

**POST-EVENT SUMMING-UP,
FROM CLERK OF THE COURSE ADRIAN GLADWIN**

The Preston 2005

Hello everyone,

Sorry you've all had nothing but silence from me since the 2005 Preston... now ten days ago as I write! I have been in a state of exhausted shell-shock you understand! Besides, I was computer-less all of last week. A number of you have emailed and/or left phone messages for me, sorry not to have responded yet, I will – eventually! (I estimate I have about sixty people to speak to after the event, and that takes a while!).

Several of us spent the morning-after-the-night-before clearing-up, and I myself didn't get home from the big event until midnight on the Monday!! This is partly because I stopped for dinner with the Farm Manager & his wife on the 'Worlington' section (Gawd bless em!), having spent the whole of Monday going around most of the route doing 'repair' work here & there, and delivering token-gesture bottles of red to the landowners.

Well, as for the event itself, as usual I can only say... What a night !!!

We had a right high quality entry it must be said, which is very pleasing, but it was only just a full entry – a few dropped out before the event (as usual), one or two dropped out on the day (as bloody usual), and in the end we no Reserves left, as predicted they all got a run!

Although the weather on the night was perfect, this was the wettest, muddiest, stickiest Preston for five years; and the, er, bumpiest for some years too...! The Rescue crews had somewhat more to do than in recent years!!

And yet, remarkably, we saw the highest finishing rate for years, many fail free – all of which makes me very happy! Did my comments at the start actually get through to some of you? !! When I said "get round fail-free and you'll be in the top twenty", I lied... 27 crews finished fail-free, that's the most for years – maybe ever!! Very satisfying from my standpoint. Even more remarkably, ALL the retirements occurred on Leg 1 !! A big big well done to all who finished, and congratulations to all award winners. As always a number of crews put in excellent performances; Chelmsford MC had its most successful Preston for many years, in terms of the achievements of 'home' crews, crowned by the top spot going to Messrs Monk & Clode – WELL DONE BOYS, A GREAT PERFORMANCE AND VERY WELL DESERVED WIN!

There were fifteen team entries – very good! The four wot finished comprised almost entirely of Chelmsford members...!

We had eighteen sections totalling about 125 comp. miles, and all ran smoothly. The loss of the FC tracks was a bit of a blow because they did give us some fab rallying (think Croxton & Pilgrim's Walk...), but we sort of made up for it with a little new stuff, which was very good it must be said; hope you liked 'Seven Hills', good eh?! The property of Royalty no less; the management were happy with the way it went, and there's potential for more in there... And the new bit at top end of Berner's Heath, how about that then?! However, there maybe a problem with getting use of it again, so fingers crossed everyone. Overall, I must say I was pretty happy with the route.

Only one section was cleaned by a number of crews (11), and that was Santon (blame the FC for 'simplifying' the section...); I did think that it would happen, nothing I could do... The winners did clean two other sections, but were the only car to do so.

Sorry about the mud in Ingham... it wasn't meant to be like that... and we only found it was in that state the day before the event, by which time of course the schedule is set, time cards done, diagrams done, marshals instructions done... its not easy to 'just change it', so we put a couple of rescue vehicles there and left it at that... sorry some of you got stuck.

Sorry too that there were some horrendously muddy bits on Chalk Farm, Feltwell Anchor & Whiteplot Farm. Again it wasn't meant to be like that and we only found it was like that the day before; however these weren't as bad as Ingham!

Hope you were happy with awards presentation being done at the Finish; we had not done that before on this event and I know that everyone is tired and feeling pretty crap at that point after a night rally. However I think it was worth doing and that it worked well enough – did I make any sense at all when speaking at the presentation?! I was in zombie mode at the time!

We deliberately did not present the Spirit of the Rally award; so if you think someone or some crew particularly deserves that, then please email me telling me *why*, adriangladwin@bigfoot.com Please don't post your suggestions on any forums, we the organisers present this award at our discretion and we want to make the decision privately.

Including breakfast and giving it to marshals and officials was, whilst a nice thing to do, perhaps a bit of a mistake from a certain point of view... since it was 'free', more people turned up for brekky than we expected... and the bill was £1120 !! We may have to think again on that one!

Also sorry that 'Quick-Response' Rescue Vehicle 2 couldn't make it; the crew in question own a horse, which was viciously attacked by another horse that evening and they spent much of the night sorting that out (Vet and all that carry on...).

Lost property dept: I am in possession of a grey 'Nissan' fleece left at the Finish; and a whole plastic bumper (without reg plate), was left on the grass outside the Finish... Why did someone leave it there ?? One displeased CoC. Anyway, it's currently residing under the fire escape stairs at the Olde Bull Inn. If you lost anything else, perhaps Geoff Lobb the Clear-up King has it, give him a call on 07768 165 814.

And now for the Complaints dept: What stupid stupid fools cut a corner at Ingham – a very big cut too – and went across the field... ACROSS A CROP. Looks like about four cars did this... you bastards, what are you trying to do?? Are you trying to ruin our relationship with that landowner? Are you just plain stupid?

Also, and I realise that this would not have been competitors, who drove around in several big figures of eight in the same field? Who drove up & down the grass runway at Knettishall DOING HANDBRAKE TURNS...??? And who moved some arrows on the last section after the course cars had gone through? Placing the arrows in 'straight-on' position (straight-on into a very muddy / rough area, when the corner was in fact a 90 left). Luckily this was discovered and rectified just before competitors arrived.

So who is behind these incidents? Marshals? I doubt it. Some of our 4x4 crews? Hooligan spectators? Whoever it is, if I find you I'll pay you back somehow, you can count on it. And if this sort of thing happens again, I won't run the event again. This is not acceptable and I will not tolerate it again.

Finally, and on a more positive note (sorry about the above, but I had to say it!), from me, my fellow Preston organisers and the Chelmsford Motor Club as a whole, I thank everyone who assisted in the running of the event in any way, this is a great many people, far too many to name, but you all know who you are – landowners & managers, officials, marshals (superb as always), course vehicle crews, rescue crews, the management & staff at the start, rest-halt & finish venues, and numerous others – you all do a great job; your hard work and dedication is appreciated more than I can say. Thank you very much. And I'm sure that I say that on behalf of all competitors too.

My fellow senior officials & organisers, I cannot thank you enough! Special thanks to Tony M who as always did a superb job with the results (all the details on the CMC website); and Dave Taylor, who not for the first time, did his party trick of actually *buying* a car specially to use as course car (!), and yet again allowed his house to become Rally HG! And I particularly want to thank Dave & Liz Rowbottom for again coming down from Derbyshire for the whole weekend to help in so many ways.

I understand there's some pretty good photos too (of course there is, with the one & only Mr M&H taking 'em!), though I've not seen any yet, looking forward to that!

Well that's it for 2005; until next time... keep it on the island!

*Adrian Gladwin, Clerk of the Course, on behalf of **The Management** !*