

# Bit of an Update

## Severn Valley Rally and Neath Valley Stages

From Ian Drummond

**W**e (Hu Kent and I) entered the Severn Valley Rally on 31 May, after my enforced layoff, to see if I could get back on the pace. Total of eight stages including Halfway, Crychan and Cefn.



We topped up the oil tank and pressure reappeared and we got to the finish with oil all over and under the car. It looked like the rear crank seal had gone. We also had split the sump. (Stages were a bit rough in places). 6th in class was disappointing but my aim was to finish and get some stage miles under my belt. My rear

I made a poor tyre choice first thing as I thought the stages would be wet and slippery.

My narrow tyres were rooted after the first stage and as I was carrying the same tyres as spares the whole morning stages were “interesting” to say the least! At service we fitted wider, harder rear tyres and despite me over-driving the car (not QUITE how Hu put it!) our times improved but we could not make up the time lost earlier on. I had noticed some smoke coming from the car at times and it all went a bit wrong on the last stage as we lost oil pressure and finished the stage with my dash lights flashing like a bloody disco! I phoned my crew and told them.

It went a bit like this ...

- “I have low oil pressure and smoke .. what shall I do?”
- “What is your oil temperature?”
- “Nothing!”
- “STOP THE CAR !!!!!!!”

tyres were so worn and through to the canvas—they actually deflated on the trailer on the way home!

After the event the car was checked (well, actually it was a fairly major strip down!). All seemed well with the engine after a vigorous road test so we entered the Neath Valley Stages, which used Rheola and Margam Forest, on 8 August. All seemed well at scrutineering on Friday, and I intended to beat the squeaks out of the Escort on the rally and get a proper result. We got to the first stage Rheola and shortly after we left the start it was obvious all was not well. Suffice to say water temp off the clock, low oil pressure and a car full of smoke gave us the distinct impression that the engine was “cattled”. So, an early bath and big sulks from me.

The engine is back with Jondel Race Engines for a post mortem and rebuild, and GB Rally Prep have the task of getting the car ready for the Trackrod Rally in September.

Disappointing for us, as the car is generally pretty reliable. I don't know yet what the state of the engine is or what went wrong ... but that's rallying!

*Ian*