



## SHELL DIARY. Ed Deak

April 30. The Queen E. Plaza is buzzing with the throng of thousands, who came to wish "Bon Voyage" to the sixty starting crews. The cars roll up on the ramp, one after the other, take their two minutes in the limelight and then start off into the early evening.

The tension is terrific, but we all are full of confidence. Some of us will be out in a few hours, a few days, but some will roll up on that ramp in Quebec City and we all want to be the ones.

The lower Mainland is a mass of checkpoints, some only a few minutes away from each other. Penalty points are doled out with both hands and we take our share.

Some already are hopelessly lost, although route finding is the least problem in the 4000. The Lotus-Cortina of Wietzes and Davies has a flat just before the Sumas Mtn. checkpoint and loses valuable time.

The procession moves onto the Trans Canada Hwy. and the crews can relax until Princeton. There's plenty of time to read and calculate ahead in the instructions.

We take the old gravel road East of the Similkameen, then down past Kere-meos we climb into the dust choked valleys toward Oliver. The dust, stirred up by four dozen cars ahead, is so thick, that we have to stop sometimes, as we can't see which way the road goes. The Merriman & Peters Chevy roars up from behind and disappears into the swirling whiteness. Just what he can see we'll never know, but we shall most likely see some of these superfast drivers yet.

Flares in the distance: the Mustang of McMahon & Dempsey and the ladies Duimel & Jackman with their Cortina are leaning side by side into the ditch. We meet the tow truck on the way to help them. There's little percentage in trying to fight this dust, it is likely to come out on top.

Behind Bridesville it is back into the dusty hills again. Wietzes is just ahead and we lose precious time. A large stone looms up on a sharp downhill lefthander. Don cuts to the side of the road and we come to a grinding halt. It takes an awful long time before we inch the car out and take off behind the flock.

The first Closed Section, where the fastest car in the class is unpenalized and everybody else gets one point for every six seconds, is over the Cascades road. We learn that our teammates Saunders & Greenfield are out with the car off the road.

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## SHELL DIARY (cont)

Don makes a cautious but fast push and we begin to pass some of the slower cars. The Lotus-Cortina team is using colour markers at pre-arranged intervals to have their cars finish at the same times. An excellent move, as rumor has it that England's Roger Clarke has wasted some minutes before clocking in at the finish at Rosslund, thereby saving McLennan's lead.

At Creston we pass the Renault of Dyer & Jackman. The clutch is shot, but they are pushing on.

Crowsnest Pass rolls by under the wheels and then it is up the Kananaskis Road to the next Closed Section. This one isn't as wild and twisty as the Cascades, but there's a lot of mud, snow, long straights where we can hit around the ton and mostly well designed curves.

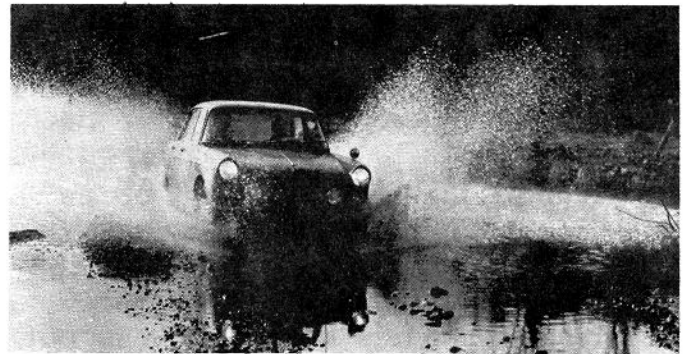
On a long and boring gravel road near Calgary we find our team mates Ross and O'Dwyer. In a million in one chance, a flying stone cut a tiny oil line leading to the distributor shaft. The oil drained out and their engine seized. The next time there will be a nice big red warning light beside the pressure gauge, but for now we are the only Datsun left.

May 2. Three hours in bed and we are off to the West again, then North to the Bow River Forest Closed Section. It is getting light when Don pours on the coals and our car shoots off over the frozen, icy bends of the mountain road.

In a few miles we pass the Sunbeam Tiger of Alsip & Andrews on the top of a snowbank. Andrews must have some pleasant memories of this road; two years ago he rolled in a Volkswagen here. Further down Floyd & Stedebauer are winching their Olds out of the ditch. Somehow, too much hurry doesn't seem to pay off too well around here.



Capable driver Don Lamont on left and Ed Deak team captain and navigator for the Datsun team. Don works at Doug's Automotive where cars were prepared. Read Ed's interesting articles in each issue of R. & M. S.



Curran - Carney in Peugeot was 5th consecutive year for car.



Wainwright closed section proves a little tricky for a lot of cars including this Rambler.

## SHELL DIARY (cont'd)

Then it is the endless boredom of the Prairie, with plenty of time to relax, as the procession winds it's way to the Wainwright Army Camp Closed Section.

This one is over loose gravel, long humpy straights, deep sandy acute turns.

Two ladies in a Volvo, Floyd & Kurtin, start ahead of us and make a valiant try. This is a section full of surprises, good thing I know most of them, especially the notorious "Shell" corner, the end of the journey to many a hot-dog driver.

Don is gaining on the girls as they disappear into the gully leading to the Coyote hill. We sense trouble and slow right down. Sure enough, the Volvo is stuck in mud in front of us. We pass safely and later pass another Volvo who has done some fastest times on other sections, but fell to "Shell corner".

Out of Wainwright a Special Control, where one must be within 20% of either side of the base average speed, catches Diana Carter, Winner of three previous Coup de Dames, in her Fiat 850. As the only penalty at these controls is disqualification, to prevent speeding on the highways, Diana is out. These Specials have eliminated almost as many cars as the rigours of the Rally.

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After more of the dullest roads: Saskatoon and another three hours in bed.

May 3. A six mile long Closed Section in the dark claims the Mustang of McMahon & Dempsey. The sand is axle deep and with power to burn, plus the limited slip differential the car just snakes off the road.

It is bitterly cold and everything is frozen. The roads are rock hard and we have no trouble maintaining the average, but as the sun comes out, the frozen gumbo starts thawing and soon our cars start floundering in the sticky black mess, slower and slower. It is a helluva job to keep the car on the road and rolling, rather swimming. The Mustang of Allen & Sharpe gently fishtails in the ditch right in front of us, but the local farmers are on the ball and they are out in seven minutes.

More of the same gumbo after Yorkton, then our caravan reaches Riding Mountain National Park, the scene of another Closed Section.

The Section is quite muddy and wet. We pass Merriman's Chevy, standing on the roadside with a blown engine.

Ray Middlemiss in his Valiant and we get Police escort for fifty miles before Winnipeg over a deserted, arrow straight gravel road. By gosh, without him we might have been doing 55 to the detriment of safety.

May 4. Sandilands Closed Section in the dark, foot deep water splashes alternated with bottomless sand, axle-busting ripples, three mile straights, and some unfunny mileage turns. Some cars drown out, some plane on the water, but by now the field is pretty well weeded out and only the stronger crews remain.

Passing through Minnesota for a short while, the cars arrive at Fort Frances, Ontario. The local radio lays the red carpet out for the leaders. Poor Robin

## SHELL DIARY (cont'd)

Edwardes gets so involved with the interview, that he forgets to punch the clock and loses 50 points, losing second place.

A few miles out of Fort Frances the Vincent & Catto Mustang swallows a leaping deer. Allen and Sharpe are sympathizing with them for so long, that they too are out.

Port Arthur, Fort William, mooseburgers at Wawa. The long scenic ride to Sault Ste. Marie.

May 5. The Dean Lake district roller coaster takes it's toll a few miles out of the Sault. The ladies Smith & Coombe (Sunbeam Imp) miss a turn and drop from fourth to eighth. The Jeep Wagonaire of Lerch & Bunch ditches and cracks up on a large stone. Others, Wietzes' Lotus-Cortina, the Citroen of Batori & Valsamis, the Porsche of Reid & Grevstad get bogged in a deep mudhole and lose precious time.

A few hours later the expected toughest part of the Rally begins near Parry Sound. Twisting and extremely rough roads, deep holes, mud, stones, drops that make the cars fly and checkpoint after checkpoint are showering points on the weary competitors. To their everlasting credit McLennan & Wilson are still running almost clean, though they must be under terrific strain. Some of the battered cars are slowing down and to finish is the thought in the minds of most. Our car is running like a clock and again we gain a few places.

May 6. We had almost 12 hours in Ottawa and start well rested. Speculation is ripe, whether Jim Gunn will make this day a holiday or a mercy killing for the tired machines.

Our fears do not materialize. Some of the roads are a bit rough, but most cars get to the circuit of St. Jovite in good shape. We do the most enjoyable

ten laps, the highlight of the rally, and after a comfortable meal start off on the final leg, into a gathering blizzard.

Every checkpoint is a festival around here. As soon as we drive in, somebody pushes a cup of coffee, softdrinks, sandwiches, donuts into our hands. Trueblooded Quebec hospitality on every turn. Cars blink their lights to us, on corners whole families are camped to watch the competitors drive by.

Another six miles of a murderous road and then it is smooth sailing all the way.

Quebec City at last welcomes the muddy procession. The snow is falling like on a Christmas card. Twenty-six cars roll up on the ramp at the Chateau Frontenac, flashbulbs pop, loudspeakers blare and we shake hands.

Tomorrow this will all be a memory, and brother, who could wish for a better one?

On the Sunday we say goodbye to our car, as it is going back to Japan. The only thing we changed all the way was an air filter element. She was a good little companion we shall fondly remember. With a change of plugs, tires, and shock absorbers, we could have started on a return rally the next day. This we shall have to do some time...



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