



SMALL CARS SCOOP THE LONDON

McBride and Barrow (Anglia) Head the Four "Clean Sheets"

BY JOHN SPRINZEL

ONCE again the organizers have been defeated . . . and in spite of 225 miles of the "best" of rally roads in the Shires of Hereford, Brecknock and Radnor, four of the rally "circus" completed the course without penalty and the results were left to the two short driving tests held halfway through the rally. Messrs. McBride and Barrow emerged victorious, just ahead of David Seigle-Morris and journalist John Brown in a Mini-Minor borrowed from the writer the day before the rally. Third were Stan Annis and R. Binns, in their newly acquired Sebring Sprite, and fourth were R. Fidler and J. Hopwood in the second of the Northern Anglias. Wood and I were fifth, one minute down, and Geoff Mabbs and brother in the Tulip Rally winning Herald were sixth, losing 2 mins. on the very last special stage of the rally. Sebring Sprites won the team award, and the Wolverhampton and South Staffs Car Club collected the club team prize in spite of strong opposition from no fewer than seven teams entered by the organizing club.

In traditional manner, the London began with Friday midday starts near four "corners" of England and Johnny Wallwork waved the hopefuls away from Manchester. Anglia Television watched

the Cambridge starters, Col. Basset handled the Taunton entry, while Miss Ann Murray—"Miss London Motor Club of 1961"—supervised the London start. The meeting place, at the Chateau Impney Hotel at Droitwich, allowed an hour's "tea" break, before the 180 crews sped off into the evening along a "Tulip arrow"-type of route card. At Staunton-on-Wye, the navigators were all obviously confused, as the rally was nowhere near any of the traditional London territory—although the mass of neatly printed paperwork which was beginning to clutter up each car was certainly up to the usual and expensive London tradition. The first marked map—sheet 142—led the rally southwards towards Abergavenny, and although navigation was quite simple some of the shorter sections required a certain amount of press-on effort from the drivers. Marshalling, at the 21 manned control points on this section, was superb, and obviously the thought of the prize for the best run control was having its effect in some of the best marshalling ever seen in this country. Screens and lights were repeatedly wiped, times were clearly and politely called out, and even sweets and pencils were distributed from beside the camp fires of the controls. At one point it seemed as if the entire

WINNERS of the Dene and Llandair Challenge Trophies, S. Annis and R. Binns (Sebring Sprite) cross the bridge near Elan Village during the run home.

B.M.C. rally team was in charge, with the Morley twins, Ann Wisdom and Peter Riley gaily stamping and joking.

At the end of this first map there were a great number of unpenalized runners and consequently the two very simple driving tests held on the narrow and twisty Capel-y-Ffin road took on a new significance, with everyone trying their utmost to save split seconds on these tie-deciders. Rom Michalkiewicz took the honours here with his TR by putting up fastest aggregate time. The second marked map was handed out just after the tests—sheet 141—and this led south-west from near Hay-on-Wye to the Brecon area. This was all masterly stuff for the navigators, and a keen knowledge of the white roads was almost a necessity through the maze of twisting farm tracks and lanes along which John Suter and Ian Mackenzie had planned their last London before handing over to—as they put it—a "younger team". Even the most experienced of navigators found several new none-goers to add to their lists, although the rally could never be described as over hard on the driver, as long as the right route was selected. Among the favourites who lost time were Brian Harper and Ron Crellin, who stopped to right Anne Hall's Anglia, and Pat Moss, whose SAAB was obviously missing the guidance of B.M.C.'s new competition manager and could be seen travelling at very high speeds—along the wrong roads! Ken Piper, too, with lights growing dimmer and dimmer lost a good deal of time before the whole electrical system gave out. At the end of the second stage, the convoy found itself on the Eppynt Artillery ranges, faced with a 6½-mile special stage over mostly unfenced mountain road at average speeds varying between 40 and 50 miles per hour according to engine size.

Pat Moss set fastest time over this special section, which was made trickier through patches of mist in the lower reaches; her SAAB and our Sprite had caused considerable confusion by approaching the control beginning this special test along the actual test route—but hurried gate shutting prevented a repetition of this somewhat dangerous manoeuvre! Inevitably—a run over the mountain road to Tregaron, where the ever-open filling station replenished the almost bone-dry tanks, and then along the lanes to Elan Village and to the finish at Llandrindod Wells, to a hearty breakfast at the "Metropole". The results team toiled hard, but not until 3 p.m. was the final calculation ready, and all that was left was to hope everyone would be back next year—for the 12th London Rally.

Provisional Results

Outright Winners: R. McBride and D. Barrow (Anglia), 0 penalties; 2, D. Seigle-Morris and J. R. C. Brown (Mini), 0; 3, S. Annis and R. Binns (Sebring Sprite), 0; 4, R. Fidler and J. Hopwood (Anglia), 0; 5, J. Sprinzel and M. Wood (Sebring Sprite), 1; 6, G. Mabbs and D. Mabbs (Herald), 2; 7, B. Harper and R. Crellin (Sebring Sprite), 3; 8, M. Sutcliffe and G. Crabtree (Austin 7), 3; 9, D. Ham and J. A. Ambrose (Mini-Minor), 6; 10, S. Clippstone and J. King (Volkswagen), 6; 11, B. Bengry and D. Skeffington (Volkswagen), 8; 12, P. Astbury and K. Binns (Morgan), 10. **Team Prize:** Sebring Sprites (Annis, Sprinzel and Harper). **Club Prize:** Wolverhampton and S. Staffs (Annis, Harper and Astbury). **Ladies' Award:** Miss Pat Ozanne and Mrs. Pat Wright (nee Allison) (Austin 7). **Mixed Crew Award:** Mrs. Pauline Mayman and D. Hewitt (Herald).