

LOOKOUT STAGES RALLY 10th APRIL

After Cadwell Park we were all in high spirits and I was ready to do my second stage rally, the Lookout Stages at Melbourne Airfield. I was a little apprehensive as I was going to be co-driving with a new driver, Bob Walker who was also going to be on his first stage rally – although he had had previous racing experience this was his first time doing a stage rally and to take a chance on a 16 year old novice navigating as well as nerve racking for me as I didn't want to let him down. On the Saturday morning we loaded up Harrys KA to transport it to the stage as he was also competing with a young lad called Russel Thompson in the co-driver seat. At around 1 o'clock in the afternoon we arrived and unloaded the KA and waited for Bob to arrive with his car; on his arrival we unloaded the BMW from his trailer and set up the service area next to Harry Walshaw and Mark Raynor all De Lacey members, we then travelled to noise and scrutineering which we passed and then it was back to service and final preparations for the rally.



The following morning I woke up at 6 o'clock and was ready to go for the rally, however we had to wait until 9:31 till our start time, but I was able to fit in a track walk during which I learned enough to call distances from the 'not to scale' track maps. Before SS1 we, Bob and my grandad had done our final checks and were happy with the car, helmets on and we hopped in the car and set off for SS1, nervous but confident that we would make it through the day.



After the start lights had gone out we set off and I was launched backwards into my seat by the sheer power of the car, which felt extremely different to the cars I had prior experience of rallying in, due to the 2.8l 6 cylinder engine which propelled us forward. This being Bobs first rally he slowly got faster throughout the day as he got to know the car and how it handled, we had a much better time on the second run through every stage as he started to learn the corners and braking points. Bobs background in racing has all been sprints and track racing so he says he has a bit to learn but he's still quick on the gears and late on the breaks. The first few stages we took it easy while we got to know both the car and track, however on each stage we got more and more confident, on SS3 onwards a hairpin was added off to the side on a completely gravel section this meant that we entered this

section on tarmac tyres with no grip causing us to slide completely sideways under acceleration, however due to a mixture of the quick rack and Bob's skill he was able to keep control of the car.



Throughout the day we both slowly learned what it was like to rally a RWD and both enjoyed the experience, however had we been on gravel tyres we could have been quicker through some sections, unfortunately the venue restricted us to using tarmac tyres, meaning we lost traction on the slippery bits so we couldn't get the power down. In the final stage we'd found the pace and had learned enough about the car to get the throttle down and enjoy everything it had using just as much fuel in 2 stages as we did in the first 3!



It was a brilliant day and we ended up 18th overall and 4th in our class, and I'm pleased to say that all being well Bob and I will be venturing out again in the BMW a couple of weeks on the 1st May on the Leconfield Stages.



Corey Powell-Jones (Car 41)