



## Chipping away to Victory!

Now you can't blame me for any of the mayhem at Cwmgilla this time, it was nothing to do with me at all!

And I'm pleased to say that my record for the most rolls still stands, despite the excellent efforts of Jo Willet and Chris Hughes. They had a few over, but not enough to take the title off me.

I don't know if it was the cold that put people off because we only had 12 drivers, those that stayed in bed certainly seemed to have made the best choice as we unloaded and scrutineered in the morning.

There was a bitterly cold wind that swept across the hilltop, and the snow was still drifted against the fences in places.

As Frank pointed out, the previous week we wouldn't have got near the place!

Down the long track in the valley it was different though, still cold but sheltered from that biting wind. And at one point we actually saw the sun shine through.

Halfway down the track there's a lovely spot where the farmer has at one time dug stone from the hillside, and along with a spring to make a swamp and a narrow, tree lined old track. Perfect for a section, and more or less guaranteed to put someone on their side.

Which it did to Dave Tomley, and damn nearly did to J.P.R, how the Beast managed to fall back on its wheels is beyond me, he should have been over.

But they scored 1, as did Frank, Tim and Matthew.

A clear was impossible I think, I felt quite safe marshalling between the 1 canes anyway.

Just across the track the next section did a simple loop around the ruined building with the finish gates up another near impossible climb.

The early gates were all downhill, especially the 10 and 9 which focused the drivers attention quite a lot.

The problem was climbing up the loose stone rubble behind the ruin. And the running order made no real difference here either, you either drove up the stone and carried on to score 1 point like Matthew and J.P.R. or you span for 5 points, or slid sideways into the canes for 6 points.

That section that was so simple to look at, basically one big right loop and a steep climb, but like all good sections—it was far from easy.

There's a tranquil stream running through the valley at Cwmgilla, with steep banks and trees all along its winding path.

So that's where we went next. Drive down the bank, turn left along the stream, and left turn back up into the field.

But, as ever, the CoC's had done their homework and spotted a few obstacles to slow you down, and in a few cases stop you entirely.

The dead fox was the first obstacle because the carcass was just decomposed enough to stink your motor out for the rest of the season if you drove over it! Dave Tomley said he was going to aim for it, but he chickened out, thankfully.

The main obstacle was a small waterfall and the tight right turn around the tree and over the roots where over half of you scored 3 points as you cross axled down into the deep water.

One's from Les Price, Dave Tomley, J.P.R. and Chris Spittle were hard won, and showed that it was driveable in a wide variety of motors.

Downstream a bit, through the gate, is a patch of very soggy ground at the base of a steep bank, and once again the stream has steep banks to contend with as well.

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The 5 gate was the obvious problem as you came down off the steep bank and tried to drive along the stream, which was just about wide enough for the Scrapసు to drive down. Anything with a Range Rover axle had to choose a different line, one that meant a lot of leaning over. Tim Mackley chose a different route however, and shot up the bank and behind a tree in great style on his way to a 2.

The finish was up the steep bank, and it turned into a contest to see if anyone could actually clear the 1 gate and the summit of the climb, which I think Frank won.

This was the first section to see any clears, and six of you managed.

Further down again there's a triangle bounded by a fence, again with a steep bank, trees and the stream.

This area is tight, the trees all seem to be the exact width of a Range Rover axle, the fences are just about at the limits of Range Rover steering lock, and the mud in between is deep!

This caused big problems for many drivers, except Les in the nimble Scrapసు who cleared.

The gap and left turn between the trees at the 8 gate stopped a lot of you, including Chris who despite his fiddle brakes managed to get his roll cage jammed firmly on the tree, but J.P.R. scored 3 and Ceri and Dave 6, so it wasn't impossible in a class four motor. Frank also scored 6 by going wide, and that was in the Half Pint which has legendary manoeuvrability.

That was a section that most drivers would like to have had another go at because it was probably driveable in every motor there, well maybe Angus in the Range Rover would have struggled? But the CoC can allow two shunts, so maybe he could have done it as well.

Still a good section though, as you watched the others getting stuck you were forced to re-think your line, whether it worked was another matter!

After lunch we resumed just through the gate where the cattle feed.

There's another smaller stream that joins the main one, and it makes a perfect hairpin bend as the banks are high and steep.

Across the flat and up onto a ledge, down at a crazy angle, a couple of turns and back up over the ledge at an angle into the trees for the 1 gate.

Arwel was first away and got stuck on the river bank in his Land Rover bodied Daihatsu, as did Daffyd in his 'Whitbread' motor that he'd repaired after losing his gears earlier in the day.

But these two are new drivers, and I'm sure they're going to learn fast and get through next time.

Angus got stuck here as well, unfortunately there wasn't enough room to take advantage of the shunt in his Range Rover.

Les, well he just span to a halt.

Five drivers scored 1's and Chris disappeared into the trees for a clear.

By this time the contenders in class three, Frank, Les, Tim and Marc, were only two points part In class four Dave had trashed a front axle earlier in the day so both he and Matthew were now driving J.P.R.'s Beast, but John was way ahead by now.

Chris was in a class of his own.

So the competition was fierce in class three, and no prisoners were being taken!

Section seven was another that crossed the stream and used the steep banks on the one side, but it was a section we've not used before and a good challenge.

The end dropped down steeply to the stream bank that had to be driven at an angle, which then meant your back wheels fell off the bank and a roll was the likely result, as Dave found out when the Beast gently fell sideways into the stream. But Arwel had the first roll, with his-

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wife on the wet side of the Daihatsu.

Marc and Frank were damn close to rolling as well, as was everyone I suppose?

Even Chris in class five entered the stream at a precarious angle, but he scored the only clear and Tim, Les and Marc scored one.

This left Marc on 20, Tim 19, and Frank and Les with 18 points in class three, with one section left.

Frank was nearly smoking again by now!

And what a section to finish with, this was a difficult and long section, one that left no room for error and even less to recover if you did make an error, however small.

It started by climbing onto the ledge and down again, left hand loop, back onto the ledge and off the end at a horrible angle. Ceri tried a terrific line and missed the loop altogether, he just drove across the side of the bank and made it look easy. Great stuff!

After that there were a couple of 'wall of death' bits on loose stones where sliding down into the canes was all too easy, as some drivers found out.

The finish was an evil climb up the bank, over two small stone ledges and between some big trees, the angle of attack was the problem here as was the momentum needed to clear the ledges.

Too much and it was wheels in the air time, as Chris showed us on his way to a 1.

Frank had a good bounce as well but ran out of grip to score 3. There was some risk of going over backwards here, which made it exciting to watch to say the least!

Ceri finished a great drive with a 1 as well, and Marc and Les both threw the Scrapu at the climb for 2 points.

Anyone who got over halfway up there did bloody well, so Dave's clear was greeted with a huge cheer from the crowd.

He came back down in some style as well, something to do with the brakes on the Beast apparently?

The trial couldn't have finished better if someone wrote a script for it, Les won class three by one point over Frank with Marc one point behind his dad.

What other motor sport, as cheap as trialing can be, can offer the chance for drivers who are closer to retirement than they admit to drive on an equal footing with young people, and in motors that are so vastly different?

Tim wasn't that far behind either in his coil sprung V8, which again is a very capable motor driven by a very good younger driver.

Class three is already shaping up to give us a lot of excitement and fierce competition which promises a thrilling seasons sport.

And watch out for the new guys as well, I heard more than one other driver comment on the way Arwel was driving. He made usual mistakes beginners do, but he 'drives' well.

Class four was dominated by John, but the Tomley boys were probably driving a bit more carefully than usual so as not to damage the Beast.

But don't discount Ceri who is coming on strong and making decisions that pay off.

Angus drives well, but it's a big motor for our trials.

Daffyd's got a good motor, he's keen and certainly willing to have a good go.

Maybe the championship will go to one of the usual suspects, but that doesn't stop anyone driving as hard as they possibly can and aiming to beat the driver one place above them.

It didn't stop Chris from driving as well as he possibly could, even though he was the only class five driver there.

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I really like Cwmgilla, there's just so many sections there, and so much difficult terrain, and even if we do use some of the same bits again, who cares? The new CoC's always put their stamp on the sections and they become completely different.

Which is exactly what Jo and Chris did, and we had an excellent trial as a result.

So many thanks to these guys and everyone who helped to make it a great day out.

Dave Lloyd