

## March Hare 12 car – organiser's report

A full entry, all TCs covered, everyone made it back to the finish and a clear winner who cleaned the route. For me as first time organiser that signifies a successful rally.

Congratulations to Ed and Ben Scott for a clear win, and for showing that the beginner/novice route at least was cleanable, At the other end of the scale Matt Endean and Tony Michael had real problems with section 1 which put them OTL at TC2, and getting further fails by running behind the closing course car at times. Because the route was a big loop cutting wasn't really an option – especially as experts didn't have the positions of controls in their navigation.

Well done to Richard Milbank, who showed that if he finishes he can be competitive by winning first beginner with navigator Gavin Stokes. Also well done to Chris Parmenter and Andy Merchant for proving that the expert navigation was possible by only collecting 1 fail and finishing as first expert. Glad the Cougar made it through the fords OK! A special mention to Gavin Leech who suffered driver sickness and plotted. navigated and drove 3 sections with Trevor recovering in the back seat – and still came 1<sup>st</sup> novice!

5 beginner or novice crews missed the second code board on the Great Leighs ford loop – not sure if they missed the ford as well or just couldn't see it through wet windscreens. The direction of approach at 739½164 should have ensured the right route here. Of the experts only Andy/Chris got the first code board – there were a lot of avoids to plot in this section which would have taken time but once they were plotted there was only one possible route.

For section 2 beginners/novices had tulips and experts had a mix of spot heights, map refs and features. Most crews did well on this section, although 2 missed the LWR at 798212, and Tony Vanderheide/ Neal Allsopp lost a lot of time and missed the second codeboard.

Section 3 had TR/TL for beginners/novices and YYY for experts. I apologise for the wrong plot of the LWR – a mix-up resulting from the navigation checking. It didn't cause any real problems. Timing was tight on this section and all but Ed/Ben lost time here.

Section 4 was in order spot heights for beginners/novices and not in order spot heights for the experts. Most crews did well however, and a couple were able to make up some time as it was a long section.

Section 5 had gridlines for beginners/novices and a reverse herringbone for experts. 4 crews missed out the loop round Molehill Green and picked up a fail – this was very easily done as Matt and I managed it when checking the route in the afternoon! Matt Cousins and Owen Styles developed a James Bond style smokescreen when the turbo failed on the diesel Scorpio at Bannister Green and cut to the finish – shame because they were doing really well up to that point and were on course for 2<sup>nd</sup> beginner.

The last section was a MR and spot heights for beginners/novices and a + and spot heights for experts, and most crews only picked up small time penalties here.

Overall I think the beginner/novice navigation was about right – maybe the expert navigation was a little hard for all but experienced expert navigators, although I intended it to be time-consuming rather than tricky.

I'd like to thank all the marshals for coming out on a colder night than we should be getting at this time of year, Gordon and Brian for course opener and Peter and Matt Brewerton for course closing. I wouldn't have been able to organise this without the advice and assistance of Paul Barrett, Brian Jaggs and Bob Blows, so a big thanks to all of them. And of course thanks to all the competitors for their support.

Finally: Q. would I do it again? A. Like a shot! It's as big a buzz as competing when it all comes together. If anyone else is considering offering to organise a 12 car I'd say DO IT! Maybe if we can get enough organisers we could run a summer series as well – food for thought eh?

Paul Brewerton