

The starting and entry list on this years Shell 4000,1968 Rally is out, and indeed full of surprises. The feared class in the past, class 3, appears to be a very good proposition this year due to the absence of the might Comstock Ford team and indeed the near total lack of Cortinas, their honour will be upheld by only two crews from Ann Arbour and London, Ontario, from personal experience I surely hope they have beefed up their suspension - they'll need it. The most popular choices in this years event appears to be Volvo and of course - Datsun, second choices are VW, Renault and surprisingly SAAB for a vehicle not sold in Canada. One of the more exciting entries to watch has got to be Fritz Hochreuter's newly acquired 911T Porsche, Fritz by the way took home the honours for best private entry with his trusty old 1500 VW in last years 4000. The following is a very brief rundown of the various crews, very brief because they will probably get sufficient coverage by the news media.

- #101 Dr. E. Skinner - Mark Skinner. Medicine Hat, Alberta.
Out of the rumoured three entries from "the Hat" only the Skinners made effect of this threat. In the new 123 GT Volvo they will be first off the starting ramp Saturday June 1st. We wish "Doc" and Mark the best of british luck.
- #103 Jim and Barbara Bickham. Upper Sandusky Ohio. Corvair Corsa. Jim and Barbara, former American Rally Champions, have this year chosen their Corvair over the ex-Harvey works Barracuda. They have entered the Shell several times before and usually place quite respectably.
- #104 Rainville/Edwards Toyota Corrolla. This very successful crew should be one to watch for another success for this newly introduced marque.
- #105 Paul MacLennan - Jim Peters - Rambler American. It should be interesting to see what this, probably Canada's foremost, crew will do with the Rambler. Paul a veteran of compacts in past 4000's and winner of the '66 event and Jim winner of the '67 event, could likely come out at the top in Halifax June 7th.
- #108 David Kuehne - David Cady - Rochester, N.Y. - SAAB Monte Carlo.
This, the Winter Rally winning crew, won this entry for their gallant efforts in that event. I think we can look forward to see this SAAB place well.
- #109 Norm Matovich - Ed Deak - Vancouver - Datsun. Unfortunately, at this time Norm Matovich is not known to me, perhaps I can fill in later when I get some dope on him. Ed Deak, however, is no mystery to anyone, being one of the B. C. Regions' top rallymen, he has been on the Datsun works team since 1966 and placed very well in past 4000's.
- #110 Tony Fall - Dennis Johnson - BMC 1800. Much have already been said and more will be said about the successes of Mr. Fall, so I'll suffice it by saying that he has successfully rallied in this years "Monte" netted a 4th overall. Dennis is also a veteran compaigner and has competed in the last four Shell's that I know of. I would predict this crew to finish in the top 5.

FROM THE RALLY SEAT CONTINUED

#114 Gene Henderson - Ken Pogue - Detroit - Barracuda.

Gene, one of the original Chrysler worksteam drivers in the 1963-64 Monte Carlo Rally, should be well worth watching, a Detroit Police Sargeant is very spectacular and prominent in American rallies.

#116 Hunter Floyd - Lutz Ecker - Rambler.

Hunter is one of the regions leading drivers, he is best known for his efforts with the Steidelbauer sponsored 442 Olds for the past two seasons, he also finished the '66 and '67 Shell Rallies in good position. Hunter will this year receive instructions from the very capable Lutz Ecker, who is not only one of Canada's top rallyists, but also a veteran of past 4000's as well as Winter Rallies where he has been very successful.

#119 Paddy Hopkirk - Mike Kerry - Mini Cooper S.

This flying Irishman is of course the star attraction of this years event, teamed with such outstanding Navigator as Mike Kerry, they in my humble estimation can do little else but win this year. My apologies to both these superb drivers for cutting this short, but they will in all likelihood be swamped with publicity, besides I would run out of paper trying to list their past successes.

#127 Dave Stratton - Walt Petersen - Mini Cooper S. - Calgary

This crew needs no introduction to Albertans, as they are at any time capable of winning a regional or national rally. They are an excellent team and now that they are back with their favorite, Cooper S, should do very well as we reminice their efforts with a plain Mini in the past. They have for the past three years ranked as one of the top teams in the region to beat. We wish better luck in this years event than they had last year when their Lotus Cortina picked up a rock and damaged the sump on the first day in the '67 4000.

#132 Alvin Faaren - Ken Craig - Mercury Cougar - Treherne, Manitoba

In keeping with past policies of recognizing all Prairie entries, let me say that Treherne was the last place I ever expected an entry from. We wish them the best of luck.

#135 Ewold van Bergen - Paul Manson - Datsun

Paul Manson, the current co-holder of the Canadian Rally Championship, is as the title suggests one of the best in the country. He placed 3rd overall in the '67 Shell and went on his successful ways to capture the championship title. Teamed with Ewold from South Africa, of whom I must admit I know nothing, this team could be doing very well at the finish.

#137 Scott Harvey - Ralph Beckman - Barracuda "S"

This veteran will undoubtedly be one of the favourites in class 5. Scott last year piloted this large bomb to a second overall in the Shell.

#148 Klaus Ross - John Bird - Datsun

This crew, the winners of the '64 and '65 Shell Rallies, many times Canadian Champions, is surely one of the major threats in class 4 and indeed in the entire rally. Klaus, co-holder of this years championship title, has for the past two years been plagued by mechanical difficulties. However, this year these two will certainly have their hands full as their class is probably one of the most competitive.

FROM THE RALLY SEAT CONT 'D.

- #150 Jim Potts - Ernest Wilson - Renault Gordini R8 - Ontario
This team won this entry for their 2nd overall in the Winter Rally. If their car holds up we might see them at the finish in a very respectable placing.
- #152 John Smith - John Catto - Toyota Corrolla - Ontario
Messrs. Smith & Catto spent a good deal of last years Shell Rally chasing the leaders only to run into mechanical problems on the later stages of the rally. Norfolk Enterprises put a good deal of their hopes on this crew.
- #155 A.J.H. Vox - W. J. Northgrave - Renault Gordini R8 - Saskatoon
These two gentlemen will be upholding the Saskatchewan honours in this years Shell Rally as they are the only entry from the Wheat Province. I know nothing of their previous experience, perhaps they, or someone else, would like to supply me with the necessary information.
- #156 Pat Stiles - Doug Jackman - Datsun 1600 - Calgary
This crew is perhaps best known for their splendid efforts in their tiny Fiat 850 over the past three years. They have always rated as tops in the Prairie Region, with the acquisition of the Datsun, they become a team to really watch for, add to that, that they are in a very favorable class (3) they could place very well in the rally. They will this year run sponsored by Hammill Motors Ltd., where owner Jim Hammill has great hopes for them in this and future events.
- #168 Stan & Suzanne Crews - Waukesha, Wisconsin - SAAB 96-V4
Stan & Suzanne will have the privilege of debuting the new V4 SAAB in a major Canadian event, based on past merits in the Shell Rally, they could do very well in their class.
- #169 Ray Middlemiss - Garry Wikjord - Vancouver - Datsun 1300
Both crew members have competed in past Shell Rallies and have been quite successful in their home region. They are however, in a very heavy class and it will require a good deal of skill and luck to come out on top. We wish them luck in their venture.
- #170 Geoff Howe - Kneale Johnson - Calgary - Sunbeam Arrow
Geoff has for the past years become, perhaps better known than any other competitor in the region for his efforts in competition and public relations. Being one of the regions outstanding competitors, Geoff is fresh from a 1st overall in the recent Corkscrew Rally and a 2nd in the Klondike Trail Rally, which has put him out in front in the ARC and Prairie Region Rally Championships. He will be ably guided by Kneale who has done extremely well in a very short time. Lorne Kramer, the president of Kramer Chrysler Sunbeam Ltd. has great hopes for this crew, which he has outfitted with car and equipment for this years event. They are however, in a very unfortunate class, as the cars entered here are much more powerful and also employ some of the best drivers to be found anywhere.
- #174 Mo Carter - Art Dempsey - Ontario - Epic Brabham
Both of the above drivers have competed in and won just about every major event in the east, with this high-powered little bomb they will not only properly christen it, but, I think, do very well in their class and possibly overall.

FROM THE RALLY SEAT CONT'D.

It is an established fact that most of us within the CSCC are very much for the acquisition of a racing complex - myself very much so. I would like to race on a fun type basis. I do neither possess the ability or the finances for racing on any other basis - therefore, I was somewhat puzzled when it was brought up that racing on any complex would cost in the neighborhood of \$1,200.00 - 1,500.00 per race meet. I think it utterly ridiculous to build a complex on which we will race twice a year - maybe - with the amount of racing enthusiasts we have in the club. There simply aren't enough talent or equipment available on the prairies to warrant such an expenditure and for us to build a complex for eastern and B. C. drivers to come and have fun as well as to take trophies away is also equally ridiculous. Racing on a competitive level here will for all but a very few CSCC members be impossible. However, let us hear what Geoff Fairs and Al Thompson have to tell us in the near future, they could shoot my arguments down in flames, meanwhile let's go racing in Edmonton if and when they get their track going - it'll be a lot cheaper.

Did you know that:

The most popular choice in this years Shell is Volvo and Datsun with 8 entries apiece - the second most popular choice is VW and Renault, as third choice is Barracuda, Peugeot (most of them 204's) and Toyota. Despite Porsche's winning ways the most popular mount in Europe happens to be Lancia Fulvia HF coupe. VW is once again in the lead in the National Rally Championship after a two year period of what I might call hurt pride, Volvo in '66 and Datsun in '67, it would appear that they are once again in the drivers seat. Second at present is Peugeot and third is Renault. For the first time there is a Buick entered in a Shell Rally, it is from Orillia and piloted by Edgar Golz and Mark McCutcheon (#173) - Them we wish luck, luck and luck.

I was just thinking about that tough looking "feller" or Gringo who against the mexican hombres advice takes a Rambler through the Baja-ha-ha - we ought to get him up here for this years 4000.

And here's one that'll set Norbert and all his fellow Porsche drivers thinking - Despite Porsche's winning ways this year (First overall in the first three European championship events) an unofficial poll will show the SAAB and Lancia as leaders with Porsche as third in the

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FROM THE RALLY SEAT CONT'D.

Constructors Championship, and in the Drivers Championship, the leaders are Elfjord, Toivonen, Aaultonen, Fall and Hopkirk. This comes about as not all of the European championship events count toward the same championship. Some of the rallies counting toward the Drivers title are The Monte, The Acropolis, The Geneva and the French Coupe des Alpes. Toward The Constructors title are The Swedish, the San Remo (Rallye dei Fiori), The Tulip, The Alpine (Austria), The Polish and the R.A.C. just to name a few.

The above championship standings are derived from the first three in the series namely the Swedish, the Monte and the San Remo. Two things are very apparent: Rallying in Europe has become real big business and nobody really knows just what's going to stop the mighty Porsche team.

An item on the darker side: - During the early running of the ARC '68 Championship, there seems to have been a good deal of dropping of standards on the part of the organizers - I hate to think of it - but we are steadily sinking back toward the standards of 1966 - if you can call them that. Now I realize that Rallies all have a backbone called volunteer labour and we rallyists are very often very critical of these labours, not taking into consideration that an organizer foregoes a good deal of his own private obligations to put on an event, we must therefore, use a good deal of diplomacy when being critical. However, it is, in my humble opinion, just as easy to put on a good event as a bad one, the satisfaction of a good event is truly worth every bit of extra labour that may go into this already very large task of pleasing everyone. Rally drivers are indeed a mean bunch after 5 to 800 miles of tiring rallying and are as such often very quick to voice their feelings, which they under normal circumstances wouldn't, therefore, causing often unwanted hard feeling on the part of the equally very tired Rallymasters. Admittedly the various crews may indeed have a valid complaint as they in many cases travel up to 500 miles to the start of a national or regional event and often spend between \$15. to \$25. to enter, they therefore feel they have a certain right to expect a top grade event - and so indeed they do. This brings us back to the crux of the matter ... Dear organizers - don't try to complicate a rally instruction-wise to the extent that you can't even figure it out, because what's going to happen is quite simply that Pip and Henry plus a few others will wind up telling you what you really meant when you dreamed up this instruction and you as a completely lost organizer, will subsequently wind up making these dreaded arbitrary decisions of which we have seen so many in the past, which sends competitors home wondering what really happened. Gentlemen - use the rule book - yes, read it, and then decide on what rules and regulations to adopt - and stick to them, if anyone disagrees after the results are published, then just quote the book, this procedure kills the heck out of a pile of arguments. For a moment let us revert back to the complexity of rallies. Many have said that rallies are getting too simple and therefore many organizers have chosen to raise the speed averages in order to trap the tardy and wind up doing just that, while the speedy crew they sought to trap escape unpenalized, because they for the most part drive works prepared cars and as such can traverse seemingly impassible terrain at what may be deemed impossible speeds thus maintaining the average required.

It is, I admit, a pretty hard task finding a happy medium where all are satisfied and the drivers are kept entertained as well as having the pleasure of bringing their cars back home in one piece. There has in the past been some excellent instructions, these could very well be brought back into use even at the risk of obvious copying.

One last point should be considered by the individual clubs, the Rallymasters qualifications. I have in the past seen major rallies organized by total non-rallyists who have marshalled in the Shell rally and indeed even competed in a Novice rally. This is something we will all have to combat. By all means, do get the rally checked out by a competent rallycrew prior to the actual running, accept the necessary criticisms with good grace, and make the needed changes - all before the competitors get over the course and if you haven't already done so, order CSCC's excellent guide to setting up a rally from the Broken Spoke Press in Calgary.

SPORTS LINE

Kramer-Chrysler Plymouth Ltd. will sponsor a Sunbeam Arrow in the 1968 Shell 4000 Car Rally. Starting from the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede Grounds on June 1st at 7:00 P.M. the car drew #170 in the draw for starting position, which means the crew of Geoff Howe and Kneale Johnson will leave the ramp at 9:20 P.M. The Kramer organization which supports many local sporting teams in Football, Baseball and Hockey has entered the field of motorsport by sponsoring a car and much time has been spent in an effort to ensure the car reaches Halifax on June 7th. Mr. Lorne Kramer will drive a Chrysler Station Wagon as a support car for the rally car. He will be accompanied by Peter Matthews of the Calgary Herald who will report daily on CHQR at 8:15 A.M. Mr. John Griffiths of the Calgary Albertan will act as team manager together with Mr. Peter White.

Two previously entered Sunbeam Imps will be contesting in Class 1. Both of the cars are from Ontario and were previously driven by Miss Rosemary Smith, the Rootes Rally girl who recently finished third overall in the group six Sunbeam Imp in the Circuit of Ireland Rally.

NEWSFLASH

Over the week-end 11th-12th of May, the annual Trail of the Bison Rally was held in Winnipeg. The event drew 24 entries, one of which was Walt Petersen and Dave Stratton from Calgary in their Mini Cooper "S", which they brought to Winnipeg to test drive in the Rally, as they have just acquired this speedy little bomb and not had time to try it out in competition.

The rally itself was fairly tough going with the Mini having to be "giftwrapped" with plastic several times in the engine compartment in order to ford some of the lake-like sloughs - this not only kept the engine clean but also dry.

The final results after 315 miles of driving looked like this:

1st overall	Petersen/Stratton	Mini-Cooper "S"
2nd overall	Jones/Lowden	Dodge
3rd overall	Bateman/Frech	Isuzu Bellett

ONE MAN'S SHELL 4000

It has always been an ambition to compete in a Shell 4000 Rally and thanks to the generosity of my sponsor, Kramer Chrysler Ltd., and the fact that the University year ends in April, I was able to make the trip.

How was it? Veeery interesting, but disappointing. It seems that all the seasoned competitors agreed and you will also notice this from Wheelspin, that this year's rally was probably the duller of the eight that have been run.

A great deal of money and time had been spent on the preparation of the Sunbeam Arrow which was probably one of the best equipped cars in the event. Nothing had been spared to see to this and if you have a look at it some time, you will see that I am not kidding.

The arrangements at the start were in true Calgary fashion, quick, efficient and hospitable, but after that it was just another rally, in fact I have been on many better club events.

The first night only a few miles from Calgary, expecting the Shell 4000 instructions to be exact, we negotiated a bear left, used on our rallies, which according to the instructions was a turn left. Not being satisfied it was a turn and determined to be correct in this international event Kneale and I questioned it and then a few hundred feet away was a turn which we took only to end up at a dead end. Klaus Ross and John Bird did the same, but got out of it by asking the way to Millarville at a farmhouse - net result 20 points!!!

The closed stages were excellent, as we in the foothills know those roads to be, but there was no way a small engined car could beat its time and the required 70 plus averages! The pace notes provided by Scott Harvey sure helped though!

After these sections it was plain sailing to Regina. As many of you know, we had the misfortune to have engine trouble after the Riding Mountain Special stage where the only cars to beat us in our class of 15 cars were the three Datsun 2000's twin O.H.C. sixes, Tony Fall in the 1800 and Fritz Hochreuters Porsche. Thanks to an efficient back up team we were on the road again in two hours, but had to miss Sandilands stage in order to reach Fort William under our maximum lateness penalty. This cost us 1200 points plus those we lost in arriving at Winnipeg, but we were still in the rally and determined to finish.

Apart from the Qu'Appelle Valley run and a couple of stages in the east the rest of the run was UGH! After bashing the car through a tight stage, we would come upon miles of highway where those who had lagged behind on the twisty stuff could catch up as there was no control. This happened many times.

One of the hi-lights of the rally was the enthusiasm of the Quebec people both at controls and along the route. Les Girls at No. 48 were great. They had set up a table with ice cold drinks, cookies and fruit and as we arrived we were greeted by a shapely nurse with a facecloth to refresh us. Other controls presented us with polaroid pictures of the car, washed the car or supplied pop and cakes, etc. Quebec was the best province for enthusiasm and I now know why its called La Belle Province!!!

Ontario residents were a bit irate to say the least and as we were at the end of the rally we got a lot of the backwash of the big boys up front. When Kneale waved at the folks, he often got frowns and clenched fists in return.

However, we made it and saw the Atlantic.

One Man's Shell 4000 cont.....

The Awards banquet was long and drawn out, most of the time being taken up with the presenting of paper packages containing anything from tin hats to lobsters, to members of the AMC team.

The banquet held in Vancouver which I had the pleasure of attending, was so much better. One thing that nothing could affect was the atmosphere of the rally. Talking to all the other competitors, the tension before the special stages, the hope that you would move up the standings, the calmness of the organizing group and helpers and the room parties.....WOW!!!.....it must have cost American Motors a packet to straighten up the hotel next morning!!

I cannot help but mention the help and friendliness of Mr. R. A. Patterson of Chrysler of Canada Ltd. Each night at the end of a long day, he would still be around to greet us at the Parc Ferme. His cheery smile and offer of help made you feel it was all worth it.

The 1968 Shell was a good way to see the country in a hurry, both going and coming back.....coming back did you say?.....UGH!! That was the worst part of all. Ship it man!!!!!!

SPORTS LINE

During the recent Shell 4000 Rally won by Scott Harvey driving a Plymouth Barracuda Chinook Films of Calgary drove a Plymouth wagon across the country on another long distance mission. They found that no one had contracted to film this years event which was the last under the sponsorship of Shell Canada, so did some fast negotiating and decided to have a go at covering the 4000 mile international rally. Even while rallyists caught a few hours shuteye cameramen Eric Jensen and **crew** shot thousands of feet of film covering every angle of the rally. After the event they showed the three hours of unedited film to Chrysler of Canada and soon a 28 minute action packed rally special will be released. Latest successes of Roes/Chrysler cars is the term win of the Group 6 Sunbeam Imps in the recent Scottish rally in which 96 starters were reduced to less than half that number by the 29 rugged special stages. Colin Malkin was third overall while Rosemary Smith was fifth overall. Andrew Cowan also finished after rolling him Imp. So Sunbeam continued their long string of successes in International competition which dates back to 1926 when a Sunbeam was the first car to exceed 150 m.p.h. and a year later when Sunbeams raised the world speed record to 203.44 m.p.h. Sunbeams latest sedan, the Arrow, is presently leading the Alberta Rally Championship and the Prairie Region Rally Championship.

There we were belting down the backroads of Maine in ninety tons of Detroit wide-tracker. Bend coming up. Foot off the gas and on to the brake.

And nothing happened.

Rather things happened, but exactly the opposite of what was wanted.

Three hundred and fifth spitting, coughing, backfiring Detroit horses decided simultareously to take off full steam ahead with neither brakes nor power steering to stop 'em.

A petrified grab for the ignition, switch off and one wild wallowagon slithers to an undignified halt as three hysterical back-up crew start round two on their rosaries.

The intrepid trio of Matthews, White and Griffiths, back-up crew for the Kramer Shell 4000 Sunbeam Arrow, were at it again.

It was just one more laughs-filled incident in a Shell 4000 that was just full of laughs or maybe nervous hysteria from start to finish.

Like the time the same lurchmobile lost two wheels from its roof-rack at 90 m.p.h. followed by a long search in a swamp for the missing items.

Like the time the exhaust pipe fell off, and going 50 miles before remembering Griffiths suitcase was at the side of the road back where we'd fixed the car (we never found the case, either).

Like the time at the prize-giving banquet in Halifax where England's Tony Fall thanked everyone very much for having him.

Like the time Klaus Ross was presented with a finisher's plaque signed by everybody, except that it wasn't a finisher's plaque at all. It was one of the Nova Scotian hotel's wall paintings.

Like the time Jim Peters did his vaudeville act at the Chrysler party: ("All honoluble Datson drivers who not make fastest time through closed section will proceed to next speed control - and kill themselves".)

The list goes on and on...

The fun started even before the rally left Calgary. One Saab, slap bang in front of all the people who'd gathered at the Stampede grounds for the start, had to take two runs at...the starting ramp. Reports have it that this one expired sometime before reaching the city limits...

The cars thrashed onward through the night...to Claresholm after three speed sections. None of the Calgary officials at the stop are likely to forget that night, made famous by Chris Dyer blowing his Scandinavian top at a nameless back-up car which tried to enter the rally control backwards and a wide-tracking local bent on proving something to nobody by gassing up and then burned rubber in front of everybody for 50 yards, straight into the arms of a moody Mountie.

The rally pressed on...

Through the Cypress Hills, across the great Alberta boondocks into Saskatchewan and so, uneventfully (?) into the first stop at Regina.

For Klaus Ross, in one of the three works Datsun 2000s (which all sounded like pregnant two-cycle Saabs for some obscure reason) it had been anything but uneventful.

He limped into Regina with the car making four separate tracks, the result of a twisted something or other after Lkauss had tried making like the Red Baron. Apparently it reached a height of ten feet before plunging back to terra firma sometime during the first night.

Then there was the case of the introverted, inverted Beetle. Sometime during that first night it rolled over and the roof withdrew to windscreen height. For the rest of the rally the crew spent their time perfecting an intriguing pump and pound routine at the gas stops. One pumped in gas and the other pounded out the roof with a bloody great hammer.

By the time it reached Halifax it had been pounded to such effect it looked just like an ordinary beetle. With pimples.

At the sametime, of course, on P. Hopkirk had decided to drive a 1275 c.c. radiator instead so things were already quite interesting by the time the rally reached Regina.

The second day's run, to Fort William, was quite mild by comparison, items of note being Tony Fall the the works austin 1800 turning cartwheels with interesting effects on all four corners of the bodywork. Thereafter it was fun to watch the car pull in at the rest of the stops across the country.

One moment there it was belting down the rally route and all of a sudden the rally route would turn right and one T. Fall would turn left and the next thing everyone knew there he was at the next control with a nice new windscreen, fender or what have you.

By the time it reached Halifax one would have hardly know it had been pranged.

The darlin' feller from Oireland still led at Fort William but with a great big barracuda snapping at his heels and poor Paddy, as history shows, it was only to be another 48 hours before his exclusion with S. Harvey taking over road which led to victory.

Once again it was flying Klauss Ross who lent a little color to the day. With mechanical troubles dogging him all the way, he finally reached to within 40 miles of Winnipeg but only had 30 odd minutes to reach the Assiniboine Park control.

Now imagine a telephone conversation something like this: "Hello, pliss?" "Yer, Winnipeg fuzz". "Honoluble Datson team in tluble. Many leagues to go and sands of time running out". "Uh?" "...and glolious lules of excellency Loblin, on whom steaming hot sun shines, be not onflinged by bleaking of bally silly speed limit". (Light shines on Winnipeg fuzz). "You want a high speed escort into town, 'zat so?" "Pliss. and ah soh to you too".

The police obliged Klauss just made it after a wild drive at 90 m.p.h.

Meanwhile, the local lads were having mixed luck. Gremlins got into Geoff Howe and Kneale Johnson's crankcase (or rather the Arrow's) and there were 120 hairy minutes spent on repairs with the car finally blasting off from Winnipeg on maximum lateness with no - one being too confident the car would be still in at the end of the day.

Unconfirmed reports had it that Kneale nailed the Howe right clog to the floorboards for the rest of the run to Fort William, which couldn't be too far from the truth because they made it - albeit for the loss of 1200 points - with the car still in one piece.

Pat Stiles and Doug Jackman sauntered in without a care in the world - they were 17th at the time - and Walt Peterson and Dave Stratton were also plugging on well in the mini-bin although they'd lost a lot of points already for various reasons. Actually the pair were doing very well. They had no back up car, the inside was stuffed full of wheels, suitcases and what have you and there was practically no room for the crew.

And so on through the third day, mostly uneventful for the crew, highly eventful for the Kramer back-up car men.

That was the day we lost the suitcase, the exhaust fell off etc. etc. and the car received its affectionate nickname of Petroleum Blunaparte.

What actually happened to make the car go wild was the securing bolt for the air cleaner coming loose and falling straight through the carburettor. Of course, it jammed the butterflies open in the process, resulting in The Great Leap Forward.

When it came to a stop we got so fed up with the whole proceedings we walked back across the Vermont New Hampshire state line to a grocery store, bought a box of Budweiser and went reeling back across the state line, line abreast bawling out "It's a long way to Tipperary" etc. in the middle of the highway.

Nothing else of note happened until Sherbrooke, where Paddy got disqualified, Pat and Doug came in very late cursing a broken coil lead (not visible on the outside) and Geoff - call me loquacious - Howe got lost in the University of Sherbrooke accommodation rooms, finally reappearing in the restaurant muttering all kind of obscenities about everyone else being lost but him...

In the meantime Fiery Fritz Hochreuter had been roughing up the Ontario natives.

Paddy, Fritz, Mr. Ball et al had come barrelling round this bend, and there was this car-hating farmer with a couple of tons of wide-tracker sprawled across the road generally making it impossible to pass.

Militant Mr. Hochreuter weighed the situation up and decided the best thing to do was the farmer.

At the same time the farmer decided to do Fritz...with a thundering great pair of shears.

Battle was engaged and the farmer was getting well and truly done when out came Mrs. Farmer with a murderous-looking shotgun and threatened to do everyone, cars an' all...Luckily the RCMP came to the rescue at this time, the farmer's car was unceremoniously removed and the rallyists went on their way.

By now Scott Harvey and Ralph Beckman were in the lead, and retained it of course until the end with only eight penalties.

While Thursday's run from Sherbrooke to St. John was quite eventful for the Magical Mystery Back-Up Car, it was no less so for the rallyists.

Paul McLennan in one Ramble, followed by Hunter Floyd in another, went blasting off into the Camp Gagetown closed section, came haring round a corner... and ran slap bang into a convoy of tanks. It was a toss-up as to who had the worst fright.

Anyway the section was closed down until the tanks were cleared, and in fact the big rumpers lined up at the finish line to give the boys a cheer as they clocked in.

Meanwhile, back in the back up car, the crew were encountering The Chronic Cruise Control Catastrophe and the Great Winking Headlights Phenomenon.

On the left hand side of the steering wheel of Petroleum Bluonaparte was a little stalk with a little tit on the end. If you pressed it, the wagon would maintain by itself whatever speed you were travelling at the time you pressed it. Fine.

But what we didn't know was that as well as pressing it you could twist it. And if you twisted it, the car would immediately blast off flat out until it reached whatever highway speed you had last set by pressing it...

Follow?

So there we were in the middle of a great heap of traffic in some New Brunswick town or other, with Griffiths driving and having a quiet twiddle into the bargain.

Well, the upshot was that he twiddled too far, the stalk went click, the carb's four barrels opened wide, and there we were bombing through the town like all get out, making like it was a drag strip...

A panic application of the brakes just short of the car in front, a few missed heartbeats, a couple of muttered comments which won't bear printing, and we were off again somewhere surprised at not being pounced on by a furious fuzz.

But old Bluonaparte hadn't finished with us yet. There was one more trick lurking up its exhaust pipe.

It came that night, at the time of the full moon.

In the middle of the hood, pointing forwards was a photo-electric cell which picked up the lights of oncoming cars and automatically dipped the headlights, thus saving the driver the wearisome job of flexing the odd toe to dip 'em himself.

Sounds great.

But what happens is this:

A car comes towards you, headlights full on. The sensor automatically dips yours ever so politely and the oncoming car dips his likewise.

So yours come back on again because the sensor isn't picking up light anymore.

So you press the dipswitch yourself hurriedly so's not to annoy the poor blike coming at you.

Not on your nellie says the sensor and puts 'em back up again.

By this time the bloke up front is getting madder'n hell and puts his on full beam again.

So yours automatically dip again, the other blike does likewise and...

You guessed it.

The bloody sensor puts you back on full beam again.

Oh gawd.

And that's the way it goes. Driver battling sensor ever onward through the night, the driver losing out all the time and leaving behind a trail of innocent, fumingly furious other drivers.

Then there was the full moon...

There we were, barrelling up a winding hill at eight. We reach the brow and go soaring over.

And a full moon is staring us in the eyeballs.

Trouble was, it was also staring that crummy sensor in its own evil little eyeball.

And it dipped our rotten, cotton' pickin' headlights just as we plunged back down into the stygian darkness on the other side of the hill.

More wild moments trying to find the road, more prayers, relief at finding it, then another flow of curses.

And finally, the piece de resistance: The Case of the Winking Traffic Sign:

In the dark of the New Brunswick countryside at dead of night we come upon a needed left turn, marked by one of those flashing orange lights. We spotted it a mile away.

And, of course, so did that (blank blank) sensor.

For about a mile it was like watching a tennis match played vertically.

The amber light flashed on;

The headlights dipped;

The amber light flashed off;

The headlights came up;

The amber light flashed on...

The headlights.....and so on.

By the time we made the turn we felt like three overworked yo-yos.

And so to the final day.

The rally roads were rough and twisty but conditions were dry and no-one had too much trouble making it to the finish line. That was with the exception of Walt Peterson and Dave Stratton in the mini.

Just 100 or so miles from the end they clouted a big rock and holed their oil pan in an almost exact repeat of their misfortune in last year's Shell, when their Lotus Cortina clobbered a rock and was put out of the rally for good.

This time, however, by dint of much fiberglass and pouring in of oil they staggered to the finish line to get an official finishers' status.

And that was how it ended. Harvey taking the overall honors, American motors taking the team prize, Sylvia and Haydn Gozzard leading the private entries in (good grief) a Renault Gordini; Pat and Doug 31st, Geoff and Kneale 49th and Walt and Dave 52nd.

Of yes, and three back-up men are vacationing at Ponoka, almost glad there may never be another Shell.