

MullMurmurs – Chapter 1

Well, hullawerrrchinasanhowzyerschockiesshooglintheday? If ye huvny goat guid suspension, go home now! Otherwise let me bid you a warm and tastiferous welcome to the 38th running of the annual Tour of Mull Rally sponsored by the best thing to hit the tastebuds since Adam reached for that apple! - St Tunnock's of Biscuitry, sponsors of 'the best rally in the world.'

As usual, the tee-shirts were flying in the Aros Hall last night when that awfy nice big chap, John Fife hosted the annual Tunnock's Rally Forum with special guests Neil MacKinnon, Paul Kirtley, Alick Kerr, Chris Paton and Dave Cabena. A fun filled frolicsome time was had by all with Quiz prizes kindly donated by Dunlop, Kumho, Nissan and Volkswagen.

Earlier on this week, Dougi Hall was up to his usual tricks. Last year he cycled the full length of the 22 miler in 1 hour 7 minutes 33 seconds and averaged 19.94 mph. This year it was wetter and slippier and he 'only' managed 1hr 8m 22s for the trip, so he's set himself a target for next year – under an hour. Gaun yersel Dougi! And it's all in aid of raising funds for the Bear Cubs, Steve Davies' rallying apprentices. So if you see Dougi, give generously. And Rod Brereton continued his RNLI fund raising activities with support from Tony Tyres and Kumho raising £300 at his Music Quiz in the Mishnish on Tuesday.

And no, you're not seeing things. Buzz Lightyear is not on the island! It's only Rally Director Neil Molyneux zipping around on a Scooter with L Plates. At least the nickname Buzz Lightyear is better than the other one we came up with, Mr Blobby's mate, Mr Wobbly - give him a wide berth!

And just before the rally gets underway, make sure you get 'tooled up' for the weekend, the 2300 Club girls are selling Tunnock's Tour of Mull gear in the Aros Hall. Rally programmes are also on sale there and at various shops and garages around the island so look out for them, they are essential reading with full rally timetable and Road Closure details. Also tune in to Oban FM over the weekend on 103.3 to enjoy (?) the dulcet tones of Campbell Cameron with all the latest rally gossip.

But back to the rally, Scrutineering opened for business at Tobermory Distillery where first through was Neil MacKinnon's (1) Mull machine, and lucky to be here at all. Two weeks ago the Kenny McKinstry car he was planning to use was crashed on an Irish event (not by Neill!) prompting the guys to have to get another Subaru ready for this weekend. They have spent the last week converting a Left Hand Drive car to RHD, but since no-one had a conversion kit in stock they had to make everything from scratch. A seriously big job. Then bringing the car up yesterday morning the tow truck blew its engine to bits and brought downtown Belfast rush hour traffic to a halt while the McKinstry lads emptied the truck and transferred everything to a spare and they arrived here on the last boat last night.

And whilst on the subject, here's the 'Tweak of the Week'. Spot the top-hinged front number plate. When the car is in full flight it blows back allowing more air through the radiator. Nice one boys.

James MacGillivray (6) has fitted last year's 2.3 litre MkII with Proflex and used it on the Jim Clark., he says it has transformed the car, so he's ready for tonight. Causing a stir last year was young Paul MacKinnon (9) up to 6th before the engine let go, but he's back with a GrpN Subaru. He reckons it needs the full AP brake kit, but has only got the GrpN Brembos at present – but then boys like him don't use brakes

Billy Bird (10) reckons "the calendar would be good, anything else is a bonus" referring to the annual Tunnock's Tour of Mull Calendar which features the top 12 finishers on each of the monthly pages. Calum Duffy's car was next through and the MkII should be in an art gallery not out on a rally. The 2.4 John Reid engine is producing in the region of 300 bhp while the car itself was built by Den Sport in Ireland. The result is every bit as mouth watering as a caramel wafer. The car also features suspension built in Sweden by Sellholm which is cheaper than Reiger but just as good according to Den Sport, worth a chat anyone?

Paul Kirtley (5) appeared in the WRC Impreza which he first used in 2002, but which has recently been rallying in Holland (and winning) with Dirk Boers. MSP has sold Dirk a new S7 so the car is back here and since Paul's car from last year is now up for sale, brother John Kirtley, who runs MSP, won't let him use it! George MacDonald's (26) wee Corsa looked a treat after it's rebuild from the Speyside. Engine, gearbox and transmission have all been re built ready for this weekend. Top ten for 'Chicken' George?

Tristan Pye (19) has already clinched the GrpN BTRDA title this year so it's a change of shock absorbers and brakes for Mull, John Marshall (29) blew a turbo on the first stage of this event last year so guess what's brand new under the bonnet this time – and check out his tribute to Colin McRae on the back window. Dougi Hall (2) is well prepared – he bought a standard engine off E-Bay to replace the one which failed last year. Chris Tooze (34) has done 2 events in his new Lancer and had trouble on

both. He hit a sheep on Epynt on the first one (and still finished 3rd) and somebody ran into the back of him on the second. Better luck this time, eh.

Stuart McQueen has upgraded his EVO7 to EVO9, but what do you made of Denis Biggerstaff (8)? Denis Smallerstaff more like. He's taking this seriously, looking fitter and meaner than ever despite the fish supper I saw him sneakyly tucking into last night. And it's a new car, but he's having trouble with the paddle-shift, so fingers crossed for a trouble free run.

Barry Renwick (30) has spectated here before, but he's a Mull Virgin "the roads look totally different from this angle". Steve Davies (45) made it to Scrutineering, which is a tribute ton his preparation skills, only kidding, but hoping for better luck than last year when "the gearbox sh*t itself on the second last stage". Another Mull virgin is young Alick Kerr (75) the John Easson Scholarship winner. You won't mistake his Fiesta, it's got gold door numbers. After two seasons in a Peugeot 205 this is his 3rd outing in the Fiesta, but first time in the dark and first time on tar with it.

Robert Davies (49) is in for a culture shock, he's not out in his Lancer, but a Ford Fiesta "I'll either do very badly or chuck it off" he said wistfully. Lyndon Barton (18) has a brand new engine in the Subaru which has still to be run in. He installed a new engine last Wednesday, which promptly failed and it was a rush to get another for this weekend. Tony Bardy's (7) Hyundai Accent WRC is a similar spec to last year's car but it's brand new although the boys had a wee misfire this morning.

And if you hear a siren and see flashing lights just ahead of the rally to-night that could be Bulletin Bill with the 'MullMurmurs', so look out for the Flying Ford Focus and be ready at the road side to grab a Bulletin!

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, Noon, Friday



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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull

MullMurmurs – Chapter 2



"the best rally in the world"

Under the command of Fuhrer Whittaker, the Scroots have been hard at work all day in the Distillery, shoogling wheels, sealing turbos and checking paperwork but they are finally getting through the gathered 160 odd cars and crews. But Roger has a wee surprise in store. It's his 60th birthday in 2 weeks time so Course Car, Neil Calvert is taking him out for a run through the stages tomorrow afternoon. It will be Roger's first run in a competition car since 1970!

There was another shock in store for the Scroots. When they opened Aggie Foster's (57) kit bag to check her Nomex race suit they found a very unusual item of apparel wrapped up in the suit. Nevertheless they checked out the lacy black thong and attached a 'non compliance' note stating that they weren't fireproof.

Iain 'Ogg' MacKenzie (41) has a 5 speed Quaife in the wee Peugeot cos he couldn't get a dog box in time and it's good to see Ian Corkhill (43) here. The Isle of Man resident feels he should support an event on another island so he's here with his glorious Mkl. It's also good to see Giles Brooksbank (32) back. The Doc has said he's fit to go rallying again, but then the Doc has never seen him drive, so what would he know?

John Woodward (59) was keen to stress that his sponsor WMD had nothing to do with Tony Blair and Steven Ronaldson (58) was looking a bit nervous about what lies ahead. He's bought Jon Burn's MG Metro 6R4. Dave Thwaites (56) has been busy replacing the Ford power steering pump with a Vauxhall electrical system and is better pleased with the feel. But we all like a good feel don't we?

Spotted an interesting innovation on Chris Paton's (74) Nova. It has only one centrally mounted w/screen wiper. Chris swears by Rain-X (as Calum Duffy does too) to shed the rain water better than a sweeping wiper. Carl Tuer (53) was looking better pleased. He found out why his new MG X Power was a pig to drive. Whoever had prepped it before he bought it had fitted the steering rack the wrong way round!

As ever, last minute preparations feature highly in Mull tales. John Rintoul's (63) centre diff failed last Tuesday despite his best intentions to have the car on the trailer by the weekend, so it was a re-fit and driveshaft replacement all round before he could come over. It makes you wonder doesn't it? Jim Brindle stepped out of his BL Mini wearing a Ford jacket, apparently son Steve works for M-Sport. Divided loyalties, eh.

Good to see Mr Fergus Loudon co-driving for Grant 'Sid the Parrot' Fleming (83). As you know Mr Loudon is the Production Director at Tunnock's. Lovely chap, and wonderful biscuits. After their Subaru exploits last year, they're back in a MkII. Bright red and drop dead racy, that's Foey the Fireman's (119) Mkl Escort. As a reward for finishing the rebuild of his new Historic car, Alan Gardiner (47) has let Iain Noble from MacKay's Garage loose in it this weekend.

Andrew Smith (94) was at the Forum last night and when presenting his wee Peugeot at Scrutineering, reminded me that he did the Tour of Mull in 1972 when it was a round of the Shell Scottish Rally Championship while another ol'timer, Bill Lymburn (148) is now in his fifth decade of rallying spread over 31 years (think about it, it does compute!). He competed in a Mini in the 70s, rose to great heights in National rallying and is now back with a MkII.

Bill Langford's Astra (107) appeared with a parrot stuck to the roof. Apparently, codriver Tom Paterson's daughter Lee stuck it on their first car and it has been transferred to every one ever since over the past 12 years. Mike Kent (129) has an ex Mike Taylor Developments Ford Escort Cosworth which he drives in the Rally Car class at Hillclimbs and Speed events as well as rallies. I thought it was only wimmin who could multi task.

Tracey Louise Muir and Garry Muir (105) have both navigated on Mull before but this is their first time together (nice innit!) with Tracey driving and Garry on the Notes. Louise Thomas and Wendy Whittaker have purloined Louise's Dad's Mini which he first drove in 1969 and are raising funds for Maggie's Cancer Care Homes. Go girls, go. And be nice to Richard Egger (121), he bought the whisky miniatures for the Marshal's goody bags! He's still got the Nova, but he seems to be collecting Escorts these days, this is his second Mkl.

Norman MacPhail found his Corsa sumpguard grounding out so needed to bend it, but it was too strong. So he went to Harry McDowall's garage and tried to Porta-Power it against the roof. It lifted the roof! The sumpguard is still straight! At 144 is the Bear Club entry. It's John MacCrone's first event as a driver (he navigated for his sister Heather last year) and Zak Hancock's (good Scottish name, eh) first event as codriver. There are 9 youngsters between the age of 12 and 19 who work on the Bear Cub Nova, the excellent project fostered by Steve Davies.



Donna Ingram (130) is taking the issue of weight saving very seriously, even her lipstick holder on top of the dash is made from carbon fibre. Apparently the Mini is called the 'Miniru', as it's the only non-Subaru in Kenny McKinstry's workshops. Alan Cowan's (128) Peugeot has done 3 Jim Clarks and 3 Mulls – not bad for a shopping car with a cage and suspension. Mark Booth (143) is back with his Honda powered Mini. After marshalling for 7 years he built this device and competed in 2004 but broke the steering rack.

Drew Struthers (127) has obviously spent a lot of time and thought on Mull prep. He's fitted an anti roll bar and forest suspension to the Vauxhall powered Sunbeam. And it's good to see Rod Brereton out in his Renault Clio, he started the 3 year build project – 12 years ago! And what about young Ross Hunter's (152) Challenge spec Peugeot 205. It positively sparkled at Scrutineering and looked even better than a factory fresh car. This is his new car for next season and first time out is Mull. Check out the graphics on the roof. Nice one Ross.

After spending 10 months building his Cooper S, Martin Page (146) was looking a mite apprehensive. He's never been to Mull before, even to spectate. The Morrisons were in trouble again (93) and (158), the Toyota Starlet broke a camshaft on Wednesday morning and the Escort wouldn't fire up and wouldn't go.

And finally, the O'Donnell twins appeared at 3.30 pm\this afternoon to get through Scrutineering. By all accounts, at 12 noon yesterday the Escort looked like an 'exploded car diagram'. All we need now is a finish and a result.

And here's a tale I couldn't resist. David Balfour Fotheringham, co-driver to Dave Calvert (86), was out recceing the other day, with Dave driving DBF's shiny and unmarked Audi. Approaching a narrow bridge, Dave didn't hear the word 'narrow' - the wing mirror pinged and snapped back against the passenger window. DBF didn't even twitch, just rolled down the electric window and pushed the mirror back, and rolled the window back up. It was his first mark on the Audi since he got it!

And what about Paul Marshall (80). The Triumph TR7 was prepped and ready to rally two weeks ago, so Paul went out one night to set the lights up - and ditched it. Back to the workshop to straighten the wing and steering and re-prep it for Mull.

Young David Bogie is here, but is a non starter. The Lancer rolled, ever so gently, on the Trackrod a couple of weeks back. They couldn't even salvage the dashboard! Jim Carty (31) is also a non starter in the Metro – I think the wife wouldn't let him come over! Craig Bennett (36) is another non starter, as is Jim McKenna (46).

And if you hear a siren and see flashing lights just ahead of the rally to-night that could be Bulletin Bill and Cruella Crumpet with the 'MullMurmurs', so look out for the Flying Ford Focus and be ready at the road side to grab a Bulletin!

And if you need to keep your sugar levels up for a night of serious spectating, there is only one possible remedy and it starts with a 'T'.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 5.00 pm, Friday



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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull

MullMurmurs – Chapter 3



"the best rally in the world"

Leading Cars' Times after SS2 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 20 Minutes 02 Seconds
- 2 Paul MacKinnon/Andrew Roughhead (Subaru Impreza) 20m 39s
- 3 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 20m 39s
- 4 Calum Duffy/Iain Duffy (Ford Escort Mk2) 20m 33s
- 5 Dougi Hall/Andy Richardson (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8) 20m 35s
- 6 Paul Kirtley/Jim Kitson (Subaru Impreza) 20m 54s
- 7 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 21m 10s
- 8 David Miller/Andrew Bailey (Subaru Impreza) 21m 43s
- 9 Denis Biggerstaff/Graham Thomson (Subaru Impreza WRC) 21m 43s
- 10 Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Hyundai Accent WRC) 22m 04s

(Please Note: These are not 'Results' it's just the leading cars' times after the first two stages, other cars running later may set faster times, but at least this gives you something to go on!)

Top seed Neil MacKinnon set off from Tobermory earlier this evening at the start of this 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally – and struck trouble on the start line of the first stage!

"I stalled it on the start line," admitted the 11 times winner, "then I forgot to switch on the anti-lag system so I did the whole Lochs stage with no anti-lag!" Things were better on SS2 for MacKinnon in the unfamiliar car, "It was OK, but it was slippery in places."

Dougi Hall had the wrong tyres for SS1 but changed before going into SS2, "there were lots of damp patches down Tuath," he said.

Calum Duffy was struggling too, "I've got the hardest Dunlops I could get on the rear," said Calum, "and they still went off in the first one, but now I've got an ignition problem, the alternator is not charging."

Paul Kirtley was on the wrong tyres and having to back off because he was in danger of making contact with the scenery while James MacGillivray was another concerned about the right tyre choice but please with his new engine.

Tony Bardy was relieved just to get the notoriously difficult Hyundai off the start line but John Cope puncture a front wheel in SS2. Paul MacKinnon is on a charge, catching Bardy before the stage finish and Eddie O'Donnell's engine cut out and stopped dead for 3 or 4 minutes in SS2 although it's going again.

That's yer lot for now,.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Salen Hotel 9.30 pm, Friday





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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull

MullMurmurs – Chapter 4



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"the best rally in the world"

Provisional Leaderboard after SS2 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 20 Minutes 02 Seconds
- 2 Paul MacKinnon/Andrew Roughhead (Subaru Impreza) 20m 39s
- 3 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 20m 39s
- 4 Calum Duffy/Iain Duffy (Ford Escort Mk2) 20m 33s
- 5 Dougi Hall/Andy Richardson (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8) 20m 35s
- 6 Paul Kirtley/Jim Kitson (Subaru Impreza) 20m 54s
- 7 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell (BMW MINI Cooper S) 20m 59s
- 8 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 21m 10s
- 9 John Swinscoe/Paula Swinscoe (Mitsubishi Lancer) 21m 11s
- 10 Tristan Pye/Kirsty Riddick (Subaru Impreza) 21m 32s

With a few more times in we can now update the Leaderboard after the second stage of this 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally and look at Daniel Harper! Up to 7th in the MINI.

Denis Biggerstaff is struggling though. As mentioned in an earlier Murrur, he was concerned about the paddle shift in the Subaru, and it got stuck in 4th gear at the end of the 2nd stage so the boys are attempting to change the gearbox at Craignure service. Fingers crossed.

Ian Forgan (66) is complaining about a slipping clutch. He adjusted it before the start p but adjusted it too much Duggie Ingram (64) has cowped the Mini in SS2 Mike Russell (67) 'went farming' in SS2, fortunately without damage John Paterson (48) is miserable. No fuel pressure in SS1 and an 'off' in SS2 It's 4 years since Sandy Smith (69) last finished a Tour and didn't get this far last year, but with a new co-driver has completed the first 2 stages Martin MacLean (72) says he's driving like a Granny Paul Miller (73) says the car is feeling nervous over the bumps and that's making him nervous ... Chris Paton (74) says this is where it all went horribly wrong last year, so he's driving with his toes crossed ... Alick Kerr (75) the John Easson Scholarship winner had a slight panic at the start of the first stage when the intercom failed, but it was fine after they put a new battery in it zand he's revelling in his first Mull – and he's only done 2 stages (the enthusiasm of youth!) Chris MacKenzie (48) got a puncture near the end of SS2 Paul Marshall (80) has a very bad misfire over 4000 rpm and is struggling to get 4th gear in the TR7 Graham Brown (84) has front corner panel and headlamp damage after an altercation with a wall at an increasingly muddy Torloisk junction where earlier cars are cutting and spreading mud across the road It's Bruce Edwards' (87) first time here and after a cautious start in the Darrian started to have a few moments so has backed off before exuberance gets the better of him Stevie Browns' (91) Nova is skipping about a bit at the back end Rick Fry (95) caught a car in there and lost a wee bit of time Murdo Morrison (93) was smiling at the end of the stage "I had a wee moment in there that was enough to put a smile on anyone's face!" and he's suffering from 'disco lights' – the headlamps and spots are switching themselves off at times and then coming back on again Allan MacKay (97) is enjoying the Lancer after years in a Ford Anglia and is amazed at the technological progress of modern cars "It's got wipers that work, it's even got a heater!" John Lloyd (98) had a wee fright at the start when the co-driver's light failed, but they got it fixed.

And so the rally heads into the deep south for a loop of 5 stages before heading back towards Tobermory and the overnight halt. It's dry, but slippy in places, and keeping adrenaline pumps fully fuelled and beating hard.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Salen Hotel 10.30 pm, Friday





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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull

MullMurmurs – Chapter 5



"the best rally in the world"

Provisional Leaderboard after SS8 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 54 Minutes 35 Seconds
- 2 Dougi Hall/Andy Richardson (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8) 55m 29s
- 3 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 55m 58s
- 4 Paul Kirtley/Jim Kitson (Subaru Impreza) 56m 34s
- 5 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell (BMW MINI Cooper S) 56m 51s
- 6 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 57m 03s
- 7 John Swinscoe/Paula Swinscoe (Mitsubishi Lancer) 57m 32s
- 8 Tristan Pye/Kirsty Riddick (Subaru Impreza) 58m 09s
- 9 Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Hyundai Accent WRC) 58m 41s
- 10 John Cressey/Stan Quirk (BMW MINI Cooper S) 59m 30s

The 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull could be renamed 'Things that go bump in the night' going by recent events, after a steady start, the scenery is now taking a pounding. But let me begin with an apology. Although I had the correct order in my previous top ten leaderboard, I mis-heard some times and it must have looked like amateur gibberish, but then again, I'm getting too old to be up this late at night or early in the morning depending on your point of view.

But the big news is that Calum Duffy is out. He made it through the third stage but it would appear that his earlier ignition and alternator problems were unable to be resolved. And just when it looked like MacKinnon Jnr was going to give the ol'man a hard time, Neil turned it up a notch, just one second off his own 2004 Calgary record and equalling John Cope's 2004 record over Mishnish Lochs. Unbeknownst to him though, son Paul was in trouble in Calgary, two punctures dropping him out of the top ten. Pressure off, but this is such a cruel sport, is it not?

It's also an unfair sport. Despite heroic efforts to get the car ready (again) for Mull, the O'Donnell twins are out. The Escort is parked well off the road in Calgary – through a hedge! Dougi Hall has leapt into 2nd place but John Cope is still there, so too is Paul Kirtley despite a big 'off' in Calgary, but just look at Harper in the MINI and now Cressey is in the top ten too despite a big spin in Calgary, and another at Dervaig. John Swinscoe is pleased, he's just gone under 7 minutes over the Lochs for the first time and Lyndon Barton is just getting back up to speed after his recent big 'off' in Epynt. Willie Bonniwell punctured in Gribun and had a huge spin while Stuart McQueen was in serious trouble – he nearly ran out of cigarettes. And how's this for a bit of luck? Mike Storrar's clutch failed at the finish of the final stage, and it was downhill all the way to the Tobermory Control, so he made it, and lives to fight another day.

Further down the entry list, Ian Ackroyd (117) is out in SS2 after a bump in which he broke his arm so he was carted off to Salen Hospital Alan McLaughlin (78) is out too, after he parked his car on the beach – quite a few yards from the road in CalgaryDerek Carless (85) has retired with mechanical problems Andrew Smith (94) crashed in the Lochs and Malcolm Davey (111) is out too which is a great pity. He was dedicating this event to the memory of Howard Turner who died in Yorkshire just a couple of months back Louise Thomas (131) is out too, so her charity fund raising efforts won't be as great as they could have been Rod Brereton (154) has parked his new Clio off the road in the second stage Dave Dalgleish (124) retired with either gearbox or clutch failure Norman MacPhail (134) is off in SS4and Shug Rutherford (122) lost all his oil pressure.

Time for a tea cake, Tunnock's of course, and bed.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 2.30 am, Saturday



Provisional Leaderboard after SS8 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 54 Minutes 35 Seconds
- 2 Dougi Hall/Andy Richardson (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8) 55m 29s
- 3 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 55m 58s
- 4 Paul Kirtley/Jim Kitson (Subaru Impreza) 56m 34s
- 5 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell (BMW MINI Cooper S) 56m 51s
- 6 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 57m 03s
- 7 John Swinscoe/Paula Swinscoe (Mitsubishi Lancer) 57m 32s
- 8 Denis Biggerstaff/Graeme Thomson (Subaru Impreza) 57m 57s
- 9 Tristan Pye/Kirsty Riddick (Subaru Impreza) 58m 09s
- 10 Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Hyundai Accent WRC) 58m 41s

As dawn clambered over the rocky outline of Mull on the morning of Saturday 13th October there were many bruised egos and battered cars littering the landscape. Last night provided a typical 'crash, bang, wallop' start to this 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally, but out front was 11 times winner Neil MacKinnon, with Daniel Barritt, going for win number 12.

Speaking of winners, we've already had one winner this weekend. After his cycling exploits on the 22 miler on Wednesday, Dougi Hall entered the Tunnock's Teacake eating contest at Craignure on Thursday night, and he won! 20 teacakes and a bottle of Irn Bru in 4 minutes. What an athlete this boy is.

Looking further down the results listing after the first Leg of 8 stages Lewis Gallagher is leading the 2 litre class in his Peugeot 205 by just 3 seconds from Curly Haigh in the Mk1 and holding 16th and 17th places overall respectively. In 20th place is 1600 leader Mike Storrar in the Anglia with nearly a minute in hand over young Kris Hall (son of Dougi) in a Peugeot 205. In the wee class, Matthew Tarbutt's Nova has 2 minutes over the Nova of Ewen MacGillivray.

There is one change to the overnight interim positions. In the previous Bulletin we didn't have times for Denis Biggerstaff, but following a gearbox change at Craignure, Northern Ireland's finest is still running, albeit quite far down the running order, and he's currently lying 8th at the overnight halt.

But if there was a prize for sheer stubborn stupidity, Jim McDowall would be in the running. His ex-works Sunbeam seized its engine 3 miles into the first stage last night, so he called home to Newton Stewart (in the deep south west) and told the boys to bring the engine out of his Avenger up overnight. They are busy fitting it at the moment ready to (hopefully) re-start the Trophy Rally this afternoon.

And if there was an award for gardening, that would be down to Brian MacLeod (82). He went so far off in SS2 last night, the local farmer thought someone had started the ploughing early. That was nothing compared to the service crew who spent the next couple of hours prizing and poking packed earth out from driveshafts, gearbox linkages and stuffed sumpguards creating enough mess to start a new series of the Beechgrove Garden.

Now it's daylight and the survivors have Leg 2 to look forward to, so doubtless there will be more motoring mayhem on Mull to come. But spare a thought for McDowall's team, the only thing that's keeping these boys fuelled is a constant supply of Tunnock's caramel wafers. However did they manage without them before?

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 11.00 am Saturday



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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull

MullMurmurs – Chapter 7



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"the best rally in the world"

Provisional Leaderboard after SS 12 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 1hr 22m 28s
- 2 Dougi Hall/Andy Richardson (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8) 1.24.38
- 3 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 1.24.53
- 4 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell (BMW MINI Cooper S) 1.26.18
- 5 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 1.26.40
- 6 Paul Kirtley/Jim Kitson (Subaru Impreza) 1.27.06

We're now well into the daylight section of this 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally, and there's more change at the top. MacKinnon still leads but James MacGillivray has caught and passed Paul Kirtley

But Denis Biggerstaff's overall position is currently in doubt. After changing his gearbox last night he continued on his way and looked to have 8th place secured by the close of Leg 1, but there may be a problem. It looks as though he incurred a stage maximum late last night with his gearbox woes which has dropped him out of contention again.

But MacKinnon is on a charge, "Steady away today, but I just tried it in there." Without a bead of sweat on his forehead, MacKinnon shattered last year's record of 6m 22s for the Lochs with a new record today, 6m 13s! Even previous record holder John Cope could do nothing about it, 2 seconds slower than 'the man'.

Dougi Hall hung on to 2nd despite a big spin in Calgary when he encountered a wet patch on a hairpin and Paul Kirtley had yet another huge off again in Calgary, but in a different place from last night and James MacGillivray did a personal best over the Lochs with 6m 36s, so these boys are flying today. And what about Daniel Harper, he was grinning fit t burst his crash hat after that one.

I wonder if the 1 litre Nissan Micra WRC (White Rally Car) is the lowest powered in the rally. Haydn Williams (118) stopped in the penultimate stage last night along with three cars behind him to extricate a car blocking the road. Even after they got back into their own car they caught up with the guy in front and they finished the Leg last night 99th out of 115 Mark Booth (143) got stuck in SS5 last night when the throttle cable snapped ... Robert Davies had to stop in SS2 last night to change a punctured tyre – in the dark Graham Brown (84) lost all his brakes last night near Ulva Ferry when a stone slackened a brake line union and all the fluid pumped out, so he finished the stage on the handbrake and young Ross Hunter (152) had to change a kn*ck*r*d bottom balljoint this morning and now has a wee 'clunk' from the rear axle.

As for Chris MacKenzie (68), words fail me. The dumpling has only gone and lost his car keys. The team now have two options, break a window or find a spotty 17 year old to hot wire it!

And just to bring the results of the Tunnock's Teacake eating contest at Craignure on Thursday night up to date, there was a Team Prize too. This was won by the Rally Recovery crew, Team Vulture, comprising Ben and Claire McCosh and Graeme Barrie. So if you go off tonight you know who to look out for. This team is now so full of caramelicious goodness, they glow in the dark!

And remember to look out for Bulletin Bill in the Flying Ford Focus with Cuddles Craig handing out these 'MullMurmur' scandal sheets. They are running ahead of the rally. So if they stop, grab your Bulletin and hightail it to spectator safety before the rally cars come.

Stop Press: Looks like young Stevie Brown is out, off the stage, but OK.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Riverside, 2.30 pm Saturday





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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull



John K. Philips Group, Transport - Warehousing - Distribution Tel: 01744 751000

"the best rally in the world"

MullMurmurs – Chapter 8

Provisional Leaderboard after SS14 (of 19)

- 1 Neil MacKinnon/Daniel Barritt (Subaru Impreza WRC) 1hr 32m 20s
- 2 Dougi Hall/Andy Richardson (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 8) 1.34.16
- 3 John Cope/Robert Fagg (Subaru Impreza WRC) 1.34.43
- 4 James MacGillivray/Ian Fraser (Ford Escort Mk2) 1.36.49
- 5 Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell (BMW MINI Cooper S) 1.37.34
- 6 Paul Kirtley/Jim Kitson (Subaru Impreza) 1.37.38
- 7 Tristan Pye/Kirsty Riddick (Subaru Impreza) 1.38.02
- 8 John Cressey/Stam Quirk (BMW MINI Cooper S) 1.39.55
- 9 Willie Bonniwell/Kevin Rae (Subaru Impreza) 1.40.19
- 10 David Miller/Andrew Bailey (Subaru Impreza) 1.40.20

They say that 'things go bump in the night', well they bump even harder in daylight. There are cars strewn across the landscape of Mull as the second Leg of the 38th Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally draws to a close, but there's more. Rally leader Neil MacKinnon was late into the start of the final afternoon stage and was off the pace through it. Drama afoot? We'll try and find out. But look at the scrap for fourth place. MacGillivray is the current holder, but Daniel Harper and Paul Kirtley are only 4 seconds apart.

It was dry again for this afternoon's second Leg, but rain is forecast for tonight. So fingers crossed for a dry night – even if only for the Marshals' sake. What a bunch of heroes these lads and lassies are, so drink their health tonight with a cup of tea and a tea cake.

Apparently George MacDonald's (26) service crew visited him in his bedroom last night and gave him a good talking-to – and told him to get his finger out today! So, yes he was quicker. Who says rallying is not a team sport? John Eason Scholarship winner Alick Kerr (75) is getting confident enough to alter the suspension settings on the hired Fiesta and was much quicker as a result today, 43 seconds quicker over the Lochs than last night Rick Fry (95) passed two cars in Calgary so he's on the pace after changing the turbo last night Ewen MacGillivray (103) had fuel starvation last night but fixed it this morning and now the clutch is slipping Ian Dawes (70) is happy with his pace in the MINI but commenting on Harper and Cressey in the top ten, reckons "they're brain dead" Allan Cameron (76) had a puncture last night and the clutch failed but is OK today Allan MacKay (97) is complaining that his Lancer is too wide and that's why he got two punctures but is more concerned about the efficiency of the heater, he's positively sweltering a rather noisy approach heralded the arrival of Pete Gibson (102) minus his exhaust which he left behind in Tuath but worse was a 16 mile run with no alternator earlier today co-driver Patrick Daley has lost his voice shouting at Paul Reford (113) when the intercom failed – never did a bottle of fizzy Irn Bru taste so good a happier man today is John Paterson (48), he changed from 17 inch wheels last night to 15s for today and the Proton handles much better also happier was Speedy Runciman (147) who took over a minute off his Lochs time today from last night because they had the right Pace Notes and Haggis was on the ball with his calls proving that teamwork does work Barry Renwick (30) had three punctures last night but even more spins although he's picking up pace better today Stephen Taylor (114) changed the suspension overnight and is much happier today Mark Constantine (99) knocked a tyre off a rim on a stone in the first stage last night but the fuel pump is cutting out and the lights are flickering, so more trouble ahead James Fairbairns (151) has electrical problems and it's cutting out, he thinks it's the coil losing a chunk of time last night was Ian Forgan (66) when the throttle cable broke in the last stage and he limped out purely on tickover local man Donald Brown is struggling with carburettor problems Chris Shield (141) lost 1st and 2nd gears over the Lochs this afternoon with two stages to go Ross Hunter (152) punctured on SS11 and had to drive a mile before he found a safe place to pull over and change it in more serious trouble is Tim Stell (40) with intake manifold problems and it looks as though Stage 13 was unlucky for Tony Bardy (7), the Hyundai has given up the ghost and doesn't want to go any further John Swinscoe (14) has left the road in Tuath with the Lancer in need of serious First Aid Tommi Graham (33) is out on SS9 and Paul Daniel (38) failed to leave the service area after limping in with mechanical problems after SS9 John Cowe (61) has broken something and is going no further while Lewis Gallagher (62) has broken a driveshaft Sandy Smith (69) has engine failure, class leading Matthew Tarbutt (71) is off in SS10 and we can confirm that Stevie Brown (91) has indeed parked the Nova upside down in a Tuath ditch Connor Corkhill (108) has mechanical trouble, Malcolm Davey (111) broke a driveshaft in Tuath and Bear Cub star, John MacCrone (144) looks as though he's retired the co-operative-built Nova on the road section after Stage 9. Phew, things are getting hectic out there ahead of tonight's Final Leg.

And a word from the 2300 Club organisers, all competitors (and followers) are advised that MacGochans will have hot drinks, pies and sandwiches for sale after the rally finishes in the early hours of Sunday morning for those in need of sustenance and refreshment at the conclusion of 'the best rally in the world'.

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 5.00 pm Saturday





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STILL A FAMILY BUSINESS

Tunnock's Tour of Mull

MullMurmurs – Chapter 9



"the best rally in the world"

Provisional Leaderboard 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/Stan 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

As ever, the Tunnock's Tour of Mull Rally finished with a sting in its tail. A smirr of rain announced changes for the final Leg of this year's event. In some places, the road was wet, in others, it was greasy, but the biggest problem for drivers was the uncertainty - never knowing if there was grip round the next corner, a large puddle over the next crest or mud spread across the road!

On the first stage of the night, two sudden bangs shook up the leaderboard. Dougi Hall slid off and Paul Kirtley left the road at speed. The Subaru soaked up the impact well but left Paul and Jim truly shaken and stirred, but thankfully hale and hearty.

It also left MacKinnon in control, but as reported earlier, he too had his troubles. On the final stage of the afternoon he was having engine coolant pressurisation problems. These continued at the start of the third Leg and there was doubt whether he should carry on or not, but with the McKinstry Impreza running in 'safety' mode, the job was on. Fortunately he had over 3 minutes in hand over John Cope, but the Lancastrian was aware of the local man's problems and turned up the pressure.

Cope took time out of MacKinnon over the final three stages, but not enough. Neil MacKinnon, with Daniel Barritt alongside, scored a remarkable 12th victory on this year's Tunnock's Tour of Mull epic adventure.

"It spat all the water out after Gribun," said Neil, "I thought that was it, but the McKinstry boys got it going again. The run of the final stages suited the car and once I got off that Hill Road I thought the job was on."

"I thought there was a glimmer of hope," said the runner-up, "I wouldn't like to win like that, I'd prefer a straight fight, but Neil led from first stage to last, he deserved it."

In third place James MacGillivray was having to keep an eye on Daniel Harper, but on the Start line at Scridain, "I got fed up with pussy-footing it, and I just let go." Jock the Bull 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 cheers of marshals and spectators - and even rivals - sitting waiting their turn behind. Nice one James.

Daniel Harper scored an excellent 4th place ahead of an equally impressive Tristan Pye. Wild Willie Bonniwell was in sensible mode all weekend and the result was 6th, despite a late puncture in Scridain, ahead of John Cressey who still had time for a wild celebratory spin in the closing stages. David Miller's consistent pace ensured a well earned 8th ahead of John Rintoul with Tim Stell rounding off the top ten after welding up his disintegrating inlet manifold before the final Leg.

Tony Bardy was out spectating after his turbocharger failure and John Swinscoe explained the reason for his retirement. A brake master cylinder failure caused a rear wheel brake to seize and spat the Lancer off into the undergrowth. Apparently it left a 100 ft single line of rubber on the road.

So, that's yer lot for now. A full report will follow on Sunday afternoon, but for now, our congratulations to 'MacKinnon the MacNificent' for his record 12th victory – what price a baker's dozen next year?

Yer auld pal, Jaggy Bunnet, Tobermory, 3.30 am Sunday



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