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MullMurmurs – Chapter 4

This is going to be difficult folks, so bear with me. Last night, rallying lost a true friend and passionate enthusiast. Susan Cameron succumbed to injuries sustained in an accident when the Peugeot 205 driven by husband Duncan left the road shortly after the start of Stage 3 and crashed into trees. Rescue services were on the scene within minutes but there was nothing they could do. I won't name everyone involved here, but fellow competitors, paramedic crews and the doctor, staff at Dunaros Hospital, Police and officials should be praised for their kind, prompt and efficient efforts.

Those sentiments were emphasised by Duncan himself who confirmed to the organisers this morning that the rally should continue with his blessing. Duncan's decision to support the organisers in this difficult dilemma was confirmed by his family and his service crew Andy, Gary, Mark, Brian, Alan and Gary.

We are grateful too to our sponsors, Philips, who concurred with the views and opinions expressed.

All I'll say for now is, no two people shared a stronger passion for our sport. Duncan and Susan met at Aberdeen University 25 years ago, joined the car club, went marshalling, and then went competing (in his Mum's Mini without her knowledge!). They were wed on the first day of the International Scottish Rally in June 1980 and spent their honeymoon following the rally. That event ensured that they never forgot their anniversary, but they rarely spent it together as Duncan would be servicing and Susan officiating. It also meant Duncan didn't need to buy Susan an anniversary present as he didn't see her for a week!

We in particular, and the sport in general, are very much the poorer this morning. We have indeed lost a true friend.

And so, back to the rally. As positions stand after last night's 3 stages, the leaderboard shows:

1 Neil MacKinnon/Mike Stayte (Subaru Impreza)	26 mins 59 secs	
2 Calum Duffy/Del Duffy (Ford Escort)	27m 25s	
3 John Swinscoe/John Bennett (Mitsubishi Lancer)	28m 34s	
4 John Price/Caroline Price (MG Metro 6R4)	28m 39s	
5 Dave Miller/Andrew Bailey (Subaru Impreza)	29m 17s	
6 Lyndon Barton/Johnny Vance (Subaru Impreza)	29m 32s	
7 Doug Weir/Duncan Brown (Vauxhall Nova)	29m 37s	
8 Mark Durham/Andy Mort (Opel Corsa Kit)	29m 40s	
9 Paul Kirtley/Jon Geldart (Subaru Impreza)	29m 51s	
10 Mark Jasper/Alan Snell (MG Metro 6R4)	29m 53s	More /



The general consensus was that it was slippery last night. Friday's intermittent rain showers had not left any standing water, but the roads were greasy, damned greasy.

First into service was ten times winner Neil MacKinnon: "It's all right, but it's a bit slippy out there, there's some grit scattered across a hairpin in Stage 2. I had to handbrake it to get round."

At least he got through, many didn't. Dougi Hall is out: "I spun on the Lochs, got two punctures and only carry one spare. I also ripped off a brake pipe so dropped a lot of time." John Cope is also out, apparently on Stage 2. Billy Bird also departed the fray on Stage 2 followed by Steve Davies while John Baird was another early bedder.

As for last year's winner, Daniel Harper dropped a chunk of time in the second stage: "I just nipped a rock a bit tight and punctured the front right tyre. I had to drive a mile before I could pull over to change it. We parked on a bit of a slope and then it fell off the jack. We lost over five minutes but it's real greasy out there. The problem is, there's no consistency, one minute plenty of grip, the next, none."

Calum Duffy is lying second and he too is saying it's slippy: "The tyres come in and it feels really good and then they just go off. It's so slippy in places you can't tell. We had three horrendous moments, the hairpin in Stage 2 nearly had us off. We slid straight on and had to reverse out, where grit was scattered across the road."

John Price is lying fourth but lost a bit of time where Dougi Hall went off and spun on Stage 2 at the gritty hairpin. John Cressey is out of the top ten with overheating: "When we get over 4500 rpm the temperature gauge goes up and we have to slow down to 3500 till it drops. It's losing water and we don't know what's causing it yet." James MacGillivray in Willie Bonniwell's MkII got a Maximum in Stage 1 when he tried to pass John Cope and the Escort bellied out on the verge. Said James afterwards: "It was just one of those things, John and Tony even helped to push us out. That's the spirit of this event."

Doug Weir in the 1600 Nova is lying 7th overall but the car won't start so he has to keep the engine running. Tony Bardy punctured in Stage 1 and had to stop and change it. Stuart McQueen damaged a rear wheel on the first stage when he hit something in the verge.

Just one more appeal folks, we need a bit of patience and understanding this afternoon. There will only be four stages and Leg 2 will start at 2:00 pm instead of 12 noon. There will also be some changes to to-night's third and Final Leg of the rally, but the backroom staff at 2300 HQ are working furiously within the confines of the Road Closure permit and timings to ensure that the rally takes place as planned.

Details will be posted at Rally HQ and on the website – www.2300club.org

And with Bill'n'Bob's help MullMurmurs will also strive to keep you informed so look out for our on-event epistle.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 1.00 pm