and we found out on a downhill left hander into a hairpin, as the rear overtook the front and threw us into a spin up a bank. No real damage and off we went. Surprisingly we set another class quickest time on the stage

We went back to service for a drink, and a change of tyres for the 2 runs up the fabulous Porlock Toll road stage.

Stage 4, the first run up went really well, apart from catching a slower car towards the top, which cost us a bout 10 sec's. The comments back were that we were flying at the top, so only the bottom sections to get quicker on!

Stage 5 again went without any problems, bar a missed gear and we were 12 seconds quicker.

Back in service, we found that the forestry tyres we used in the morning had too much air in them, and this was put down to a faulty tyre gauge.

Stage 6 was the silly little 1 mile stage, and was rough as anything.

Stage 7 was when it all went wrong. The car stalled and we couldn't start it again. The kill switch had shorted and no power was getting to the battery, so the ECU cut out. End of play.

After about 3 hours of hanging around, getting towed out etc, we ran some wire to the battery from the alternator, bumped the car, and drove it back to service, and went home.

Thanks to everyone for the help, and the girls for keeping us company. Next event, the Dukeries in June.

Steve and Mark

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