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MullMurmurs – Chapter 5

Interim Positions After Stage 15 (of 20):

1 Neil MacKinnon/Mike Stayte (Subaru Impreza)	49 mins 58 secs
2 Calum Duffy/Del Duffy (Ford Escort)	50m 22s
3 John Price/Caroline Price (MG Metro 6R4)	52m 28s
4 Dave Miller/Andrew Bailey (Subaru Impreza)	53m 13s
5 Simon Proud/Pete Smith (Ford Escort)	53m 59s
6 Ian MacKenzie/Angus MacKenzie (Ford Escort)	54m 02s
7 Paul Kirtley/Jon Geldart (Subaru Impreza)	54m 27s
8 Doug Weir/Duncan Brown (Vauxhall Nova)	54m 29s
9 Stuart McQueen/Alistair Green (Subaru Impreza)	54m 34s
10 Mark Durham/Andy Mort (Opel Corsa Kit)	54m 37s

A much shortened Leg 2 (4 stages as opposed to 8) heralded the re-start of the 34th Philips Tour of Mull Rally on Saturday afternoon, and reflecting the overall mood of the rally was the weather. It was dull, grey and wet as the 120 remaining crews from the previous night's 150 starters took the roads of Mull.

But if conditions are dull then the competition is coming alight. Last night Neil MacKinnon had a 26 second lead over Calum Duffy, that has now been reduced to 24 seconds. Not much but it shows just how determined Duffy is. MacKinnon started the Leg on cut slicks: "It was too slippy for these tyres but I was stuck with them and had to make the best of it." But he still retains the lead with the Saturday night final loop of 5 stages to come.

"I wish I had gone for wets," said Duffy, "but the intermediates heated up surprisingly quickly." But, dear reader, remember, the Escort has nothing like the firepower or the grip of a WRC Subaru!

John Price moved up to third place: "How unlucky can one man get in a rally, being first car on the scene of two incidents, first Dougi Hall last night and John Swinscoe this afternoon who went off at (Andy) Horne's rock on Gribun. Just one of those things but it did cost me some time."

Swinscoe had been lying third before going off on this afternoon's slippery conditions but he wasn't alone. Lyndon Barton retired the Subaru and there are doubts about young Ogg MacKenzie. In a superb display of speed, MacKenzie had pushed himself into sixth place but at the end of this afternoon's final stage, the Escort was spotted parked up with an ominous oily pool appearing under the car. Time will tell if he makes the re-start tonight.

Mark Durham has dropped to 10th place but the head gasket has gone and he too looks a suspect for the re-start tonight. Paul Kirtley has actually moved up the leaderboard no doubt attributed to the fact that the Subaru's brakes are fast disappearing – and if you can't slow down, then you can't lose time. At least that's the way I see it.

Let's make things better.



PHILIPS

Another star in the making is Simon Proud. He's moved into the top ten with a scintillating fifth place in the MkII but is having trouble with his gearbox ... Dave Johnson in the Golf is also having gearbox trouble and can't select 2nd, 4th and 6th ... as for Mike Russell he reckons his Subaru is spending more time in the air than on the ground ...

things were also hectic in the Dave Taylor Mitsubishi when co-driver Paul Barrett turned over two pages in the Pace Notes simultaneously and things got just a tad too exciting till Paul found the place again ... John Cressey is still going despite the Astra's engine overheating last night and it's still doing it, Cressey hoping it's a faulty sensor and that the engine is actually OK ... Pat Johnson broke two front brake discs this afternoon and has found it difficult to control the car under braking ... Stuart McQueen's times are improving and has moved into the top ten despite finding some sphincter tightening moments when finding earlier car's oily spills on the road ... John Cowe has lost 3rd and 4th gears on Stage 14 but are planning to install their spare gearbox at service before tonight's final Leg ... James MacGillivray is still going and is pretty chuffed with his personal best over Mishnish Lochs in the borrowed Willie Bonniwell 'Blue Bullet' ... Tony Bardy has dropped time with some 'moments' on oily bits ... Angus Mathieson executed a complete 360 degree pirouette one mile into the Mishnish Lochs test - and got a resounding full mark score from the assembled throngs of spectators ... Frosty Smart emerged from the end of Sage 15 with no turbo boost as the pipe keeps coming off, and they have to put it back on again - very gingerly as it's bl**dy hot! ... Dave Harris in the Mk1 was having a great time "This rally is just a hoot because I've got a standard 2 litre Pinto engine and the power I've got is just ideal for these conditions" ... Mike Storrar in the Anglia under strict instructions from the wife not to make any embarrassing statements (see last year's MullMurmurs) regarding the fact that he regarded rallying on Mull as being better than s*x, has discovered a new method of beating the four wheel drive cars, he just drops oil on the road! ... John Cockburn is having the time of his life in the 4 litre Tomcat 88, it may look ungainly and it probably is, but Cockburn is having a ball ... Keith Hall emerged from end of Stage 15 with only three gears after losing 2nd gear last night and 5th today but is intending to carry on with the three that is left until they give out ... Robin Hamilton who is bidding for a finish (for a change!) in the Metro is enjoying himself but reckons he's now getting too old for rallying ... Mark Wheeler was having fuel starvation problems in the Escort. He started the rally not having done a recce which no doubt contributed to a big off on the second stage today, but he's still going ... Carol McCrone in the Mini got a Maximum on the first stage last night when the throttle cable broke and then had alternator problems to contend with.

By the way, did you see Dougi Hall's time over the Lochs this afternoon on the Trophy Rally. It was 16 seconds quicker than MacKinnon and Duffy. Eddie O'Donnell is lying second in the Salen Silver Escort after an overnight engine change re-installing the original Pinto engine ... oh! And by the way, Chris Paton who has done 33 Mulls and co-driver Dave Cabena who has started all 34 so far are still going despite pulling out of the main event last night.

That's yer lot for now
Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 7.00 pm