

Team Tulachard

HEATHER ON A HIGH AT CRAIL!

THE KINGDOM STAGES RALLY

Crail

Saturday 3rd November 2007



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Driver: Heather MacKenzie

Co-Driver: Steven Clark

Heather MacKenzie from Sauchen, made a very successful switch from the co-driver to driver's seat in last Saturday's Kingdom Stages Rally at Crail, near St Andrews. Having competed for the last eleven years in the co-driver's seat, Heather has always had the itch to start driving, and she was really looking forward to the new challenge.

For her first rally in her Peugeot 106 GTI Cup Car, Heather teamed up with 2006 Scottish co-driver champion and experienced 106 driver; Steven Clark, to contest the final round of the Hytorc Scottish Tarmac Championship.

The event was fully subscribed with 100 entries, in addition to a number of reserves waiting for an opportunity to run. As this was a first time event for Heather she was seeded towards the end of the field at car number 89. However, she was soon to change that!

Heather commented on how much she was looking forward to her big day;

"I'm very excited. I've wanted to drive for a long time, and I'm delighted to have bought a great wee car, and I can't wait to go out and have a blast. I'm going to have a lot to learn with it being my first event, but I've got Steven sitting beside me to keep me right. He's a very experienced driver, so I'm sure he'll soon be telling me if I need to go faster!!"

The event consisted of 46 competitive miles over 6 stages at the World War II Crail airfield. Each stage used three laps of the airfield perimeter roads, with cars starting at 30 second intervals.

Heather started the first stage with her stomach in knots. However she settled herself into driving very well, and was soon getting the hang of her 106. She was also listening to every word her co-driver Steven was telling her, including taking the bale chicanes flat, which resulted in her losing one of her wing mirrors!! You certainly couldn't accuse her of not trying! They finished the stage 62nd fastest, which was a great start.

The second stage was a repeat of the first. However, it didn't go so well for Heather and Steven, with cars holding them up in the stage. The second wing mirror also fell foul of the bale chicanes!! Heather explains what happened;

"We caught two cars in this stage, which were stuck behind a slower car in a narrow section. It probably took us almost half a lap before we could get past, so we were only able to equal our first stage time."

After the first two stages the pair were in 62nd overall position, and Heather was just beaming.

The road layout was altered for the next two stages, and Heather thought these stages were brilliant. She was really getting to grips with the car, and was getting faster by the mile. They

were 52nd fastest in the first of these stages, and were delighted to improve their time by 15 seconds on the repeat in stage four.

The penultimate stages five and six saw the route reversed, which added a new element to the challenge. Heather was just getting the hang of the route for the first four stages before it was all change for the final two. Steven joked; "It also meant I had to start reading the route again, instead of being able to enjoy the scenery!"

The fifth stage went well, and Heather and Steven finished the stage with a 48th equal fastest time. They then headed out for a good fast run in the final stage, hoping for an improvement on their fifth stage time. They did just that, improving their time by 19 seconds, in addition to having a wee two wheel moment! Heather explains;

"We clipped a large lorry tyre on the inside of a chicane, throwing the car onto two wheels. We very lucky it didn't go over, but we were soon back onto four wheels, and off again!"

After an eventful final stage, Heather and Steven moved up to 41st overall. An excellent result for Heather's first event in the driver's seat!

Steven commented on what he thought of Heather's driving on the day;

"Heather drove extremely well and was pushing very hard by the end of the day. She has natural driving ability and that meant that she could concentrate on learning the stages and the handling of the car."

A delighted Heather left Crail with a huge grin on her face, and a real hunger to get back out in the car again. "I had a great day, and I am definitely hooked! It was brilliant fun. I can't wait to get back out and have another go!!"

The crew would like to thank everyone who came to help; Callum Hardie and Heather's brother Mark for servicing, as well as all the rest of Heather's family who came to offer their support on her first event.

Funds permitting, Heather hopes to contest the Scottish Tarmac Championship next year, and her first event should be a return to Crail on Saturday 22nd March 2007.

For more information, please contact Heather on the details below, and for the results from the event, please visit www.gmsc.org.uk

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