

## Woodpecker Stages Rally

The SM Rallying team headed off, for our anniversary outing of the team forming, to Ludlow for the Woodpecker Rally.

The weeks up to the event, since the Quinton, have been quite hectic as we found that the gearbox had been damaged, and required a rebuild. This resulted in a massive bill, and a load of work for us. It turned out that a cir-clip inside the diff had disintegrated and damaged the diff, first and second gears plus the primary input shaft. On top of this we had to purchase a new intercom!

We turned up at the racecourse and found that after driving the car around for a week with no problems, the throttle was sticking! Half an hour of adjusting the cables and brackets resulted in a lot better pedal feel, and a car that ticked over better. Scrutineering went through with no problems, and more positive comments of the prep of the car were received from the scrutineer.

Saturday morning came, and we got set up at the racecourse for the day. Tyres were checked and a general once over before the start.

Stage 1 had already been shortened because of water damage to the stage, and the drive up showed just how bad it was! Good job they had cut that section. Our intercom problem had also returned, but a quick rewire sorted it out. We decided to take stage 1 steady, as we needed to make sure that the gearbox was OK. It proved to be in good shape, and we were happy with our time. Dusty was an understatement!

Stage 2 was the first spectator stage, and we passed a few stranded cars, and had one close moment, but felt that the hairpins suited the car.

Stage's 3 and 4, were again good runs for us with no dramas. The tyres worked well, and felt that we were at a safe pace.

We got back to main service to find that John had been ill during the morning, but saying that he felt better after spending a few moments in the hedge!

The afternoon had nothing major to report, apart from a slightly wrong line out of one corner resulting in taking out a post and arrow, and being slowed by a crashed Escort. We felt that we were going a lot quicker in the afternoon, but the tyres were beginning to 'go off' towards the end of stage 7.

The tyres were dramatically losing grip during the last 2 stages, so we aired on the edge of caution and slowed quite a bit, but felt that we were on a good pace.

At the end of the rally we finished 89<sup>th</sup> overall, 24<sup>th</sup> 1400 crew home and 3<sup>rd</sup> in our class.

This means that our plan for the year has now been well and truly smashed, and we have ended up better than any of us could have expected. We have a car that now works, and is nearly there, so only the crew to be sorted out now!

We expect that we'll be second in class at the end of the year, but hope to better this next year.

A massive **THANK YOU** goes out to everyone involved in getting the car to where we are now, and hope that we can continue into the 2008 championships.

Mark And Steve

[smrallying.co.uk](http://smrallying.co.uk)