

# Team Tulachard

## SNOWMAN RALLY

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**Driver: Calum MacKenzie**

**Co-Driver: Martin Forrest**

Sponsors:



**GRAHAM HIRE**

It was a very busy week for the crew on the build up to the Snowman rally getting the car ready, but by Friday morning the car was on the trailer, and everyone was set for an exciting weekend of rallying. For the Snowman this year, Calum teamed up with the 2006 3<sup>rd</sup> Overall Scottish Champion Co-driver, Martin Forrest.

Scrutineering and documentation went smoothly on Friday night, and having been informed at a driver's briefing that all the heavy frost and snow from the previous weekend had cleared, the crew were looking forward to a fast and exciting day.

Saturday morning brought a very sunny and dry day, with a nice cold air to wake everyone up for the first eight mile stage in Millbuie forest in the Black Isle. This was a fast stage, with a number of chicanes put in to slow the cars down on the very high speed sections. The stage went well, but was very slippery towards the end. The crew got through without incident; however on some of the 5<sup>th</sup> gear straights they were hearing a very loud vibrating noise. The crew were concerned that the noise was perhaps a propshaft or tyre problem, but it turned out to be the new underbody guards vibrating against the underside of the car!

The crew set an 11<sup>th</sup> fastest time in stage 1, and were fastest 2WD. They finished the stage only 2 seconds behind Inverness man Jimmy Christie, and were 3 seconds faster than David Hughes with his recently acquired World Rally specification Mitsubishi Lancer. In this stage Martin was concerned that the Escort hardly ever seemed to be pointing in a straight line, and gateposts seemed to be getting very close! Calum's response to this was; "*Welcome to RWD!*"

During the first Service at the Inverness Caledonian Thistle Stadium, Calum reported that the gearbox was not crossing the neutral gates nicely and was a bit sticky selecting some of the gears. Calum said;

*“We had a look at the rose joint in the lever, and a pin underneath the gearlever but it seemed to be inside the box itself causing the problem, so we just had to glory on and hope it wouldn’t get any worse.”*

Stage two, was a new 7.5 mile stage just off the A9 at Daviot. This stage went well for the crew but they lost out a little to the 4WD’s in the high speed sections. They finished the stage 14th Overall. Things were getting very close between Calum and his closest competitors, with there only being ten seconds separating 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> fastest in this stage. Calum was lying 10<sup>th</sup> Overall at this point, 9 seconds behind the Mitsubishi Evo IX of Forfar farmer, Malloch Nicoll.

At the second service new tyres were fitted, and as the gearbox didn’t seem to be getting any worse, the crew headed off to the next stage beside Loch Ness. They even had time to look and see if they could spot Nessie on their way!

Stage 3, Corrimony was 4.3 miles, and was located down towards the Great Glen at Drumnadrochit. This stage was more flowing than the previous two, and suited the Escort well. The crew were a credible 6<sup>th</sup> fastest in here moving them up to 8<sup>th</sup> place in the overall standings. Calum commented;

*“We really enjoyed that stage. The flowing nature of it really suited the Escort. It was just a pity it wasn’t a bit longer!”*

Stage 4 was to be the longest of the day at 14.5 miles. This stage had many different surface conditions, and it was very twisty in sections. For these reasons, the crew were expecting to lose a bit of time to the 4WD’s.

The time loss was kept to a minimum, however the crew, along with others reported a few minor half spins in this stage. This resulted in a stage time 10<sup>th</sup> equal fastest, but it left them tied with Mike Faulkner in his Mitsubishi Evo VI for 8<sup>th</sup> Overall.

Stage 5, Glen Urquhart returned to use 3 miles of stage 3, but had an added loop to bring it up to 8.3 miles. At the start of the stage Calum said;

*“We are looking forward to this one. We are tied for 8<sup>th</sup> place overall, 7<sup>th</sup> is 10 seconds ahead, and 9<sup>th</sup> is 8 seconds behind, so we’re going to have to try hard to secure our position or improve it. There are a series of hairpins in this stage, some of which are uphill so I think we’ll loose a bit of time to the 4WD’s. We’ll just have to make up for it on the rest of the stage’s flowing sections!! Tulachard!!!!”*

This stage went well with some very committed driving from Calum, which awarded them with 6<sup>th</sup> equal fastest time but more importantly they managed to seal 7<sup>th</sup> place overall by only 2 seconds! They also succeeded in finishing top 2WD and first in their class.

The team were delighted with their result and with the technology of 4WD cars improving a top ten result is getting harder to achieve with a classic Mark II Escort.

Co-driver Martin Forrest who normally competes in a world rally car gave his comments at the end of the day;

*“It was good to see and feel the differences between 2WD and 4WD and the commitment that’s required from a 2WD to get good times. When you are travelling in the Escort, you feel the corners more, and you’re always setting up the car for the next one. The straights tend to be a lot shorter too, as you’re not in a straight line for much of them! I have to say, I certainly enjoyed the rally, and I had a smile on my face all day.”*

The team would like to thank their service crew, Keith, Andy, and Andrew for keeping the car running smoothly all day, and also to Martin for his expert co-driving skills.

A big thank you to all of the team’s sponsors for their ongoing assistance, who without, the rally would not have been possible: Nicolson Maps [www.nicolsonmaps.com](http://www.nicolsonmaps.com) , SBS Logistics [www.sbsl.com](http://www.sbsl.com) , Graham Hire, and Ross’s Garage.

Many thanks also to the organisers of the Snowman Rally, as well as all the marshals in the stages. Together they ran a fantastic rally.

Results from the Snowman Rally can be found at [www.flyingfinish.co.uk](http://www.flyingfinish.co.uk) , and for more Scottish Rally Championship information, including a press report on the Snowman Rally, see [www.scottishrallychampionship.co.uk](http://www.scottishrallychampionship.co.uk)

The team’s next event will be the Granite City Rally, in Aberdeen on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April. For more information on this event please see [www.admc.org.uk/granite.htm](http://www.admc.org.uk/granite.htm)