

Results after SS19 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 2hr 26m 50s
- 2 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 2h 29m 11s
- 3 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 2h 31m 29s
- 4 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell (BMW MINI Cooper S) 2h 31m 56s
- 5 Tristan Pye/Kirsty Riddick (Subaru Impreza) 2h 33m 07s
- 6 Willie Bonniwell/Kevin Rae (Subaru Impreza) 2h 35m 26s
- 7 John Cressey/Stam Quirk (BMW MINI Cooper S) 2h 35m 40s
- 8 David Miller/Andrew Bailey (Subaru Impreza) 2h 38m 01s
- 9 John Rintoul/Jim Rintoul (Mitsubishi Lancer) 2h 39m 21s
- 10 Tim Stell/Mike Yates (Subaru Impreza) 2h 39m 46s

- 13 Tugs Sherrington/Sam Bould (Ford Escort MkII) 2h 40m 18s – 1st Class C
- 14 Kris Hall/Ella Flynn (Peugeot 205 GTI) 2h 40m 29s – 1st Class B
- 16 Stuart McQueen/Neil Shanks (Mitsubishi Lancer) 2h 40m 59s – 1st Group N
- 29 Ewen MacGillivray/Andrew Falconer (Vauxhall Nova) 2h 46m 23s – 1st Class A

Nothing seems to faze him. A change of car the week before the event, a change of co-driver days before the event, no pre-event shakedown and a serious car problem which manifested itself late on Saturday afternoon. It all offered a glimmer of hope to his rivals, but once Neil MacKinnon pulled on the crash hat, it was business as usual. 'MacKinnon the MacNificent' not only won the 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally, he scored a record-breaking 12th victory on the island

Two fastest times over the first two stages gave MacKinnon and Daniel Barritt a 30 second lead after which it was a home run all the way. But on Saturday afternoon, the Subaru started to pressurise its coolant system which led to electronic sensors going off like disco lights on the dash. The McKinstry boys worked on it ready for the final Leg on Saturday night. Even running in 'safety' mode no-one was quite sure how the World Rally Car would respond.

"I thought there was a glimmer of hope," said John Cope, "so I turned up the pressure." Cope did indeed take time out of MacKinnon over the final three stages, but not enough.

"I thought it was over myself," said MacKinnon, "It spat all the water out after Gribun, the second last stage. I thought then that was it, but the McKinstry boys got it going again. There was one thing in our favour though, that final stage route actually suited the car and once I got off that Hill Road I thought the job was on."

MacKinnon's lead was cut by over a minute over those final stages, but despite heroic efforts it was too much of a gap for Cope and Robert Fagg to close. MacKinnon won again. And there was more to come.

Dougi Hall was actually on course to finish runner-up and maybe even give MacKinnon a last-dash run for his money, but the rally's first rain fell late on Saturday night turning previously dry-ish tarmac into surfaces more akin to a greasy chip pan. Almost matching the speed of light up the Glen, there was no margin for error, and Hall's Lancer hit an unexpected slurry of mud across the road and skated off. Paul Kirtley did the same, only more violently, but fortunately all four crew members were OK.

That prompted the 2300 Club team to stop the stage and route remaining cars through it to take up the fight over Mishnish Lochs where it was even greasier – but forewarned is forearmed

James MacGillivray therefore scored a slightly surprised third, but was having to keep an eye on Daniel Harper. After a steady run in the 2.3 MkII, a touch of the 'Jock the Bull' red mist was apparent on the Start line at Scridain and brought forth a cheer from drookit onlookers, "I got fed up with pussy-footing it, and I just let go." James slid his foot off the clutch at near full revs and with tyre smoke and steam coming from the rear, exploded off the start line sideways to the hoots and hollers of marshals and spectators - and even impressed the hell out of John Cope sitting behind him.

And didn't the German sausage tins go well all weekend. Daniel Harper scored an impressive 4th and 'team-mate' John Cressey was 8th which prompted MINI driver Ian Dawes to comment, "They must be brain-dead those two!" I couldn't agree more.

Tristan Pye finished a sensible and well controlled 5th while 'Wild Willie' Bonniwell was also in sensible mode all weekend scoring not just a finish, but a result with 6th. The unflappable David Miller was 7th ahead of John Rintoul, while Tim Stell rounded off the top ten after welding up his disintegrating inlet manifold.

So while fortune favoured the brave, misfortune dogged the tracks of others. Much was expected of Calum Duffy in his new Saturn 10 MkII, but even with the hardest tyres he could find, they went off half way through the first stage. But it was electrics which sidelined rallying's favourite rocketeer. Similar maladies affected the O'Donnell twins although they might have found a better use for the Escort than trimming the tops off a roadside hedge when they were in full flight!

Tony Bardy's turbocharger failed and John Swinscoe retired when a master cylinder failed causing a rear wheel brake to seize which spat the Lancer off the road leaving a 100 ft single line of rubber on the road for the Rally Rescue crews to follow.

And what of young Paul MacKinnon. Lying second, 15 seconds behind 'The Ol'Man' at one point, he suffered two punctures in one stage and a third in another leaving him always coming from behind and then a hub broke up. In similar troubles was Denis Biggerstaff. Paddle-shift failure prompted a gearbox change on Friday night and happy again with a 'proper' stick shift gearbox, 'Yer Man' was on the pace, but road penalties after the gearbox troubles left him too coming from behind.

Stuart McQueen won a sterling fight for Group N honours with John Morrison, just 24 seconds separating the twosome after 150 fright miles around these notorious rocky contours. But finishing ahead of these two was one of the big shocks of the night. Young, gifted and good looking, this boy's got talent oozing out his driving gloves. Kris Hall scored a sensational 14th overall in his class winning 'old-tech' Peugeot 205. Ian Chadwick was second in the 1600 class, while Tugs Sherrington won the 2 litre class from Curley Haigh. Another star in the making was young Ewen MacGillivray winning the 1400 class in his Nova from the similar car of Mark Constantine.

This was not just a rally, this was yet another epic adventure in the annals of Mull rallying history and thanks are due to an intrepid and hard working crew from 2300 Club, all the other clubs who helped and Marshals who officiated. To all the radio and rescue crews, and ambulances and doctors, a great debt of thanks is due. The good folks of Mull also deserve a huge vote of appreciation for putting up with the disruption that the rally brings each year. Even the Polis were nice and helpful and the Cooncillors too, without whom we couldn't possibly have this event. Thanks are indeed a two-way appreciation, for the Mull Swimming Pool Committee would like to extend their own thanks to all of you who over the years have supported their fund raising activities. And to reward you all, you can come for a 'dook' on the new pool next year. But we must also thank the competitors, service and support crews, families and friends, who all help to make the Tunnock's Tour of Mull, the best rally in the world. Not only the best, but the tastiest.

There is of course one other to whom we all owe a special debt of thanks. For the past three years now we have had dry Tours and things were looking ominous last week, but Friday dawned dry and stayed dry. Saturday was dry too, but for a light sprinkling on Saturday night - I reckon somebody nearly forgot to put the big umbrella in the sky up! Thanks Brian.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Fishnish Ferry Terminal, in the back of a van, cold and hungry, tired and exhausted, and still writing drivel like it was never wrote before, 5.00 am Sunday