



Minis were lined up in groups of 10 for the circuit test.



“You don't speak French? No problem; all the instructions were also communicated in English.”


penalty. So far all the navigation had been via tulip diagrams. The final section of the day, a run to the overnight halt at Delémont, used a marked map which caused some a few problems. We ended the day in 7th place, the Barnes boys were 10th and solo man Dickson was still doing well in 17th. It was only here that we discovered that, unlike UK road events, the MWR is timed regularity sections from start to finish. This came as a bit of a surprise to us UK new boys and accounted for most of our penalty marks.

Sunday dawned neither bright nor sunny but with three more sections ahead of us. The first was a 60km-er from Delémont to St Martin and, for some reason, everyone picked up plenty of penalties on this section. Next was a marked map section from St Martin to Boudry, which involved passing through a couple of small towns where the navigation required careful concentration, which some found difficult. The final section was another 37km from Boudry to Vugelles, which we cleaned. After all the numbers were crunched we were 7th overall and top British crew. We were pleased with the result as it was our first competitive event together for three years, first time at this event and first rally in a new (to us) unproven rally car. At the final reckoning fellow Brits Keith and Chris Barnes were 10th and the solo Richard Dickson a very creditable 16th; the ex-pat Brits, Doug and Graham, finished in 20th place. Only two cars retired, the aforementioned Hornet and the tidy 1966 Austin Cooper

of Romain Rambla/Pierre Lhomme.

Overall winners were the French crew Philippe Paget and Cyril Massard, in their 1994 Rover Cooper, who were well clear of the next two crews who were both Swiss. Our journey home was the reverse of our journey down, in glorious sunshine and largely uneventful. Over the 1,700 or so miles round trip, apart from broken rear exhaust mountings, that we fixed in a supermarket car park, and a couple of slowly deflating tyres that needed pumping up each morning, there is remarkably little to report.

Is the Mini Winter Rally for you? Well

it ought to be. The organisers went out of their way to make us and all the other competitors feel welcome. You don't speak French? No problem; all the instructions were also communicated in English. So, if you can stand the thought of driving your classic Mini in the winter, possibly in snow, then you should seriously consider getting yourself some winter tyres, a Blizz or similar accurate distance measuring device, speed tables and head for Switzerland next January. 

Find out more at: <http://mini-winter-rally.blogspot.co.uk/>



Nicolas Pinon in his Arden Sport engined 1960 Morris Mini.