

## **Sutton & Cheam Motor Club.** **Longmoor Loco Stages**

**Monday January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006**

This year's championship got off to a very early start with the recent Longmoor Loco Stages. This was to be one of the furthest trips for contenders in this year's championship and as a result only saw 6 crews made the trip to Hampshire. This year's event was again only open to drivers of 2 wheel drive, non turbo charged cars, but a strong entry of nearly 60 crews lined up for the start. The event used the very testing tarmac roads of the Ministry of Defence training camp at Longmoor providing 8 very fast but tricky stages. The conditions were good but a few damp and slippery patches in the stages were to catch out many crews. As usual Sutton & Cheam organized a very good event that ran smoothly with all 8 stages running without major dramas.

Seeded at Number 1 Andy Corner/James Greenwood had a bit of a fraught day. Andy's driving of his little Peugeot 205 was inspired as he held second place for much of the rally. But two gearbox changes and a broken drive shaft was to cost them time late in the rally and they eventually finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall.

At the other end of the field was the West Suffolk Motor Club crew of David Holmes & Mark Ellis. This was to be their first ever rally. At service before stage 1 both David and Mark were looking nervous. But 15 minutes later when they returned to service after the first stage the look on David's face was totally different. He said "I just didn't want that stage to end. Fantastic!" A small misfire in the last couple of stages and a damaged wheel on stage 4 cost some time but from an original start number of 59, they finished 28<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> in class. This excellent result has put the crew in second overall position in the 2006 BK Competition Tyres & Ward Construction AEMC Stage Rally Championship. Now that's what you call a DEBUT!

Peter Jefferies brought his unique space framed rear wheel drive Peugeot 205 home in 10<sup>th</sup> overall after a trouble free day learning about his new car. Some brake balance problems cost him some time during the day, but at the finish he was very happy with his days work.

For Essex based Ian Barnard & Simon Higgs the day was to be more of a test as Ian had made several major changes to his car over the closed season including a new engine. They had a good steady run getting used to allot more power in some very tricky condition to eventually finish 14<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> in class.

For other championship crews it was to prove to be a fraught day. Seeded at car 3, Les Skeet was to have a very short event. Les had finished rebuilding his rear wheel drive Peugeot 205 over the Christmas holidays but on the short run to stage 1, the cars ignition failed and that was the end of their rally. Les now has the dubious honor of being the first person to retire from a rally in 2006.

Richard and Irene Lewsey made a steady start to the event in their Escort Mk2 but were to fall fowl of the slippery conditions. Sliding wide on a corner on stage 1 they caught a rather solid piece of scenery and broke a front steering arm. They made it back to service but were out of time. However the car was repaired and they rejoined the rally to finish the last few stages.

### **Final Results - Top 3**

- 1<sup>st</sup> O/A Michael Holland/Dan Palmer – Ford Escort RS1600.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> O/A Geoff Bennett/Mike Stewart – Ford Escort Mk2.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> O/A Andy corner/James Greenwood – Peugeot 205.

### **Other Championship Results:**

- 10<sup>th</sup> O/A & 3<sup>rd</sup> in class B - Peter Jefferies/Beverley Walters – Peugeot 205 RWD
- 14<sup>th</sup> O/A & 4<sup>th</sup> in class 4<sup>th</sup> C – Ian Barnard/Simon Higgs – Ford Escort RS Mk2
- 28<sup>th</sup> O/A & 4<sup>th</sup> in class A – David Holmes/Mark Ellis – Vauxhall Nova.