



May '97

won by Vic Elford in a Porsche 911. 3rd in the original meeting was Tony Fall in a Mini Cooper (represented on the day by Alan Bryant) 7th in the original meeting was Tony Skelton in a Mini Cooper (represented on the day by Phil Brent) whilst Mike Catlow took the place of Bob Freeborough's Mini Cooper at the back of the grid. The rest of us then drove two laps of the road race circuit in a sort of convoy behind a Kent motor cycle police officer. As usual in a convoy run, let the man in front get far enough away and then have a quick burst to catch him up. I do not think that many of the road cars would have survived the ruts and pot holes when getting onto the rough stuff if we had tried the rallycross course on leaving the track.

A brilliant day, thanks to John White and Dave Tippet for making it possible.

P.S. If it had not been for some pillock running into Peter Ranagan's car as we were loading it to take it to Warwickshire I would have been rebuilding Peter's car with the MCR team at Stoneleigh this weekend and not out in the sun at Lydden.

**Paul Wilson**

## Horiba Coventry Automotive Rally Team

This report is a summary of press releases received from the above team who are currently campaigning a 1994 Spec Group A Rover Mini Cooper 1.3i.

A mixed season last year for driver Trevor Godwin and codrivers Rick Spurgeon, Ian Harrop and David Wyr (sidelined through injury) culminated in November's Network Q RAC Rally.

The weather conditions under which the event was run have been widely reported and caused the crew of Trevor and Rick some trepidation. Arriving at SS1 Kershope after a 158 mile road section, they found the off road section to be packed ice. The delayed start resulted in a long queue of cars waiting to tackle the icy stage. However when the Mini was just three cars from the front of the queue the stage was abandoned due to the appalling conditions.

The link section between SS1 and SS2 Riccarton was so icy Rick had to push the car up one particularly tricky slope! An accident on the approach road then resulted in the cancellation of the subsequent service, but despite only a brief service, the Mini completed stages 2 through 5 without incident. SS6 comprised 36 miles in the infamous Pundershaw Forest where, despite Rick having to push the car on two occasions, their 1 hour 13 min stage time kept the team in the rally.

Cancellation of the Hamsterely stage saw the crew heading to Croft for the final two stages. At 1.30am the crew arrived at Leeds to be greeted by a couple who had been waiting for 3 hours to see a Mini because their first car had been a Mini! (I'm sure no one would do that for any other car! - Ed) At this point the crew weren't sure if they were still within the time limit, however permissible lateness was increased so the Mini was still in

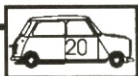


Essex member and BARC (Home Counties) Chairman John White displayed "Marigold" at Lydden. Gordon Cowie's "Mini Monte" Rover Cooper in background.

I enjoyed seeing Jeff Williamson's much campaigned and very original Cooper entered in the Historics, in the sort of field which took me back to my early marshalling days.



The Minis parade on the "loose stuff". Hugh Wyllie in another Mini Monte survivor!



for Leg 2.

This comprised the traditional spectator stages including Clumber, Chatsworth and Donnington and some very strict road timing. Leeds (Temple Newsham) and Chatsworth passed without incident but the icy road link from Chatsworth saw the crew accumulating more penalties. In contrast to the ice of Chatsworth, Clumber was virtually snow and ice free, but any sense of relief was quickly destroyed when it started to snow! Heading towards Donnington on the M1, many of the rally crews were caught in solid 40mph traffic. Many crews consequently arrived overdue including the Mini (10 minutes) but the organisers waived time penalties for this section since so many teams were affected.

Stages at Trentham, Tatton and British

stages marked the return of snow and ice but had been partially cleared by a snow plough and the crew recorded good times and were enjoying themselves.

On the final run back to Chester, a combination of rally traffic, a single track road and banked snow saw the crew arrive at the final service 3 minutes late which left no time to clean the car. However the Mini received a tremendous reception for its 80th overall and 5th in class finish.

February 22nd 1997 saw the crew at Bournemouth for the Winter Rally where they performed with great consistency on the seafront stages and good times elsewhere, which combined with the Mini's impeccable behaviour resulted in 38th overall and 2nd in class.



*Trevor Godwin demonstrates the ultimate 2WD Cooper fitted with a friction reducing levitation device at Chatsworth on the 1996 Network Q RAC Rally*

Aerospace passed uneventfully en route to Chester where the cancellation of SS18 Dyfnant was announced. The noticeboard at Chester showed the Mini still in the rally although several crews above them on the list, and all those below, were OTL and being reviewed for exclusion.

The exclusion of 19 cars saw the Mini very near the bottom of the list of runners, rather than having 15 cars below them. Moving into Wales, the lack of snow and ice enabled the crew to post some quick times without progressing for up the leader board. Punctures on Hafren and Gartheiniog saw the car running last when they reached the Dolgellau service. The two Cloecaenog

Let's hope the success continues and that the Group N 1997 Spec Mini Cooper currently being prepared will follow suit and give Mini rally fans something to look forward to in both national and international events.

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P.S. A crash in the recent Rally of Portugal brought the crew's most recent outing to a premature end. I am assured the cause was driver error and due to no fault of the car which was coping well with the very rough conditions, as well as getting tremendous support from the public on every appearance.

