

# Team Tulachard

In association with:



**GRAHAM HIRE**

## GRANITE CITY RALLY Aberdeen

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2007



[www.ecossepix.co.uk](http://www.ecossepix.co.uk)

Driver: Calum MacKenzie

Co-Driver: Alan Clark

Calum had a very busy week on the build up to the Granite after having the gearbox rebuilt; he replaced the standard steering rack with a heavy duty version, along with replacing the clutch. By Thursday however, all the work was done and the car was ready. The car on Thursday afternoon even ventured into town to park at the Escape premises in Carden Place, Aberdeen to help promote their new partnership with team Tulachard.

Scrutineering and documentation went smoothly on Friday night, however Calum was having a dilemma trying to decide which tyres to use for the event, as with the weather during the week being so dry and warm, he was concerned that the medium compound Dunlop tyre he had previously been using would not be suitable in the hotter temperatures. After discussions with the tyre supplier, it was decided to stick with the medium compound.

Saturday morning brought a very frosty start for the crew in Sauchen, having to defrost the rally car and van windows. This pleased Calum very much, as it meant that it would keep the ground temperatures cold for the day helping make the tyres work better. He had to settle for frost, after failing to bring on rain after a week of rain dances, but as his father in law quipped;

*"If you've ever seen Calum dance, you'll understand why it didn't rain!"*

The first two stages were tarmac, based in the grounds of the Aberdeen and Exhibition Centre where car tyres were laid out to form the route, along with some tonne bags of concrete mix at each of the corners. The crew's first stage went well with a 7<sup>th</sup> equal fastest time overall. During the second stage however they clipped one of the concrete bags resulting in them bending the driver's side steering arm. After a short service on the Beach Boulevard the service boys did a fantastic job changing the car from tarmac tyres to gravel, along with changing the damaged steering arm and resetting the wheel alignment, all in 15 minutes.

The first of the real action stages took the team to Durriss forest for a 9 mile stage, where Calum's concerns over tyres were confirmed, with the Escort struggling for traction. By the end of the stage the tyres had been completely destroyed. After the first three stages the team were lying 10<sup>th</sup> overall, only two seconds behind Gordon Cunningham in his Mitsubishi Evo IX, with the nearest 2WD competitor Willie Bonniwell in 17<sup>th</sup> position.

With a service at Mackie Academy the crew were able to fuel up, however they were unable to change to a different compound of tyre as there was no space for the tyre vans. This meant that they would have to stick to the medium compound for the next two stages.

Stage four took the crew to Fetteresso for a fast and flowing 7.5 mile stage. Due to a lack of traction along with a very marbly surface in the stage, the crew half spun twice, dropping around 8-10 seconds. They finished the stage 10<sup>th</sup> fastest overall. Leading the rally at this

point was Andy Horne in his Metro 6R4 with young David Bogie only 8 seconds behind him in a Mitsubishi Evo IX.

After a short service within the forest the team headed to Glenfarquhar for an 8.6 mile stage, which was very fast and flowing. They dropped a little more to the 4WD cars in this stage resulting in an 11<sup>th</sup> fastest overall time.

Calum commented after stage five;

*"We are struggling today, as although the stages are dry and hard, there is a slippery surface meaning that we are struggling to get the power down. Also with the increased temperatures the tyres are overheating, and the blocks are moving about too much. This is making the car very unstable, and extremely unpredictable in the fast corners."*

Heading south to Edzell the crew had their longest service of the day, meaning they could change to a different compound of tyre to see if it would help with the ground conditions. However, they opted to use the best of their part worn tyres for the next shorter stage in Drumtochty. Calum explains why;

*"Having used six rears already today, I have two more with a different compound which I would rather keep for the last nine mile stage. To tell you the truth, if I were to the job properly I would need two new fronts, and four new rears for these last two stages. But unfortunately the piggy bank is already empty!"*

In Stage 6 (Drumtochty) the stage went well, however the crew felt that they lost some time to the 4WD cars in the very tight and twisty sections of the stage. At this point in the rally Calum had dropped to 12<sup>th</sup> overall, with John Morrison moving ahead with only 5 seconds separating them. Kevin Ross was lying a further 2 seconds ahead of Morrison.

The last stage of the day took the team back to Fetteresso for the longest stage of the day at just over nine miles. With a different compound of tyre on the car, the team were delighted with the improvement in traction they gained. They thoroughly enjoyed this stage as the car was handling well and it ended up being their most competitive of the gravel stages with them achieving a 9<sup>th</sup> fastest stage time, only 5 seconds off fourth. It's just a pity they didn't have these tyres on for the whole day, which would have helped them in their battle to mix it with the Group N cars.

Calum and co-driver Alan thoroughly enjoyed their day, and learned a great deal. They felt they achieved a good result in the dated Escort at 12<sup>th</sup> overall (7 seconds off 10<sup>th</sup>), whilst winning their class, and finishing top 2WD. Alan's highlight of the day was the last stage, and his comment after it probably says it all;

*"That last 9 miles was proof of why rallying is the best sport on the planet!"*

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) , Escape Business Technologies [www.escape-tech.co.uk](http://www.escape-tech.co.uk) , and Graham Hire.

Also a big thank you to: Andy Tong, Keith Robathan and Callum Hardie for their mechanic assistance on the day, and for the use of his tarmac wheels and tyres, thank you also to Murdo Morrison.

It goes without saying that the unsung heroes of rallying are the marshals, organisers, doctors and rescue crews who without we wouldn't be rallying.

Results from the Granite City 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 Granite City Rally, please visit the SRC website [www.scottishrallychampionship.co.uk](http://www.scottishrallychampionship.co.uk)

The team's next Scottish event will be the Speyside Stages in Elgin on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August. For more information on this event please visit their website at [www.speyside-stages.co.uk](http://www.speyside-stages.co.uk)

For further information, or to contact the team please visit their website at [www.teamtulachard.co.uk](http://www.teamtulachard.co.uk)