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Philips Tour of Mull
THE BEST RALLY IN THE WORLD
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MullMurmurs – Chapter 7

Final Results:

1 Calum Duffy/Del Duffy (Ford Escort)	1hr 41mins 31secs – 1 st Class C
2 Neil MacKinnon/Mike Stayte (Subaru Impreza)	1h 42m 37s – 1 st Class D
3 John Price/Caroline Price (MG Metro 6R4)	1h 47m 47s
4 Paul Kirtley/Jon Geldart (Subaru Impreza)	1h 50m 29s – 1 st Class DE
5 Dave Miller/Andrew Bailey (Subaru Impreza)	1h 50m 43s
6 Doug Weir/Duncan Brown (Vauxhall Nova)	1h 50m 46s – 1 st Class B
7 Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Nissan Sunny)	1h 50m 55s
8 John Cressey/Ian Grindrod (Vauxhall Astra)	1h 50m 57s
9 Mark Jasper/Alan Snell (MG Metro 6R4)	1h 25m 30s
10 Pat Johnson/Graham Harper (Subaru Impreza)	1h 25m 28s
39 Jim Brindle/Jon Bould (Mini 1293)	2h 01m 02s – 1 st Class A

There are times when I surprise myself. That piece ‘what I wrote’ in the Philips Tour of Mull programme is a case in point. If you didn’t see it (and why not you cheapskate, it was only 3 quid) I stated that all the best words start with the letter ‘M’. What we witnessed last night proved it – Mull Magic in a Mark II.

After three stages on Friday night, Neil MacKinnon had a 26 second advantage over Calum Duffy. At the end of Saturday afternoon, MacKinnon still had the advantage by 24 seconds. Then came the first stage of Saturday night, the 22 mile Tuath/Calgary test. Daniel Harper blitzed a new record last year of 20 mins 43 seconds for that tarmac ribbon of torture and that was in a four wheel drive Mitsubishi Lancer.

MacKinnon stopped the clocks on 20m 50s. Impressive stuff. Then it was Duffy’s turn, and this was where the ‘belief buds’ in my brain refused to register the facts. Duffy’s time was 20m 37s! Mishnish Lochs was next, but it was fearfully greasy after earlier runs and smeared with rain.

At the end of it, MacKinnon’s expression said it all before he wound down the window. “Terrible, I spun in there,” he said, “a full 360. I haven’t spun in that stage for 20 years. Calum’s away with it now.” And he was, adding another 37 seconds to the 13 he had snatched over Tuath: “But I’ve got a problem,” said Duffy, “the throttle’s sticking and I landed so hard on one jump the steering column was hammered into the steering box and it’s made the steering really heavy.”

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Over the next three stages, Duffy kept the pressure on. MacKinnon stole back 3 seconds on Loch Scridain, but Duffy was on the case over the next taking 5 on Gribun and another stunning 37 second advantage over the Hill Road and down Glen Bellart. Calum and Del therefore reached the finish of the 34th Philips Tour of Mull Rally in first place by a margin of 1 minute and 7 seconds. And just in case I hadn't made myself clear, this was in a MkII. Even 'Finding Nemo' is more believable!

Neil MacKinnon and Mike Stayte just shook their heads. Having struggled with the complexity of the WRC Impreza last year, MacKinnon was more confident on this occasion: "I knew where all the switches were this time," he joked, "I still didn't know what they did, but I knew where they were." Whatever, he failed to add to his record tally of 10 wins.

As for John and Caroline Price, third place was hard work. "We had the best seat in the house, last night," quipped Price, "watching that pair in front go at it. I just sat back and let them get on with it." The term 'sat back' must mean something different in Herefordshire. That Metro was a sight and sound to savour bellowing through the dark Mull air.

In fourth place was Paul Kirtley: "We took a grinder to the discs and pads to get some brakes back. Not very scientific (and don't tell Subaru) but it did help." He displaced Dave Miller who had to settle for fifth when a potentiometer problem struck his own Impreza.

In sixth place was yet another belief defying performance. Doug Weir and Duncan Brown also won the 1600 class in their Nova and both were quietly smug about the numbers of four wheel drive, turbocharged machines they had seen off. Nice one you two. Both however, had something else in mind: "This one is for Duncan," they said, as the Nova carried a small sticker on the front which bore the legend 'SC 84' and a black ribbon tied to the bonnet pin.

After earlier turbocharger problems, Tony Bardy was back on the pace with a new one fitted to the Nissan and stormed back into the top ten to finish 7th demoting John Cressey to 8th. Cressey had finally solved his worryingly high temperature gauge and engine overheating problem – he disconnected the temperature sensor! It didn't solve the problem but it took his eye off the gauge! Mark Jasper was 9th and struggling to find gears in the Metro gearbox and rounding off the top ten was Pat Johnson who was glad it was all over: "We've run out of brakes and run of tyres, and it's overheating!"

Just outside the top ten was James MacGillivray in a MkII and had it not been for earlier problems a top ten finish might just have been on the cards. Brian Cameron was 12th, Stuart McQueen 13th, Ian Colman 14th and Alex Taylor 15th. Top 1300 runner was Jim Brindle with Jon Bould in the Mini: "Last year I was fighting Chris Tooze for second place. This year I've won the class, its just a pity Tooze isn't here for me to gloat!"

As ever, those were the lucky ones. Dougi Hall went off on the first stage, the O'Donnell twins had their brand new engine convert itself back into a parts list, John Cope disappeared in the second test along with Billy Bird and Steve Davies. John Swinscoe crashed last night and Daniel Harper, last year's winner, chose not to re-start the rally after Friday night's tragedy.

It was a personal decision faced by many, but it was also Duncan's wishes that the rally continue and his many friends participate. We'll all miss Susan, her sense of colour, her ready smile, and her sheer stubborn, tolerance of Duncan's 'little ways'. Who else would so

cheerfully put up with a garden full of Peugeot and Saabs rather than a bed of roses and manicured lawn? I'm sure all our thoughts are with Duncan, his family and the rest of the ABOSpeed team.

Safety is something we kind of take for granted in our sport because of its enviable safety record despite the speeds and challenges faced. It just makes such tragedies all the harder to bear. And as I started with the letter 'M' let me finish on that note. M is also for Molyneux. Thanks Brian.

God speed and safe home all of you, from all in the 2300 team.
Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, Sunday, 12 Noon