



# Reay Wins On Home Event!

The 2009 Snowman Rally certainly lived up to its name as the forests around Inverness were covered in 'the white stuff' making for some truly treacherous driving conditions.

With the rally being run at the same time as Rally Norway these were, inevitably, many comparisons made between the two events. Without doubt though, the biggest difference was in tyre availability. In Norway the World Rally Championship contenders could choose studded tyres but in Scotland, as in the rest of Britain, such tyres aren't an option. As a consequence running order on the road, rather than tyre choice, would play the major part in the final outcome.

It came as no surprise then that the fastest car through the 7.5 mile SS1 McCall Mor was seeded in the thirties. What was a surprise however, was that it was a Ford Fiesta ST that outpaced a whole range

of cars that benefitted, in theory at least, from four wheel traction. Alick Kerr and Drew Starrock had borrowed some old snow tyres and coupled with their 37th seeding it had all gone rather well. They emerged from the test as rally leaders 16 seconds ahead of John Morrison and Martin Forrest who's second placed Mitsubishi Lancer Evo9 was shod with gravel tyres. Third fastest, albeit a further 11 seconds slower, were David Bogie and Kevin Rae who were running snow tyres on their Evo9. They were three seconds up on 51 seeds Neil Coalter and Hannah Crawford who were debuting a Fiesta ST equipped with gravel tyres. Jack Armstrong and Kirsty Riddick had been first to tackle the

stage in their hired Subaru Impreza. They too had borrowed snow tyres but Armstrong found the car's settings to be too hard and struggled through in 19th place. Mike Faulkner and Peter Foy fared a little better completing the test in 14th spot despite losing time when they under steered into a snow bank. A similar incident left Euan Thorburn and Clare Mole's Impreza in 24th place. It was worse though for top seeds Jimmy Girvan and Mike Ramay who buried their Subaru Impreza in a snow bank. Fortunately they had a shovel, but almost 25 minutes were lost digging out the car and with that went all hope of a good result. For the second stage the rally headed to the Black Isle for the

nine mile Millbuie stage where Reay MacKay and Robert MacDonald set fastest time on the icy surface in their MG Metro 6R4. They passed three cars in stage in the process and it catapulted them from 30th to fourth place at a stroke, however the crew were counting themselves lucky just to have started the test. Heading north on the road section the wipers began to slow before the car ground to a halt. A quick check showed the alternator belt had jumped off but fortunately they carry a spare which was quickly fitted to send them on their way again.

Kerr was unable to repeat his stage one feat and slipped to 11th. Armstrong, who caught and passed both Thorburn and the Evo9 of Barry Groundwater and Jude Wylie in the test, now topped the standings. Still running the same snow tyres, the Impreza's handling had been transformed by switching to the softest suspension settings. The Impreza of Willie Bonniwell and Neil Fwing was second place at this point whilst Bogie, who having switched to gravel tyres wished he hadn't, retained third place.

Following service at the Black Isle crews faced the 13 miles of Turrachilly, close to the Rogie Falls. MacKay was again quickest, moving him into pole position ahead of Armstrong, as Steven Campbell and Graham Law now edged their Evo5 into the final podium place. Kerr improved his standing to fourth whilst Donnie MacDonald and Paul Beaton regained the fifth place they had held after SS1, in their Evo9. Morrison got away with planting a "Glasgow Kiss" on a log pile but Girvan was out

of luck again as gearbox problems finished his rally. Andy Horne's good run also ended here, as he and Jim Howie went no further after putting their DAM 4100 in a ditch. The stage also claimed the Escort Mk2 of Frank Kelly and Liam Brennan together with the Evo4 of Ivor and Tom Clark, both as accident victims.

With SS5 cancelled on safety grounds SS4 Corrimony became the final stage of the rally and third fastest stage time, equalled by Bogie, was enough to give MacKay his first



2009, Steven Campbell & Graham Law

forest win. Quickest time was set by Campbell enabling him make it a 'local' 1 - 2 as he overhauled Armstrong who slipped to third. Bogie gained four places to finish fourth whilst a last stage charge by Rory Young and Allan Cathers moved the Evo5 crew to fifth, up eight places from 13th at the stage start. Their only problems during the day had come from catching slower cars in SS1 and being bombarded by snowballs thrown by spectators!

Bonniwell ended the day sixth whilst Morrison took seventh ahead of MacDonald on the tie-break rule, but only after both Evo9 pilots survived last stage moments.

Morrison suffered a 180 degree spin whereby he was forced to back track to find somewhere safe to turn the car whilst MacDonald's excursion into a ditch resulted in him having to complete the stage with defective brakes.

Having recovered from landing on a SS1 snow bank, then losing time catching slower cars in SS2 & 3 and finally stalling in SS4, Shaun Sinclair and Chris Hammill brought their Evo6 home in ninth place. Malloch Nicholl and Robert Lumgair completed the top ten in their Evo9 after Kerr broke a driveshaft and missed out on a deserved top ten finish, ending the day in 11th place.

Having survived an excursion in SS3 David Hughes and Bruce Harper steered their Evo9 home 12th followed by the Escort Cosworth of Gordon Smith and Peter Carstairs. Having completed the final mile of the rally with a puncture Faulkner finished

14th with the Evo9 of Peter Gilbert and David Anderson just ten seconds behind. Thorburn ended the day 16th having set fifth fastest time through the final test after sacrificing his maximum lateness time in order to run late on the road. Jimmy Christie and David MacFadyen survived a last stage coming together with a snow bank to finish 17th in their Evo9.

At the finish MacKay expressed his delight saying "To win our home event makes it all the more special. The last eight mile stage was the longest stage of our lives but we made it and the smile on my face is going to take a while to go away."

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- REAY



## RESULTS

1. REAY MACKAY ROBERT MACDONALD MG METRO 6R4 ..... 55:15
2. STEVEN CAMPBELL GRAHAM LAW MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 56:15
3. JIMMY GILBERT DAVID ANDERSON SUBARU IMPREZA 2.0L ..... 56:25
4. DAVID HUGHES BRUCE HARPER ESCORT COSWORTH ..... 57:24
5. RORY YOUNG ALLAN CATHERS MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 57:25
6. WILLIAM EDWARDS NEIL EWING SUBARU IMPREZA ..... 58:05
7. JOHN MORRISON MARTIN FORREST MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 58:11
8. DAVID THORBURN CLARE MOLE SUBARU IMPREZA ..... 58:17
9. DAVID HUGHES BRUCE HARPER MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 58:21
10. MALLOCH NICHOLL ROBERT LUMGAIR MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 58:38
11. ALICK KERR DREW STARROCK FORD FIESTA ST ..... 58:44
12. GARY BANNISTER AND LOUISE SUTHERLAND ESCORT MK2 ..... 58:59
13. GORDON SMITH PETER CARSTAIRS ESCORT MK2 ..... 59:09
14. MIKE FAULKNER PETER FOY MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 59:20
15. DOUGLAS DOBSON DAVID ANDERSON MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 59:30
16. EUAN THORBURN CLARE MOLE SUBARU IMPREZA ..... 59:44
17. JIMMY GILBERT DAVID ANDERSON MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 59:53
18. GORDON SMITH PETER CARSTAIRS ESCORT MK2 ..... 1:00:20
19. JOHN MORRISON MARTIN FORREST MITSUBISHI EVO 9 ..... 1:00:21
20. BRUCE HARPER BRUCE HARPER ESCORT MK2 ..... 1:01:21



**Class 1**  
A fine 24th overall earned Stephen Murray and Gary MacDonald the honours in their Peugeot 106 with Scott MacDonald and Stewart Horst finishing a distant second in their Vauxhall Nova.

two Nova crews saw Fraser Wilson and Steven Froll emerge as victors ahead of Craig Rutherford and Derek Forryth.

**Class 3**  
Dougal Brown and Douglas Dobson took the spoils guiding their Talbot Sunbeam home ahead of the Novas of Niall Inglis and Chris Murro.

**Class 4**  
Finishing 20th overall ensured Benice McCombie and Michael Coultis collected top class honours in their Ford Focus S1600. Runners up Stuart Davidson and Keir Boston were over four minutes behind after breaking the clutch of their Proton Satria on the final stage.

**Class 5**  
Neil Morrison and Graeme Anderson were convincing winners in their Talbot Sunbeam with second place falling to the Peugeot 205 of James Brims and Ailie Donaldson.

**Class 7**  
Kerr finished almost six minutes ahead of Coalter who ended the day 29th

overall after a multitude of moments followed his superb first stage start (see main report).

**Class 8**  
Top honours went to Steve Bannister and Louise Sutherland who finished 22nd overall in their Escort Mk2. The similar car of early leaders Mike

Horne and Robbie Mitchell finished more than a minute in arrears.

**Class 9**  
Escort Mk2 pairing Adrian Hetherington and Gary Nolan collected the prizes after the early retirement of the similar car of Viv and Paul Hamill.

**Class 10**  
MacDonald/Beaton, Sinclair/Hamill (see main report).

**Class 11**  
Bonniwell/Ewing, Faulkner/Foy (see main report).

**Class 12**  
Morrison/Forrest, Nicholl/Lumgair (see main report).

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