



I was
there!!

By *Tom Stibbard*

Even with Edmonton's representation in this years run being rather minimal - Hunter Floyd (Rambler), there was still quite a number who trecked to Calgary for the start of this year's 4000 mile jaunt. No small time operators those Calgarians, they (or Shell?) had arranged for the use of the basement of one of the Stampede ground's building, greatly facilitating a smooth tech inspection and registration. The F.I.A. tech was again very "loose" but at least this year they did more than count doors and stick a box into your truck.

As for the cars, Scott Harvey showed up with last years Barracuda - (suitably rebuilt), the Ramblers looked strong as did the Datsun 2000 sedans. Hochreuter's 911 T Porsche looked great but lacked any underpanning. BMH's entries of a Cooper for Hopkirk and an Austin 1800 for Fall were extremely well done but certainly looked weird with huge mud flaps protuding out in front of the car.

Gordon Taylor was trapped in the traffic jam outside the grounds and made the startline only about 30 seconds before he was due to flag off car #101; a Medicine Hat Volvo. Again showing his enthusiasm for motor sport Taylor flagged off the remaining 67 cars.

From Calgary the cars headed south west into the forestry roads and transversed three closed sections totalling some 50 miles before the rally was even 4 hours old. From a vantage point high in the Porcupine Hills we could observe some 4-5 miles of the Skyline Trail section. For the most part cautious driving was the order of the day. Even the cars which were being guided by pace notes (the sections were announced Thursday morning) had to take second place in the action category to Sam Wilson and Paddy Hopkirk when they just about shared a cattle guard.

The first gas stop at Claresholm saw several cars already sporting scars of battle; the Ross-Bird Datsun had acquired strange rear end noises, Callon-Valsamis Cooper had strangely aligned front wheels, 2 VW and a Saab had been well bent.

Unfortunately the rally was just about over as standings were to change very little in the next 3600 miles as the 1968 Shell was without too much doubt the easiest since the B.C.I.T.F. event.

The Assistant Sump Editor's Continued Column

I'm driving to the Big Four Building in Calgary on Friday noon, and see this scruffy type in a SHELL rally jacket walking the same way, so offer a ride. "It's even the right color!" she exclaims. Oh, do you have one two? "Yes, in California!"

It's Jean Calvin from Sport Car Graphic, off to see Hopkirk. Wow. We pull up to the Big Four just as Patty is getting out of his Cooper. He actually thought we were a Calgary entry. Exit Jean Calvin. I look over the BMC Cooper casually, as I'm aware that it is very similar to mine. BMC types try to block mine from the TV people. Bad for the image, you know. CBC asks Hopkirk for a demo. Hopkirk gets into my car by mistake. Can't tell them apart. Notices steering wheel is on the wrong side. Mumbles "Colorblind..." Gets in his own car. Backs up in narrow alley at 220 mph, does "handbrake turn" [A sort of reverse U turn thing] and leaves alley at 220 mph frontwards. I try the same thing, albeit many hours later. Drive up alley. Change my mind. Can't even turn the Mini around- its a foot longer than the width of the alley. Aha... Hopkirk drives specially modified shortened version!

Saturday 4 pm. Kananaskis Forrestry Road. Closed section. Must be off the road by 7 pm. Park across the ditch.

7 pm. Roxann suggests we build a branch type shelter on the hill. Build shelter. Wait for course opening car. Sit in shelter. Wait. Set camera. Darkness falls. "What about bears?" Sit in car. "What about shelter?" "What shelter?" Wait. Wait. Do crossword. 9 pm. Course opening car passes. Wait for first car. Wait. Wait. Fall asleep. Listen? Here they come!

First three cars thunder past.... Land Rover...Land Rover... Dodge station wagon... Is that Scott Harvey? Which one?

Station wagon re-appears. "Are you checkpoint #3?" Rain starts. Rain stopp. Wind starts. Sleepy. 9:30pm..... POW!! 105 roars past. 105? Did we sleep through 4 cars? Renault wheezes by. Adnoids. Datsuns...Toyotas...Volkswagens... Waiting for

The Assistant Sump Continued Editors Column Thing

Hopkirk. 107....109.... Here he comes..... Accelerating up through an S bend and hairpin... 2nd gear.... still second... I'm waiting for the bang.... My Mini blows a head gasket in sympathy, parked in the ditch.... half a mile down the straight-third gear-my gracious!

That alone was worth the six hours.

Midnight. The last VW chuffs past. Sleep. 1 am. Nature calls. Wake up. Two Shell Competitors' Sachels are walking down the road. Fumble for lights. Turn on wipers. Turn off wipers. "Is it a bear?" Turn on lights. Two competitors jump 17 feet two and one half inches. A voice asks "Are you competitors?" No-are you? Where's your car? In a creek. 30 feet down. Upside down.

1:02 am. Question: shall we drive down the road to the control? Have all the cars passed? Only one is missing, #156. Better wait. "Hey, that's us" Oh..... Drive to control. CP officials want our route card, get two competitors instead.

3am Two Husky's try to pull Saab out of the creek. I turn my driving beams down into the creek. Kill the battery. 4am, everybody is ready to go. Cooper won't start. Everybody pushes. Escort Saab back to Calgary. Run out of gas. Shell station. Three cars fill up. Use Shell Competitor's Credit card. Only Saab in the world with a thirty six gallon tank.

Noon Sunday. Hey, we missed the ELCC party.

Worth it? You bet. Got to buy a new Cooper; the kind with two radiators and the shortened body, and the gold wheels and the close rati