

Peter Lloyd Rallying Stages – 24th February 2002

Rally Report

Once again, Peter Lloyd proved to be the class of the field, as he took an extremely convincing win on the rally that he sponsors, Carmarthen Motor Club's Peter Lloyd Rallying Stages Rally. Held at the Welsh Motorsports Centre at Pembrey, Lloyd was fastest on four of the six special stages held in extremely wet conditions. On this occasion, Lloyd was co-driven by St. Clears teenager, Lowri James, who scored her first ever victory on only her sixth ever rally.

Leading the 51 car field away for the third round of the First Choice Welsh Tarmacadam Championship, Lloyd / James quickly mastered the slippery conditions, and after the first two special stages, had opened up a 13 second lead over the Sierra Cosworth 4x4 driven by Bridgend's Ian Godney / Justin Davies.

On stage three, Lloyd saw his lead reduced by three seconds, as Godney set his first fastest time. However, on the next test, Godney's Sierra slid into some tyres, and dropped a minute to Lloyd, leaving the Metro 6R4 driver well clear of the field. Fastest time on the penultimate stage left Lloyd / James with a two minute advantage over the rest of the field, and second fastest time on the last test saw them emerge as worthy winners of the event.

When Godney spent another minute and a half off the road on stage four, second place was up for grabs, and it was Lancastrian Lyndon Barton who made the decisive move. Surprisingly, this was the experienced tarmac drivers first visit to Pembrey, and it had got off to a bad start. On the first stage, he misjudged a junction, and his Metro 6R4 careered over some tyres, one of the cars front wings coming off as he reversed back onto the road. From then on, he and Aled Loveluck settled down, and were never out of the top four fastest times, as he made sure of second position.

Reigning Welsh Champion, Damian Cole, opted to use his four-wheel drive Mitsubishi Lancer Evo V on this occasion, rather than his Darrian T9, and he and co-driver Llinos Jones-Edwards took a creditable third placing, an early spin not costing too much time.

Following his time consuming incidents, Godney rounded off his day with fastest time on the final stage, moving up from fifth to fourth place in the process. This was at the expense of John Thwaites / Mark Crisp who had been having a good run in the wet conditions in their Subaru Impreza. However, a spin didn't help their cause, and they eventually had to give second best to the flying Godney.

Despite not being Pembrey regulars, Martin Parkinson / Andrew Howdle were obviously finding the conditions to their liking, as Ford Escort Cosworth held fourth position, until a fifth stage puncture dropped them to seventh place. Another top ten time on the last stage was good enough to move them up a place, ahead of the Subaru Impreza of late entries Jonathan and Mark Williams.

Following their class win on the recent Rali Cwm Gwendraeth, Nigel Gibbard / Darren Mansell were looking for a repeat performance, and early on they held a top five placing. Unfortunately, in the wet conditions, the windscreen on their Darrian T90 kept misting up, and the pair were forced to reduce their pace. As a result, they were overtaken by Mark Ellis' Ford Escort and the Vauxhall Astra crewed by Chris and Jamie Jones. A late charge saw Gibbard / Mansell retain the class lead and finish in eighth place, one ahead of the Jones.' Rounding off the top ten were Neil Williams from Cardigan and Rob Richardson, who also took their Ford Escort RS to a class win.

Just outside the top ten on only his second ever rally, was Gareth Jones, son of the well known local rally driver Glyn Jones. After a couple of early spins, he quickly adapted to tarmac rallying and moved from fourth to first in class against some far more experienced competition.

In the 1400cc class, Bryan Davies / Huw Mathias looked set to take the honours, only for their Vauxhall Astra to break a drive-shaft on the last test, handing the class win to the Rover Metro Gti driven by Haverfordwests Richard Davies / Gareth Wilcox. Following their recent success on the Rali Cwm Gwendreath, Ian Davies / Steve Wolverson repeated their road rally class win in their Ford Escort, as Neil Featherstone / Kevin Rees took third in their similar car.

Granville Cottle / Lisa Evans got off to a good start with third fastest time on ss1, before their Sierra Cosworth broke a driveshaft, whilst Sebastian Ling / Ken Gibbard held the 1600cc lead before rolling their Vauxhall Nova. A broken drive-shaft also accounted for the Peugeot 106Gti of Andrew Dark / Tony Thomas, Peter Zjalic / Jonathan Butler-Jenkins retired their Subaru Impreza with a misfiring engine, whereas Darran Powell / Gareth Shell were forced to retire their Ford Escort after it landed in a tyre wall.

33 of the 51 starters finished the event.