



4000 SHELL CENTENNIAL RALLY



By Don Grey

THE PRESS RELEASE CALLED IT "NORTH AMERICA'S TOUGHEST CAR RALLY, with more entrants, more miles, and more days to celebrate Canada's 100th birthday." The Shell Centennial 4000 Rally was all that—but by an ironic twist, it was also the first time in the last four years that Canadian crews failed to shut out the foreign opposition.

The man who broke the Canadian stranglehold was crack English rally driver Roger Clark, who paired with Toronto navigator Jim Peters to bring a factory-entered Ford Cortina Lotus to the finish in Montreal with the loss of just forty-four points. It was Clark's first victory in a major international rally—the Shell is one of five events counting toward the Royal Automobile Club's world rally championship—and it gave Ford its second consecutive win in the Shell 4000.

Clark's performance gave a boost to the rally's international reputation and set the stage for a strong showing by foreign cars and drivers. Former SCCA rally champion Scott Harvey and Toronto navigator Mike Kerry finished second overall in a Plymouth Barracuda with 133 points, while a Datsun crewed by Karl Schulz and Paul Manson of Toronto nailed down third with a loss of 170 points.

The expert Canadian crew of Paul MacLennan and John Wilson, who won last year and led for the first six days this year, finished fourth in their factory Cortina Lotus with 329 points. Citroen entered a factory team in the Shell for the first time and clearly demonstrated the great reputation for reliability and performance that the firm has earned in European events. Three experienced crews dominated the manufacturer's team category for the first five days and two of the cars, driven by Marcel Rainville and Robin Edwardes of Quebec, and Jean-Claude Ogier and Lucette Pointet of Paris, placed fifth and sixth with 336 and 387 points respectively.

At the start, local boys Mike Hunter and Mike Alexander in their Alfa. At Westwood race circuit, Harvey's Barracuda storms through traffic. In the parc ferme, Ann and Rosemary dutifully change the Imp's tires. The Samida/Beckman Barracuda flies over the infamous Ontario bumps.

Appropriately enough in Canada's Centennial year, there were exactly one hundred cars entered in this year's rally. Ninety-three of them actually left the starting ramp in Vancouver on May 3, and fifty of those were scattered across the country before the forty-three survivors of the eight-day, 4,500-mile event staggered in to the finish at Expo 67, the world's fair in Montreal. This year's route was two days and 500 miles longer than in 1966, and included overnight stops at Kelowna, B.C., Red Deer, Alta., Saskatoon, Sask., Brandon, Man., Fort William, Ont., North Bay, Ont., and Kingston, Ont.

In addition to the factory teams from Ford, Citroen and Datsun, American Motors made a welcome return to motor sport with three factory-prepared Rambler Americans. Individual factory entries included the Harvey/Kerry Barracuda, a Sunbeam Imp for 1966 Coup des Dames winners Rosemary Smith of Ireland and Ann Coombe of Toronto, and a two-wheel drive Jeep Wagoneer. Three Volkswagen dealers got together to sponsor a team of 1300 sedans, and about half a dozen other dealers backed individual entries. Private entrants, however, provided seventy-five percent of the entries, and they included twenty-three U.S. crews from as far afield as Riverside, Calif., Bossier City, La., Longview, Tex., and Alexandria, Va. Twelve states were represented altogether.

One reason for the large U.S. entry is undoubtedly the fact that the Shell is one of the few North American rallies designed to ring out the car and its driver rather than the time-keeping expertise of the navigator. Over the years, rally organizers Jim Gunn and Peter Bone have logged up more than 50,000 miles sleuthing out the toughest backwater roads in Canada, and they freely predicted that no more than fifty percent of this year's entry would finish. Just to make things tougher, all engines (including head and sump), transmissions, drive axle assemblies, and generators (or alternators) were sealed before the start, and heavy penalties imposed if the seals were not intact at the finish.

With the atrocious roads providing the real test, timing for the most part was to the nearest minute, ten points being lost for every minute early or late

It's called "America's toughest rally," and few entrants would question this description!

Photos: Shell Canada Ltd. & Rick Mason



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at more than one hundred secret controls. To add spice to the proceedings, there were also twelve special stages — up from eight last year — that included mountain tracks and logging roads, the sand and gravel wastes of military camps and three racing circuits. The special stages were all on roads closed to the public, and ranged in length from six to thirty-seven miles, with a total of over 250 miles. Racing against the clock, the competitors lost one point for every twenty seconds they were slower than the target times set for each of the six engine capacity classes.

The special stages generated criticism on two counts. One was that the formula used to calculate the target times imposed a major handicap on the larger cars. Class Six cars (over five liters), for example, had target times twenty percent faster than the Class One cars (under one liter) — a difficult enough feat on a freeway and almost impossible on corkscrew mountain tracks barely wider than the cars. A second criticism, voiced among others by Roger Clark and Henry Taylor, Ford of England's competitions director, was that the target times were all too slow, resulting in several drivers completing the special stages without penalty. They suggest that the target times be made completely impossible — then all drivers would lose points but the faster ones would lose the fewest and the special stages would provide a true barometer of the driver's skills.

Despite the addition of two days and five hundred miles, competitors faced their most challenging assignments in the mountains of British Columbia and Alberta on the first two days, and on the backwoods rural roads of Ontario and Quebec on the last three days. The middle three legs, over the vast, largely featureless Prairies, annually present an almost impossible challenge to the most ingenious of rally organizers. Gunn and Bone did come up with three special stages and a few other workouts for the cars, but for the most part the crews became bored, the scores went almost unchanged and the press searched their vocabularies for different ways to say the same thing.

Leaving Vancouver on the first day, however, the cars were in action within twenty-five miles when they tackled a special stage over ten laps of the 1.8-mile Westwood racing circuit. Impassable roads in the B.C. interior eliminated part of the day's route but a generous slice of other logging and ranch roads gave the cars the first of their many poundings.

Running true to form, it was the 1966 winners MacLennan and Wilson who grabbed the lead when their Cortina ran clean on the road and dropped only two points at Westwood. Private entrants John Smith and

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Left: Diana Carter-Polivka helps de-ditch teammate Curran's Rambler; Schulz winches class-winning Datsun after eighth day rollover and Citroën team drivers hustle the girls' channel-blocking Imp through an Ontario water hole. Top: MacLennan and Wilson led for five days, but Roger Clark and Jim Peters snorkeled through the water, right, to put the Cortina on the winners' stand. Below: The Bunch/Bland Jeep Wagoneer won Class 6, fifth overall.



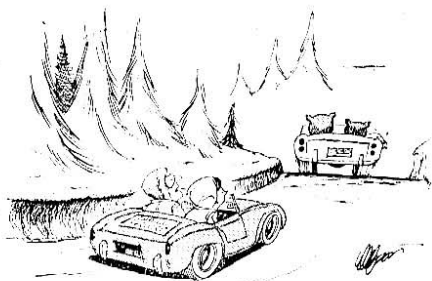
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John Catto of Ontario, in a Lotus Cortina, were in second place after losing five points at Westwood (although Smith had never driven on a race track before and was directed by Catto, who had). Schulz and Manson were one point and one place back in their Datsun, while the three factory Citroens were all in the top ten to put a stranglehold on the manufacturer's team category that was not broken for five days.

In the three-way battle for the Coupe des Dames, the Rosemary Smith/Ann Coombe Sunbeam Imp had already opened up a margin over English racing driver Anita Taylor and her Montreal navigator Terry Gillies in one of the three factory Cortina Lotuses and Diana Carter-Polivka/Barbara Jean Jack in one of the three factory Ramblers.

Ten cars were eliminated in the first day's shakedown and another fifteen succumbed on the second and longest



"Oh-oh... I don't like the looks of that!"

day's run to Red Deer. Ranging from the Columbia River Valley on the B.C.-U.S. border to the glacier country north of Banff, the 820-mile route ran the gamut from pot-holed logging roads and mountain trails to gravel, mud, ice, snow, and choking dust. Keeping the pot boiling were three special stages — 37.7 miles over the Cascades in southern B.C. and then runs of 37 miles and 17 miles over a forestry road and the appropriately named Corkscrew Mountain in Alberta.

The roads were unbelievable, even to a journalist who has covered every Shell 4000 on the ground since the rally's inception. Strapped into the navigator's seat of an Anglia entered in the newly instituted 'press category,' the ride felt like a combination of a square-wheeled roller-coaster and the wall of death at a county fair. Don Newlands, Photo and Feature Editor of the Canadian magazine, who was in the driver's seat, was so busy sawing at the wheel through one series of chuck holes that he hardly flinched when my Curta calculator flew off my clipboard and whizzed past his car onto the back seat.

But, while the crews sweated, it was the cars that took the real beating. Some rolled and some simply expired as rocks and boulders ripped off brake lines and
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punched holes right through the shielding protecting the engines. One Volvo staggered out of the wilderness with a piece of wood propping up the front suspension and another was hauled from a muddy quagmire by a mine rescue squad. Our own Anglia made a brief excursion down some Canadian Pacific Railway tracks (it was the quickest way back to the road). The next day, after alternately slithering through mud, plunging over blocks of ice and choking dust, the car finally expired in the Rockies when the engine shifted forward and the fan ventilated the radiator. We might have fixed it if we had been anywhere near civilization, but the nearest community was thirty miles ahead and that was a mining ghost town that had been turned into a penitentiary. We made it to Red Deer in the cab of an 18-ton semi-trailer that had been hauling blasting equipment to a road-building crew.

By the third day, however, the rally was into the Prairies and the pressure eased. Only four cars retired and for three days the top six cars remained unchanged. The MacLennan/Wilson Cortina Lotus still held the lead with two points, followed by the Schulz/Manson Datsun (sixteen points), the Clark/Peters Cortina Lotus (23 points), the Smith/Catto Lotus Cortina (twenty-eight points), the Ogier/Pointet Citroen (forty-two points), and the Harvey/Kerry Barracuda (fifty-five points).

The holiday ended on the sixth day when the rally entered Ontario and returned to serious business. And although that day was the second longest of the rally - 780 miles - it was a short stretch of little more than one hundred feet where the chances of several competitors were literally drowned. While the local radio stations warned of flood conditions in the Espanola area west of Sudbury, the unforgiving rally organizers assured the competitors "the

roads were passable." They were passable all right - if you had a submarine.

Some cars sank up to their headlights and beyond, some plowed through with a bow wave washing over the roof, and others floated across with their snow-tired rear wheels propelling them like paddle steamers. More than one navigator had to swim when the ground gave way beneath him as he reconnoitered a passage for his driver.

It was a flood of despair for the Citroens, whose almost faultless team performance came to an end when the car driven by Keith Ronald and John Medwell became irretrievably mired despite the best efforts of teammates Ogier/Pointet to free them. Ronald and Medwell were tied in eighth place at the time with the Smith/Coombe Imp and it wasn't long before the Imp also sank into the water - "just like a frog jumping off a lily pad," as one driver put it. Other competitors pushed the girls clear (they had to because the Imp was blocking the only navigable passage) and although they dropped to seventeenth place, they retained their hold on the Coupe des Dames.

Thirteen cars were swallowed by the combination of mud and water, and for the first time since they had left Vancouver five days earlier, MacLennan and Wilson dropped points on the road. They pulled into the overnight stop at North Bay with a twenty-two point total and just a one-point lead over teammates Clark and Peters. Ford's hopes were high with the cars running first and second, but the hopes were short-lived. Launching into the seventh day and the maze of twisting, hump-backed roads used in the Canadian Winter Rally, the Anita Taylor/Terry Gillies Cortina Lotus was eliminated when the girls failed to follow alternate instructions and bogged down in a mud-hole on the original, impassable route. Shortly afterward the MacLennan/Wilson car clouted a sandbank on a special stage in Camp Borden and deranged the Cortina's suspension. Later that day they were to lose both the clutch and third gear, and they staggered into the last overnight stop at Kingston in fifth place.

They were just one place ahead of private entrants Herb Felton and Jim Callon from Sault Ste. Marie, who had done a superb job in driving their tiny Austin Cooper S into the top six. The Clark/Peters Cortina moved into the lead, with the Schulz/Manson Datsun second, the Rainville/Edwardes Citroen third, and the Harvey/Kerry Barracuda fourth.

With the last and shortest day ahead of them (370 miles), the one thought of the survivors was to make the finish in Montreal. Despite their caution, however, the finishing order was almost entirely changed. Felton and Callon dropped to twenty-first place when drive shaft U-bolts failed; Rainville and Edwardes suffered two flat tires and also lost points while talking to the law in Ottawa, which dropped them to fifth overall, with 336 points. Schulz and Manson also lost points, first rolling their Datsun on the way to a special stage at St. Jovite race track, and later being penalized for a broken seal. They picked up 117 points for a total of 170, and fell to third, while Scott Harvey and Mike Kerry cooled it in their Barracuda to jump to second overall with 133 points.

Of the top six cars the day before, only Roger Clark and Jim Peters failed to change position at the finish. And, although they dropped twenty points on the final day, for a total of forty-four, their Cortina Lotus held the one position that mattered - First.

Filling out the top ten positions were Jean-Claude Ogier and Lucette Pointet of Paris in their factory Citroen (387 points), Blair Bunch and Doug Bland (of Quebec) in the factory Jeep Wagoneer (443), Eric Siivonen and Tom Jones of Ontario in one of the factory Ramblers (560), Bob Dunwoodie and John O'Dwyer of British Columbia in a dealer-sponsored Volkswagen (584 points), and Fritz Hochreuter and Lutz Ecker of Ontario, who dropped 633 points in their Volkswagen, but picked up a well-deserved \$1000 as the first private entrants to finish.

Rosemary Smith, the chic Irish dress designer, stole the fashion show and, with Toronto navigator Ann Coombe, also won the Coupe des Dames for the second year in a row in their factory-entered Sunbeam Imp and also took Class One award. They were thirteenth overall with 761 points, but had earlier run as high as seventh overall.

With the elimination of one car each from the Citroen and Ford teams, it was the Datsuns, led by Karl Schulz and Paul Manson, which took the manufacturers team award. The two other crews were Don Lamont and Ed Deak of British Columbia, who finished eleventh with 705 points, and Klaus Ross and John Bird, overall winners in both 1964 and 1965, who placed eighteenth with 1,102 points.

Only forty-three of the original ninety-three starters were counted among the finishers - a survival rate that stands as its own testimony to the tortuous, demanding route laid out by Jim Gunn and Peter Bone.



"I didn't mind the cold... I didn't mind the long grind over the Rockies... I d'nd't mind breaking down east of Saskatoon... I DO, however, mind losing the whole cotton-picking car!"