

CESTRIAN STAGES

IT was of little surprise that Barry Lee, driving his new Japanese registered Datsun Violet, should take overall victory on Chester Motor Club's Mike Hindle sponsored Cestrian Stages Rally, but he really had to fight for it, and it was more than a little luck on the last stage which helped him win.

Leading away the 100 entries for the stages in the Clocaenog, Drws-y-Nant and Aberhrrnant areas of North Wales was last year's winner, Ian Hughes in the Ian Harwood/Colwyn Tool Hire entered Escort RS1600, fresh from a class win on the Manx. On this occasion he was partnered by Kevin Jones. At two were George Hill/Mike Fletcher in Malcolm Byrom's Escort RS1700 — George having a break from his usual Martin's Magnum. Barry Lee was at three with John Gittins, giving the Glovers' Datsun a shakedown for the RAC, whilst the old faithful TNT242J of Frank Pierson/Arthur Brick was next up, followed by Robin Farrington/Philip Gunning in the Bornac Escort. Graham John/Gerdi Frickel followed in a 3000 Capri, with class winner Gwynn Pritchard/Miss J. Warburton next up in the Warburton Hotels Clubman S. Jim Corner was having his first competitive run through the forests in his Mexico co-driven by Tony Goulding and, despite a maximum, made it plainly clear that he has been converted to forest rallies, immediately cancelling his entry on the Bartley Rally!

The event started in Clocaenog with Robin Farrington setting the pace on the first stage, dropping 320 to Lee's 322, Pierson also on 322, Hughes on 326, Martin Watson from number 17 in a Twin-Cam on 328 and Hill on 332. Farrington took the second stage also by three seconds from lowly-seeded Wil Owen/Evan Williams at 26 in a 2-litre Escort, with Lee a further 4 seconds adrift, then Hughes, Pierson and Watson.

Stage 3 saw Farrington complete his hat-trick, this time by 3 seconds from Hill,

with Lee a further two adrift, closely followed by Pierson, Hughes and Watson. Brian Powley/P. Whitehurst ended their rally when yet another driveshaft broke on the Cooper S whilst Jeff Hignett had problems with an errant tree which halved the length of his 240Z's bonnet. Stage 4 saw Farrington beaten by five seconds from Ian Hughes, and by one second by Lee, with Pierson, Watson and Owen again on the leader board. Jim Corner collected his maximum by going off, and Paul Ellis/Charles Hughes gained a rare retirement when their Capri fell over after hitting a fire-beating post.

Stage 5 saw Lee get to grips at last, taking three seconds off both Hughes and Pierson, whilst on stage 6 it was Lee and Farrington tying, both beating Hughes by two seconds, who was on the same time as Pierson.

Stage 7 was the last one in Clocaenog and fastest time (obviously a flyer?) was credited to G. Shone/A. Pemberton at 69 in an RS2000, taking 28 seconds (!) off Lee, followed by the usual gang of Hughes, Hill, Pierson, Owen, Farrington, Pritchard and Watson. There was, in fact, virtual domination of the event by some seven or eight crews.

Stage 8 took crews out to Drws-y-Nant, a relatively new stage, which this time started with the long uphill climb to the hairpin left.

Baines/Moore had the bonnet fly open which obstructed vision somewhat, and Lee's Datsun had full power advantage up the climb, taking fastest for the stage from Owen, with Farrington, Hill, Pierson and Hughes completing the leader board. Martin Watson disappeared from the running, whilst Lee had finally taken the overall lead, starting the ninth and last stage just one second ahead of Farrington.

Stage 9 saw Aberhrrnant being used for the last time prior to various road improvements and the bridging of the infamous ford, which this time caught out no-one. However, many crews suffered from punctures including Farrington who lost 19 seconds to Lee and so lost all chance of victory, although it was George Hill who finally took fastest on the stage, with Pierson, Hughes, Farrington and Owen



Action on Olivers Mount for Steve Ward, on his way to winning the Wolds Stages Rally.

next on the leader board.

The event qualified for the Welsh Stage Rally championship which is being led by Frank Pierson/Arthur Brick, whilst for Lee it proved a very useful and successful shakedown for the bigger events. The Cestrian was enjoyed by all and showed up some outstanding performances from some smaller cars, with Gwynn Pritchard pedalling the 1293S to eighth overall and the Smalleys also gaining a top ten place in a car of less than 1000 c.c., both these crews beating the 1300-1600 class winner!

DAVE THOMAS

1. B. Lee/J. Gittins (Datsun Violet)	2433
2. R. Farrington/P. Gunning (Escort RS)	2453
3. F. Pierson/A. Brick (Escort RS)	2461
4. I. Hughes/K. Jones (Escort RS)	2474
5. W. Owen/E. Williams (Escort RS)	2515
6. G. Hill/M. Fletcher (Escort RS)	2518
7. T. Phelps/A. Phillips (Opel Kadett)	2628
8. G. Pritchard/Miss J. Warburton (Clubman S)	2632
9. V. Smalley/R. Smalley (Mini 1000)	2649
10. G. Edwards/J. Savage (Escort RS)	2651
Class A (Up to 1000 cc):	
1. V. Smalley/R. Smalley (Mini 1000)	2649
2. I. Oakley/R. Cottrill (Imp)	2697
3. C. Jones/R. Jones (Imp)	2854
4. R. Ceen/R. Williams (Imp)	2930
Class B (1001 - 1300 cc):	
1. G. Pritchard/Miss J. Warburton (Clubman S)	2632
2. P. Shaw/	2692
3. P. Taylor/J. Lewis (Clubman S)	2735
4. K. Wilson/L. Grimley (Cooper S)	2839
Class C (1301 - 1600 cc):	
1. T. Hart/P. Messer (Escort)	2669
2. C. Brookes/C. Bain (Escort)	2868
3. B. McGhie/J. Lowthion (Avenger 1500)	2873
4. N. Sharpe/P. Sharpe (Escort Mexico)	2888

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