



2015 Tour of Cheshire winners Matt Warren and Guy Woodcock. Photo: Tony North

Tour of Cheshire

7 March

Temperature rises on the Cheshire...

After a period of very mixed weather the sun was out, and temperatures went well into double figures, for the Knutsford & District Motor Club's Tour of Cheshire - round one of this year's HRCR Clubmans Road Rally Championship, writes *Mike Harrison*.

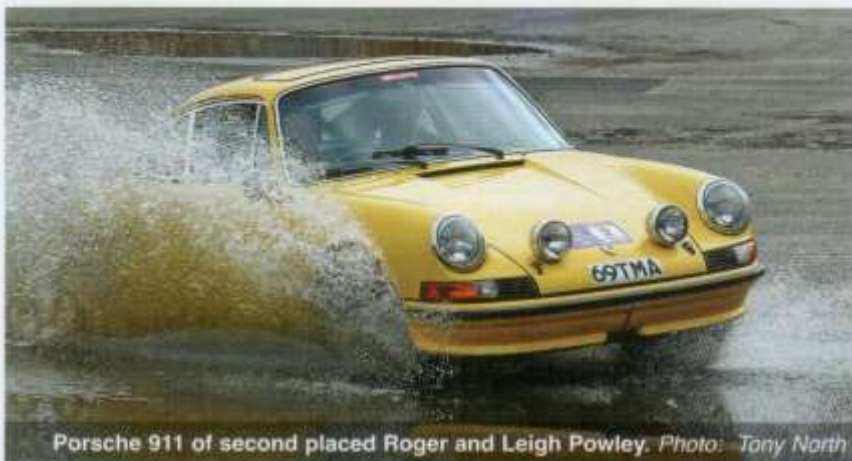
Once again as soon as the event opened for entries the organisers were flooded with applications taking 57 of the 75 places on the first day. The oversubscription was such that I applied to the MSA to increase the number of permitted crews to 85. With the event full before the HRCR Open Day my team and I wondered at times why we'd attended the Gaydon event... perhaps we should have been taking entries for the 2016 event!

Competitors were flagged off from rally HQ, The Bickerton Poacher, by members of Ecurie Cod Fillet who once again were out in large numbers to support the event. A short transport section took the crews to their first visit to Beeston for an early morning blast around the cattle market.

A new test scoring system was being trialled by the event for the HRCR this year where the crews were grouped into similar vehicle types to avoid the overall event result going solely to the fastest car on the tests and to ensure there was a greater emphasis on the regularity results.

The Beeston test was followed by a regularity section around Beeston Castle area and on towards the Delamere tarmac site for an off-road regularity around and through the buildings on the old tile works where the organisers provided a 60-tulip instruction booklet to help (?) the crews cover the 2.1-mile route. This was followed by a test on tarmac and gravel and included an interesting 180 degree turn which had to be negotiated whilst driving through an area which was nicely flooded.

After a brief coffee stop the event headed south by way of two regularity sections to reach Shrewsbury Auction Mart in time to complete two tests on the open concrete aprons around the Mart before the ▶



Porsche 911 of second placed Roger and Leigh Powley. Photo: Tony North



Above: Lovely Porsche 356 of Charles Colton and Paul Bosdet finished 24th.
 Right: Simon Harris and Matt Fowle brought their GTi home in sixth place.
 Photos: Tony North. Below: Ryan Pickering/Claire Woodcock's Porsche 911
 finished eighth. Photo: Tony Large



lunch halt, a time to enjoy lunch discuss the morning's performance with the other crews and watch some of the field 'at speed' on the two pre-lunch tests.

After lunch, in

afternoon sunshine the event ventured deeper into Shropshire, returning to Shrewsbury for two further tests before returning north to Cheshire by way of a series of road regularity sections. The day's competition was concluded with two tests around Beeston cattle market including the favourite Beeston long test - an opportunity for the final blast on the day.

The competitors were greeted back to rally HQ and each crew member was presented with the customary gift of a Cheshire Cheese before supper and the prize giving.

This year's winning honours went to the Ford Escort of Matt Warren/Guy Woodcock who had a decisive margin over the second place crew of Roger and Leigh Powley in their Porsche 911. The top three

were rounded off by the Triumph 2.5PI of Jonathan Hancox/Richard Lambley.

KDMC members Dave and Jenny Aincham were overjoyed to finish the event this year following their Mini's gearbox failure on the way from home to the start of last year's event. Unfortunately, KDMC navigator Shon Gosling was not so fortunate and failed to finish the event after again being caught out for the second year running by car troubles. Another KDMC navigator who has regularly failed to finish due to car issues rather than navigational errors is Steve Skepper, fortunately not this year as Steve finished in 40th place.

The organising team would like to thank members of KDMC and other local motor clubs together with the regular band of helpers including members of Ecurie Cod Fillet who all did 'their bit' during the Tour of Cheshire to make it happen. Grateful thanks to competitors, marshals and organisers for supporting the North West Air Ambulance through the donations they made, with the event raising about £750.

I've put the ToC 'banner' away for another year, but my thoughts for 2016 have already started - see you on 4 March 2016, if not before.

1 Matt Warren/Guy Woodcock (Ford Escort) 47 2 Roger Powley/Leigh Powley (Porsche 911) 74 3 Jonathan Hancox/Richard Lambley (Triumph 2.5PI) 96 4 Peter Welch/Richard Bestwick (Triumph Dolomite) 99 5 Steve Entwistle/Andy Pullian (Mini) 100 6 John Dignan/Peter Dignan (MGB Roadster) 143 7 Ryan Pickering/Claire Woodcock (Porsche 911) 145 8 John Ruddock/Roger Burkill (Ford Escort) 151 9 David Ruddock/Lee McGuffog (Vauxhall Viva) 155 10 Paul Davis/Roger Bricknell (Ford Escort) 171