**The Dansport Historic Rally 9/10 Oct**

47 Cars started the 2021 Dansport Historic based at the Peak Edge Hotel. The numbers were a little lower than expected but some of this was due to competitors contracting Covid and some HRCR compet-itors are just not creatures of the night. That didn’t stop 20 Masters from throwing their hats in the ring to try something new and hopefully come away with enough points to win their class or if good enough the rally and/or Championship.

A 25 mile transit from MTC 1 gave the navigators sufficient time to plot reg one and ensure that as every-one got underway it would be dark and the narrow lanes of the Peak District quiet. The sneaky bit was the instruction, coloured roads only except for LWR. The first 7 IRTC’s were straightforward but the final one had a pesky white on a LWR that caused 9 crews to pick up 4 minute penalty for a wrong direction into the control. That included car 10 Andy’s Beaumont and Fish in the Sunbeam Rapier and car 21 the author and his wife Sarah in the MGB. There goes the top ten finish and its only the first reg.

The second reg was a short affair that took the crews to a pub for pie and chips and gnashing of teeth in some quarters. However results from those who didn’t make any errors showed the usual suspects of Paul Crosby and Ali Procter (Porsche 911) in first on 26 seconds Dan Willan and Andy Pullan(Volvo PV544) 8 seconds behind and Mike and Matt Vokes (Ginetta G15) in third on 47 seconds. Holding the first expert slot were Phil B-Wood and local, Kelvin Phipps in 7th.

After the previous evenings shenanigans it was back to the normal routine and Sunday was into two tests at Walton Lodge. Two fast blasts along the drive and round the front of the grand house that saw Car22 Darren Everitt and Susan Dixon win the first test and Car 4 Crosby/Procter win the second.

Reg 3 was a coloured road junction affair that had just three IRTCs. However fine weather was starting to bring out the cyclists and horse riders so the roads were starting to get busy.

Back to the Walton Estate for the next two tests which included a tight trip through a farmyard and some fresh cow muck that made the turn out of the yard a bit slippery for some! It was a tie for the first run round with Crosby/Procter level with Willan/Pullan on 1:41 and the second time around Crosby/Procter just pipped them by 1 second on 1:38.

Reg 4 was a Herring Bone where a white was used near Harewood Moor north of Matlock. but not shown on the map to make life inter-esting and the Crosby/Procter roadshow rolled on to pick up just 8 seconds.

Then a transit to The DFS Sofa factory at Darley Dale for a whizz around the carpark that involved two 360+ to get the head in a spin. Car 6 Matt Warren and Ryan Pickering (Escort) achieved a scorching 1:19 to head the field.

It was then on to Reg 5 that was split in two with test 6 sandwiched in the middle. The test itself was ra-ther rough towards the end and as is normal in a cow farm managed to coat most of the vehicles in large quantities of cow slurry. However once at the stop astride there was no time to relax as the finish time of the test was the start time of the second part of reg 5 that followed steep narrow lanes around the Birchover area. Richard Isherwood and Ian Canavan(VW Golf) won reg 5 with 11 secs.

A well deserved light lunch then followed at the Druid Inn and the results showed no change to the top three but with Crosby/Procter enjoying a 27 second advantage. However with three regs and two tests to come it certainly wasn’t all over.

South west of Bakewell was the start area for Reg 6 that required the navs to negotiate 4 specific grid squares and 10 speed changes whilst also dealing with the 6 controls. On this one it was Willan/Pullan who were ahead of Crosby/Procter but only by 5 seconds.

Reg 7 utilised a London Map South of Ladybower and was only three controls but local knowledge would definitely be an advantage as a hard to find slot through a quarry to find the narrow yellow on the other side caused 11 crews to pick up 1 minute penalties. Locals Anthony Davies with Mark Goodwin driving,(Dolomite Sprint) aced this reg with 3 seconds overall.

The final reg was a 6.5 mile Jogularity that was fairly straightforward but did contain a cheeky do not pass Hall instruction that looking at the times caused some confusion and then it was straight onto a 10 yard grass section to find the control. Harvey Steele and Martin Pitt (Volvo 144) found everything ok though and won the reg with 15 seconds.

A return to Walton Hall then beckoned for the final two tests on the mixed surfaces around the estate. Crosby/Procter were obviously on top form as they won both tests by just 1 second and giving them the best overall performance on all the tests with a total of 14:19, 8 seconds ahead of Warren/Pickering and in third just 1 second behind was Willan/Pullan.

Back then to the Peak Edge hotel for the results and they were as it started. Crosby/Procter in first on 2:23, Willan/Pullan 2:43 and despite an engine oil issue on the final test, Mike and Matt Vokes held on to third with 4:25.

Considering this was a new addition to the Championship there were no teething problems to contend with from the competitor’s point of view and that is to the great credit of Matlock Motor Club and Martin Phaff in particular. A great rally with lots of variety for both sides of the car with the night work not being too oner-ous. Here’s to next year and hopefully this will become a regular addition the HRCR calendar.

A full list of results can be found at https://www.rallyroots.com/