

# Brean Stages Rally 2015

Brean Leisure Park, Somerset, 24th/25th January 2015

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Photos: CStartworks – Calvin Talbot

The last weekend in January sees the annual Brean stages rally organised by Club Rallysport West. This year it attracted a record entry of 109 crews spread across five classes, ranging from four-wheel-drive world rally cars such as Subaru Imprezas and Mitsubishi Evos. Through two-litre and 1,600 Ford Escorts, Hondas and Peugeots, down to the 1,400cc class which included our Hillman Imp. There were ten entries in the class, mostly 1,400cc Peugeots, Citroëns and Vauxhalls. Then there was our 1970, 1,100cc Imp. Unsurprisingly we were seeded at 99 which at least would hopefully mean we would be well out of the way of the big boys!

The rally runs over two days with six stages each day that wind their way through a caravan park, the shortest stage being 3.8 miles and the longest 5.4 miles. Every stage has a series of 90-degree lefts and rights, some hairpin bends, several long straights and a spilt-and-merge. There are ditches, ponds, narrow gateways, tyre bales and numerous static caravans to avoid. This year as always saw several people fall victim to the ditches and tyre bails. Thankfully the caravans all stayed intact!

The first day for us went well and after completing the first six stages with no hiccups we found ourselves fourth in class and 44th overall. This meant that we would start the second day seeded between a 2.5-litre BMW and a 1,600cc Escort. It also meant that due to the splits-and-merges we were very likely to be fighting for our place on the road among some very fast cars. This was certainly the case when on stage 8 a very quick two-litre Escort came flying past us on the straight. We had the last laugh, however, when a few corners later we came across him heading over the grass towards us having lost it completely and had a spin. We also had a good battle with a BMW which kept



almost catching us on the straights but couldn't compete with the nimbleness of the Imp through the tight corners meaning we stayed in front.

The car, service crew, driver and navigator all performed well again on day two and we were amazed to finish with all but the air filter box and the nearside indicator/sidelight lens intact. The air filter box fell off on a

particularly bumpy stage and the lens had a slight coming together with a tyre bale!

Of the 109 entries only 61 finished. We had a brilliant weekend and were surprised and delighted to finish third in class and 44th overall, having beaten cars a lot more powerful and very much more modern.

