

## John Robson Rally Review

Only 2 weeks have passed, and we have completed another night rally. This time we headed up north towards Northumberland, to arrive at the Hexham Auction Mart for the John Robson Rally organised by Hexham MC. Whilst we were travelling, the weather couldn't make up its mind. As when we left Darfield it was raining, on the A1 we hit a snowstorm, so were relieved when we hit the A68 and the sun came out, and any doubts about being on the right tyres for the conditions disappeared!

Arriving at the auction mart we unloaded the car from the trailer and our little Pug fired up and passed scrutineering and noise (making the 2 weeks of rushing around preparing the car after the Bryniau Clwyd Rally worth it!). Next stop was a brew and bacon roll from the café and signing on with a drivers' briefing at 7, with Jonathan Webb and his team warning of the odd dodgy spot to look out for!

At 8:32 I collected my route with 30mins to plot and another 30 to drive to TC1, the first half consisted of herringbones, tulips, spot heights and grid references, black spots, etc, - I found the first part fairly easy to plot in the time allowed, unlike the second half but more on that later.

At the start of TC1 it was an unusual sight as the clock read it was only half 9 and slowly approaching 9:32 which was our due start time (we're more used to midnight starts!!). At the start line and ready to go it was still dry and the weather showed no sign of changing, however we were wrong, as by the time we reached the second selective the rain and wind had arrived, not just rain, the heavens opened, by the time we reached the end of the first half the weather was biblical; my Gran and cousin were the Marshall's doing the clocks at the end of the final section before petrol, when we arrived my grandad had to look away when we stopped for our time as they were both looked like they'd been swimming and it wouldn't have gone down well if my gran had spotted him laughing! We would both like to say thanks though to all the Marshalls who were out and staid at their posts despite the awful conditions, to make sure the rally went ahead. Despite all this I might say this was still my favourite selective of the night due to the tight corners.

The second half was much more difficult due to the plot and bash element of it. Arriving at MTC15 nerves were high due to the route ahead being completely unknown, adding to this was a long queue of crews with later due times in front of us so after a bit of manoeuvring we were ready to go, with thoughts of a 44-minute plot and bash section ahead and not dropping road time and going OTL later; then with 5 seconds to go the second road book was launched through the window and we were off. The first part of the road book was using grid lines which meant stopping for 3 minutes while I plotted the first 10 miles then got on our way as I attempted the near impossible task of reading the route to the driver, plotting the route ahead and spotting code boards while writing in the mileage of sign posts, all while bouncing around the lanes! In this sector we gained a misfire after we passed through a ford and apologies to one of the Marshall's (Maurice Ellison) for having to leave at full revs to keep the car going. 59 minutes after starting the second half I had finished plotting the route and finally reached the end of the selective. The rest of the route was a relatively smooth section of road containing around 8 square corners, a 1-mile-long bumpy pothole filled white road that was completely straight and the final part full of tight hidden slots and confusingly close slots on the maps all done in heavy rain and gales. However, we got through with no further issues and reached the finish without damage and were rather happy with our final result of 3<sup>rd</sup> in class and 21<sup>st</sup> overall.

Corey Powell-Jones (Navigator car 32)