

2022 Brynia Clwyd rally review

After winning the ANWCC novice navigators' championship in 2021 I returned to rallying in 2022 in high spirits and our first rally of the year was the Rali Bryniau Clwyd (run by Broughton and Bretton Motor Club). After a "slight indiscretion" on the JJ Brown, we'd spent 2 months putting the car back together and preparing her for her first outing of 2022 – during this time I also discovered that being tall (16 years old and still growing!) has a downside with non-adjustable seats as this is the 5th time I've had to adjust it! It then came to the weekend before and we had a few small things to do for the finishing touches, and building on the success of last year we were confident and the weather was looking good, little did we know what we would be facing on the day. Although we had confidence in the car being ready for anything the Welsh hills could put it through when we saw the weather forecast on the Friday we made the decision to go the extra mile and add extra waterproofing to the car.

Commented [mj1]:

On Saturday I woke up at 11.55am ready for the rally, everything had already been loaded up the night before and we were looking forward to it and although the weather was bad when we left Yorkshire, it got progressively better as we approached Wales. We then arrived in Mold industrial estate, for trailer parking, it was a little chilly but still no sign of rain so then we unloaded the car off the trailer and went to noise check, then went to join the line for scrutineering where the rain finally decided to catch up. We passed scrutineering so yet again the little orange pug was ready for the rally. We then travelled to Mold rugby club for signing on and then had a 2 hour wait till the drivers briefing, where we learned of a dangerous crest into a 90 right after PCH in Ceiriog Forest. After receiving the route, we then returned to the trailer parking for plotting to then find out we had **4 A4 sheets** of six figure map references, each containing around 45 six figures meaning there was about 180 plots. By 11.52 we were ready to go and set off to Worlds End for the first selective.

We joined the line at the top of Worlds End and had 10 mins to wait as the anticipation built up. Then we arrived on our minute and were ready to go, the rain began to pick up again as the Marshall counted, 5. 4. 3. 2. 1. GO! Then the engine revs as we travelled along Worlds End with no mistakes. We then continued to the second selective where the same couldn't be said, due to the extremely rough conditions through the Ceiriog Forest. Due to the downpour the roads had become rivers, and this led me to dub the event the Welsh Preston due to the wet and muddy conditions. When exiting the forest, we came to the crest we'd been warned about in driver's briefing, we did a small jump into the hidden 90 right back onto tarmac where we could then again get back up to speed. After turning in timecard 1 at TC7 we then had a clean run through the selective crossing Llantysilio Mountain. The next selective was yet again a very muddy one due to an arrowed section in a farm next to Pentrecelyn, where we even went through a barn that was completely not as mapped, full of 90s and hairpins around bails that had been ripped up and very muddied up which led to us spinning the wheels over a brow and nearly getting stuck! After leaving the farm the selective continued for around 10 more miles where we then went neutral after TC11 to petrol.

The second half began at 3.52am into a rather small selective containing a short white with a large puddle that decided to blind us with a thick layer of sludge that wouldn't come off with the wipers but luckily was taken off by a nearby puddle moments later, we then continued to the time control at the end. There was then a rather large neutral to the next selective that contained more mud as the rain continued to get worse. We then had 2 clean selective sections. However, after TC22 we had a small wobble after a blind crest where we glanced off a bit of scenery but luckily didn't cause or receive any damage. Then we continued to TC24 this would be the start of the final selective that was very short but contained a rough white section that was very bumpy but gave a great end to the Bryniau Clwyd aka the Welsh Preston! We then returned to the rugby club where we met up with our marshals, who deserve a huge thank you, as they looked like they had been swimming in the mud for the night, after being stood right next to a large puddle and getting splashed by every car that passed unable to move to due to the narrow road they were on! A big thank you should go to ALL the marshalls who had to deal with some terrible weather throughout the night! The breakfast at the end was rather enjoyable and rounded off the night to which I slept the whole way home!

We finished 24th overall, 2nd in class – the real reward though was simply finishing, as 33 failed to do so!

Corey Powell-Jones (Navigator Car 52)