

**Adam & Ray Ripper**

**Nissan Micra 1.4**

**Class A**

Lee Holland Memorial Rally

1st March 2020



# Jump

The long trip to the seaside Trac Mon on Anglesey is a straightforward affair by virtue of the M1, M6 and A55 – there's some striking scenery along the way, especially once you get into North Wales.

The circuit is small by comparison with some, but the Lee Holland Memorial Rally, hosted by the Pendle & District and Garstang & Preston Motor Clubs is cleverly arranged to use all of the available roads, in all directions and sometimes multiple loops to make for an interesting rally.

The stages have at least two splits and two merges on each so eyes

have to be everywhere and brain fully engaged to follow the stage diagrams properly.

Set up must have been very difficult for the stage builders; the wind was hitting 45 knots on Saturday, increasing to 60+ knots overnight resulting in much of the signage having to be refitted on the morning of the Sunday rally.

The only immovable objects were the tyre stacks on the chicanes; even the scrutineering building had been condemned overnight. The wind continued to blast the circuit throughout the day, whipping foam

from the sea and depositing it onto the service area, coating the screens, mirrors and windows with a slimy film in the process.

In all of this, there was the potential for chaos, but as in other years, the marshals did a great job keeping everyone safe, both on and around the circuit.

We started the day with a soft compound on the fronts, figuring that the cold and dampish conditions would prevail for at least the first stage. However, we had forgotten that the tarmac here is more abrasive than that of the MSV circuits –





probably necessarily so given Trac Mon's exposed location – so our new tyres were in quite bad condition once back in service. Still, a time of 7:31 put us a second behind the first placed Puma of Ron Walker and Amy McCubbin and 17 seconds ahead of the rapid throttle-bodied Micra of James Hardy and Nick Wilkins.

After a front tyre change to a more durable harder compound, stage two under wheel was much better, but half way round Adam reported a long brake pedal. This gave much cause for concern as our only mechanical competitive advantage is to brake later, our Micra having much less low-down torque than that of our rivals. Consequently, our time of 7:28 was 9 seconds slower than the Puma.

A brake bleed revealed impurities in the old fluid, and although the pedal was improved, it was nowhere near as hard as Adam likes, so we went out mindfully on stages three and four.

Times of 7:32 and 7:27 displayed some consistency, but showed we were slower than required. Adam is a 'committed' driver and the brake fluid issue was hampering us, but we couldn't afford not to get a good finish here.

We pressed on and the next two stages used more of the rougher, concrete roads around the buildings situated on the hill at Trac Mon.

This provided variety, but also some consternation at the end of the stage when our time of 9:03 for stage five inflated the leaden feeling that was now beginning to set in.

And a six-second improvement on stage six, whilst welcome and, having finally overtaken a dogged Peugeot, meant that although we were only a second slower than the Puma on each these two stages, we were still losing ground to Ron and to the other Micra which was now considerably quicker than either of us!

A cold, sharp shower just prior to the start of stage seven may have provided some opportunity to close the gap, but this was now 15 seconds and all things considered and barring errors in front of us, it felt unassailable.

We again overtook the Peugeot through a late merge, Adam's quick reflexes avoiding collecting several orange cones along the way, but there were another 2 seconds lost to the Puma.

We were now consolidating our position. Stage eight was one of those situations where the finish was more important than anything else, so we plodded round, the time reflecting badly on us.

Oh, the jump. Well, we try not to do it any more. The jump, or 'yump', is a defining feature of the Anglesey

circuit and provides a spectacular leap, for thrill-seeking competitors and photographers get some great shots. The header picture of this report shows us getting quite a bit of 'air' last year and I well remember the heavy landing that followed. It felt hard enough to dislodge the fillings from my teeth.

I can testify that it's harder still from the other direction, where the car lands into the depression before the upriser. If I had dentures I'm sure they'd have been still chattering as they hit the windscreen.

Powerful cars can also have trouble with the jump, as Frank Bird and Jack Morton sadly discovered this year, their WRC Ford Focus landing badly, curtailing their rally and possibly their charge towards Championship glory.

Since last year, we now take the jump with circumspection; wheels on the ground mean more traction and less attrition on the car and it's just as much fun – more like a rollercoaster ride – which is apt, given the location.

At the end, a third in class wasn't too shabby. The result puts us and the Puma level on points going into the final round at Donington Park where there promises to be an exciting end to the season!

**Ray Ripper, Co-Driver**