

## **GwynneSpeed Novice crew left to fly the Team flag!**

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2007 saw the 4 cars from GwynneSpeed Rallying based in Staverton, Gloucestershire travel to Down Ampney airfield, near Cirencester to take part in round 5 of the Cotswold Motor Sport Group rally championship. The "Get It Sideways" rally, promoted and organised by Cheltenham Motor Club used the airfield for this single venue rally which is also the venue which GwynneSpeed Rallying uses for rally school.

Andy Gwynne, company proprietor of GwynneSpeed, lead the team in his Peugeot 306 GTi running at car 3 with 2 of the rally school instructors taking part in rally school cars, James Wozencroft and Ed Robinson. The 4<sup>th</sup> member of the team was novice Charlie Robinson making his debut driving on a rally in another rally school car despite having co-driven in the Formula 1000 Rally Championship during 2006.

The day started well with all crews finishing the first loop of stages well, setting reasonable times and bringing the cars back safely. However, stage 3 was to bring an abrupt end to Gwynne's rally. The 306 GTi suffered from an engine oil surge on a long fast corner which caused the engine to fail. Andy Gwynne, co-driven by Holly Robinson remembers the moment the engine blew:

"There was a long fast corner which we took flat in 4<sup>th</sup> gear followed by a series of fast chicanes. I knew there was a problem as soon as we entered the first chicane – the car was down on power and the engine was noisy so I pulled over in order to minimise the amount of damage. It's a shame but that's rallying!"

James Wozencroft, 2006 British Super 1600 Rally Champion, co-driven by Chris Ridge suffered from a typical rallying problem – driveshaft breakage. This was caused by a large pot hole on the inside of a 90° degree corner which bent the bottom arm of the Peugeot 106 Rallye which therefore caused the driveshaft to be ripped out of the gearbox. Until the retirement, James and Chris had been setting some top 10 stage times against cars with double the power of the 106!

Ed Robinson also suffered from gearbox trouble which was caused by component failure. A set of new dampers had been fitted to the car but they failed to work efficiently which caused the gearbox to take a massive strain every time the car went over a bump. Ed's co-driver, Iestyn Ap Dafydd recalls the problem:

“We got into Service after stage 3 and explained to the service mechanics that car wasn’t handling well. The mechanics examined the suspension and located the damaged dampers. The spare dampers were of the same make and so they were fitted but did not resolve the problem. We had no option but to carry on with poor handling and suspension that simply didn’t work. The gearbox broke on the exit of a hairpin when Ed tried to select 2<sup>nd</sup> gear but there was no drive. Again, it’s a shame because our times were getting consistently better on each stage.”

The event was not all misery. Youngster Charlie Robinson, co-driven by his regular driver Nick Rowland was also driving one of the Peugeot 106 Rallye school cars. The rally started with 10 other competitors in the class. Charlie and Nick finished the event 3<sup>rd</sup> in class with the competitors in front of them having already done many more events and in cars with considerably more power. Charlie explains the strategy of the day:

“Nick and I had discussed how we wanted the day to go – start steady and build on our stage times. Although I have competed on rallies in the co-driver’s seat, I didn’t really know what to expect when I pulled the car up to the start line. However by stage 4 I felt totally comfortable and really started to enjoy the event! To finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in class was a massive bonus – we didn’t expect an award, we just wanted to finish and to bring the car back in one piece. Many thanks to all the crew for the help and support!”

The venue is being used again on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2007 for a similar event which is organised by EMCOS (Enthusiasts Motor Club of Stonehouse). For more details, visit [www.emcos.co.uk](http://www.emcos.co.uk).

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