

## MullMurmurs – Chapter 9

Provisional Leaderboard after 19 (of 19 stages):

1 Calum Duffy/Del Duffy (Ford Escort MkII)	2 Hr 26 Mins 06 Secs
2 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Subaru Impreza)	2.27.40s
3 John Cope/Tony Cope (Subaru Impreza WRC)	2.28.57s
4 John Swinscoe/Paul Swinscoe (Mitsubishi Lancer)	2.32.57s
5 Paul Kirtley/Jon Geldart (Subaru Impreza)	2.33.49s
6 David Taylor/Mark Andrews (Subaru Impreza)	2.34.29s
7 Billy Bird/Plug Pulley (Mitsubishi Lancer)	2.34.54s
8 Martin Healer/Shawn O'Gorman (Ford Escort WRC)	2.35.26s
9 Pat Johnson/Graham Harper (Subaru Impreza)	2.35.42s
10 Frosty Smart/Carl Swinnerton (Mitsubishi Lancer)	2.36.13s

The 35<sup>th</sup> Philips Tour of Mull was a vintage year, and like all good vintages, it will gain richness in the re-telling. And as memories are 'mulled' over in years to come it will be further enhanced with the selective recall of memories clouded with advancing age, but the bare facts will relate that Calum and Del Duffy scored their fourth victory - three 'proper' wins in a MkII (plus that other one in a Lancer) and perhaps more satisfying this time than last: "I really wanted that," said Calum, "back to back wins in the Escort."

In an era dominated by turbos and total traction there are those from afar who will cry 'local knowledge' – but these are people who have never been here. It's one thing to know where the roads go, quite another to drive them. This is a place for talent, stout hearts and a sense of adventure, the machinery will always come second to that.

On paper the win looks quite convincing, by a minute and a half from James MacGillivray and Ian Fraser, but it was nervewracking: "I found it harder to preserve the lead than go for it," said Calum, "I always seem to go better coming from behind."

MacGillivray too had his troubles but survived and drove well in the Group N Impreza into second place after changing a smokey turbo on Saturday afternoon and rebuilding the whole left rear corner after a 'clatter' on Calgary. It worked. Did you see his time on the 22 miler? 4 seconds under 21 minutes. Stunning! The 'Cope Twins' were third: "We were dead level with Tony Bardy with three stages to," said Tony, "we took 8 seconds out of him on Scridain and he took 8 back on Gribun, so we were still dead level at the start of the final stage - and then he put it off."

Tony Bardy's fight ended on the Hill Road, sliding off on a L into R12 and bang went a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> place – and there was more drama. Daniel Harper lost out on 5<sup>th</sup> place when he unintentionally parked the MINI on the beach on Gribun. He had been complaining about a bouncy rear end, but he's right trier that boy. There was just one problem with that, the car would have to be moved before the tide came in.

..... more overleaf/

John Swinscoe was an ecstatic 4th, Paul Kirtley 5th, still struggling with lack of brakes, and David Taylor was 6<sup>th</sup> just ahead of Billy Bird who rumbled out of the last stage with a puncture. Rounding off the top ten were Martin Healer, Pat Johnson achieving his aim of a top ten finish and a relieved but delighted Frosty Smart.

In the classes, early 1600 leader Mark Durham departed the fray somewhere on the final three stages in his Corsa Kit leaving Mike Storrar to claim the spoils in the Anglia (15<sup>th</sup> o/a) from Chris Paton in the Nova (25<sup>th</sup> o/a) while John Paterson won the 1300 class in his Nova (26<sup>th</sup> o/a) despite a last minute scare stopping to change a puncture, but managing to stay ahead of Duncan Cameron in the wee 1300 Peugeot 205 (29<sup>nd</sup> o/a). John Fuller was top 2 litre FWD category winner in the Astra (41<sup>st</sup>) from the similarly mounted Dave Steggles (50<sup>th</sup>). John Cressey won the Saturday afternoon Trophy Rally which was some consolation for his retirement from the main event when the ECU failed and Dougi Hall bounced back on the night time Tropy to win that.

But they were the lucky ones. Mark Jasper retired early with electrical failure in the Metro (again!), Mick Briant crashed and Eddie O'Donnell's gremlins struck again in the 22 miler, the SalenSilver.Com Escort parked up in the long one with a dead engine. Neil MacKinnon disappeared late on with a mechanical problem and Dougi Hall also fell victim to Mull's little idiosyncracies. Tom and Sue Hynd crashed out on the first stage, Stuart McQueen's wheel fell off on the second and Martin Fox swore at co-driver Linda Whitmore - who wanted to stop and take a picture of the moon shining on the sea – on stage, when she should have been reading the notes! Engine failure claimed Doug Weir, Angus Mathieson and Steven Paterson, Paul Miller perforated his radiator, Alan Kirby crashed and Ian Curwen's Lancer was spotted sinking gently and elegantly into a bog. And just when he thought he was home and dry, Stevie Brown crashed out almost within sight of the finish. A puzzled Paul Marshall wondered what was up when rear silencer started to break up internally and stifle the passage of exhaust gases. The engine was overheating and slowing down. At service as the boys poked the exhaust pipe with long sticks, Paul gave the TR7 V8 a bit of severe welly to blow the blockages out. It worked – but the boys apparently looked like chickens after being shotblasted with fibreglass filling! Neil Morgan was left cursing too. Never having had to change a fan belt before, when his broke for the first time he simply went round to the boot to get the spare strapped to the lid which had been there since the MkII was built – only to find it was the wrong one and wouldn't fit. And as for the two long-termers, Chris Paton on his 34<sup>th</sup> Mull and Dave Cabena the last survivor of all 35, they nearly chucked it all away on the final stage when the Nova plopped into a ditch, but only through superior skill and bravery (so I was told) they managed to regain the road and reach the finish. And here's another happy tale, 'Fuey the Fireman' finished in Clarky's Avenger, 60<sup>th</sup> overall.

There was one other hero on a weekend blessed with them - the number 84 yellow and orange Peugeot 205 with the black rose on the bonnet. Well done Duncan. Maybe it was just the street lights, or maybe I was getting tired, but at the Final Control, I'm sure I saw a smack of lippy on the front bumper. Thanks to Philips, to all competitors, service crews, followers, Marshals, Officials, the nighthawks at Oban FM, the Isle of Mull and its population, and even the Polis – without you all there would be a big black hole in British rallying. And a special thanks too, to one other. You know something, during that wonderful astral display in the heavens high above Dervaig on a breathtakingly clear Friday night there was one star which shone brighter than all the others. I'm no astronomer, but I'm sure it winked at me.  
Thanks Brian.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 12.00 Noon Sunday. ([www.2300club.org](http://www.2300club.org))