

Cambrian Rally  
Robert Kennedy/ Steve Coombes  
Nissan Micra RF1.0 – Retired SS3



The Cambrian was the final round for the championships we were contesting and with a mathematical possibility of 2<sup>nd</sup> overall for me and Robert with the chance of 3<sup>rd</sup> we were determined to put our season of learning into practice. As the car had some new tyres, front struts (one had cracked on the previous round) and with some more power, especially in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear, we were hopeful of a good run.

The event started on the prom at Llandudno before an 80 minute drive to SS1. There was relaxed feel about it, with TV interviews, crews talking to each other and of course Bob doing his usual start line interview with the drivers.

SS1 – Clocaenog Main – We were soon into the action and blasting through the slippery North Wales forest. As we'd not been out since the Nicky Grist Rally in July we were a bit 'rusty' and this was reflected in our time. The work done on the car however had made a difference as it felt great.

SS2 – Clocaenog East – Stage 2 started at full pelt and we were back in the 'groove'. The stage had some very long straights, but was again very slippery with a good covering of mud in places. Things were going well and we must surely have been pulling back some of the lost time when disaster struck. 500 SmC 300 Turn SqrR was the notes. As we threw the car in to the SqrR it spluttered into limp mode. Eventually it cut out, but as we re-started it, it purred into life and we were off again. The results at service did not read well as we were almost a minute down on the class leaders.

SS3 – Penmachno North – The first 2 miles was all up hill and we were going for it. Then the stage levelled out and was very fast. 5 lefts, 6 rights. Flat crests and long straights. As we came over one of the flat crests we got out of shape. A bit of a 'Tank Slapper', which ended up with us driving along a ditch for a while. Robert kept his foot in and drove it out. Next bend negotiated ok. We'd got away with it. Not quite!

Suddenly the car started pulling to the right under breaking. "Keep going" I said. "Drive it as best you can and lets get out of the stage". A series of left right lefts saw us slide spectacularly into an adjoining road. We carried on and then came the call of "no brakes" as we headed towards a downhill 2 left. Another spectacular spin saw us stuck in the soft mud on the inside of the corner. Thankfully the spectators dragged us out and we limped to the end of the stage. A quick look under the car saw brake fluid leaking and with no emergency service until after SS4 we had to call it a day. Unknown to ourselves we had also broke the bottom arm which eventually gave way on the drive to Penmachno Village.

Thanks to everyone for their support, not just in organising the Cambrian Rally, but for the entire season. Roberts parents have transported us around the country, developed the car and learnt a lot about competing in a championship. Thanks also to Ian Arden for his advice on the events. All valuable and a big learning curve for the Kennedy's.

Until next year enjoy your sport

Steve (Gemini 5)  
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