

Northwest Stages

Peter Jackson - Steve Coombes

Car 28 - 11th O/A

I think the first thing to do is to say well done to everyone in getting the car ready. (In no particular order) Peter, Neil, Kevin, Steve and Andy put in a huge effort in the few weeks leading up to the event to get the car ready after Peters '*minor off*' whilst testing.

The plan for Friday night was to make sure we started Saturday morning. Two steady runs along the prom no probs. Weeton 1 no problems and a good time set in the dark. Weeton 2 was not so good. The car previous to us had managed to somehow go off along a straight, dumping a load of oil in the braking area. We hit it full pelt and then hit the barrels. No lights for the rest of the stage but we made it.

15th Was our starting position Saturday morning. The prom may seem like a Mickey Mouse stage to some, but it is great to go flat out along it. 2 Steady runs saw us move up the leader board towards the top 10. Hillhouse is a great stage but it wasn't kind to us. A spin on the first run and another collision with a barrel on the second run saw us lose best part of a minute. Neil and Kevin did an excellent job in repairing the steering on the road section between stages. Two clean runs at Weeton saw us set competitive times and it was off to service. An unusual error from me saw us needlessly drop 5 minutes at the service arrival control. Luckily it was penalty free, but I misread an amendment at the start and altered a road section time from 25 to 30 minutes. I must admit I can't remember the last time I made an error like that and I hope its a long time before I make another one.

Car checked and repaired and into Pontins. I expected it to be fast and furious and it was. A good run through Pontins 1 apart from a spin on some mud at a 90L. Pontins 2 made up for our earlier indiscretion as a top 5 time was set. Off to Hillhouse again and yet another bad stage after another competitor hit us at the hairpin left near the start. We weren't to blame but it was more time dropped. Hillhouse 4 saw us have a clean run at last and showed what we could have done by setting a top 10 time. Weeton was again good with top 10 stage times then it was off to Clifton. Only done this stage once before so I was unsure what to expect. Apart from the huge sideways moment in the mud approaching the finish line both stages went well. The map for Lytham Hall is useless so it was minimal info that I could give. Just sit back and enjoy the ride, so I did. Our tyre choice may not have helped us but we made it back to service.

Excellent work by the service crew and into Pontins again. Driver and Navigator in full flow and 3rd and 2nd fastest times set. Awesome. Clifton again flowed. Despite catching some of the later runners on our second run they moved out the way quickly and good times were set. The only challenge left was Lytham Hall and two steady runs through saw us reach a moral boosting finish for everyone concerned.

An excellent result in 11th O/A and great to reach the finish when you consider our off's, moments and problems of the two days. Neil and Kevin worked very hard in the chase car and they did a brilliant job keeping us going. The car looks like its been in a battle rather than a rally but it will be ready for its next adventure.

Until next time.....