



SHERIFF LAYS DOWN LAW!

Roger 'The Sheriff' Skeete reinforced his reputation as Barbados' top driver with a second consecutive victory at the renowned Sol Rally Barbados!

All 24 planned stages were completed without major interruption, ensuring the organising Barbados Rally Club was left celebrating another successful weekend.

After the results were made final, Skeete and co-driver Louis Venezia received their trophies from the Hon Stephen Lashley, Minister of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, at a packed prize-giving ceremony at The Boatyard, on the outskirts of the island's capital Bridgetown.

Skeete was once again in top form at the Caribbean's biggest annual motor sport international, winning by a margin of nearly 24 seconds. Driving his Subaru Impreza WRC S12, he was fastest on all seven of the Saturday morning stages, establishing a cushion of around 11 seconds by lunch.

However, arch rivals Paul Bourne and UK National Rally Champion Paul Bird were not too far adrift. They each claimed two stage wins in the afternoon, but Skeete still managed to increase his advantage to nearly 14 seconds by nightfall.

Bird and Scottish co-driver Kirsty Riddick were second overnight in their Ford Focus WRC, with Bourne and Ronald Plant, who were on their first attack in the WRC class, third in their Focus.

England's Rob Swann and Welsh co-driver Darren Garrod, who were the 2010 Group N winners, were an impressive fourth, half-a-second ahead of former winners, Jamaicans Gary Gregg and Hugh Hutchinson.

After a spin and stall on the day's penultimate stage dropped them from fourth, Trinidad's John Powell and Nicholas Telfer placed sixth with their

S12 specification Impreza WRC.

On the Sunday, Skeete continued to grow his advantage, although he was only fastest on five of the day's 11 stages. Still, he went on to win the event by 24 seconds, leaving his rivals trailing in his wake.

"We had a spectacular weekend," Skeete said afterwards. "We started with a completely different mindset, which allowed us to finish Saturday with a comfortable margin to build on through day two, which was easier than last year."

Bourne moved to second just before lunch, after Bird ran off the road on the third Malvern, causing the Focus to overheat on the subsequent LIME Kendal stage. The top four were as last year, with Bourne and Bird the remaining podium finishers, while a determined charge from Powell



carried him back to fourth.

Swann was delighted with fifth overall. His ambition had been a top six finish, and he commented afterwards:

"We had a great rally and will definitely be back with a WRC to get the job done!"

Gregg retired mid-way through the Sunday with mechanical issues, leaving sixth place to the local crew of Neil Armstrong and Barry Ward in the Toyota Starlet.

From stage one, on which he was the faster of the two, Armstrong had been engaged in an enthralling battle for SuperModified 10 and overall two-wheel-drive honours with the Suzuki Swift belonging to brothers Ian and Robert Warren. Swapping stage wins back and forth, Warren had the advantage overnight by little more than a second.

On the Sunday, Armstrong was on home ground. After losing out to Warren on the opening stage, he nailed four more stage wins to open up a near four-second advantage by lunch.

On the afternoon's first stage, the island's fickle weather patterns played a role. Rain fell as Warren arrived to brake for a 90-right, where he slid into the notorious 'Malvern wall'.

Thomas Maguire Perpetual Memorial Trophy

ALLAN MACKAY WITH GLENN CAMPBELL PRESENT PAUL BIRD WITH THE 'THOMAS MAGUIRE MEMORIAL TROPHY' WHICH THEY DONATED IN MEMORY OF THOMAS TO THE HIGHEST PLACED INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATOR - KIRSTY RIDDICK.

"The water was midway through the braking point," he rued. "The battle with Neil wasn't finished, that's what I am most upset about."

Armstrong finished sixth overall and highest-placed two-wheel-drive, but Warren was out of the overall running. Having failed to finish that stage, with repairs necessary - the Swift was also struck by Brett Clarke's Citroen C2 S1600 - but he did finish second in SM10.

As Armstrong was also slowed by Warren's incident, Cliff Roett and James Wilkie picked up the first of two SM10 stage wins in their Starlet.

Mere tenths of a second behind Armstrong at the finish was former UK National Champion Roger Duckworth, who was co-driven by Aled Davies in his Impreza WRC. After anti-lag problems on the Saturday, he got into his stride on the Sunday, ending the day with a stage win at the Sol Aviation SuperSpecial.

Having won a fully-paid entry to the event following his victory on Rallye Sunseeker National in February, Duckworth said:

"We were probably too cautious on day one, but got faster. I was stunned by the pace of the locals, and the heat was really something. I have to see how the wife enjoyed her trip, then we'll see if I'll be back next year!"

The top 10 was completed by Mark Hamilton, Josh Read and Geoff Noel. Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9 campaigners, Hamilton and navigator Clive Howell were the leading Group N contenders together with Geoff Noel and Kreigg Yearwood. Hamilton won all but one stage on the Saturday and despite



PART 2 - NEXT MONTH
 Loads more pics and fun PLUS how you could compete in the Caribbean in 2012!

Pacenotes VIP prize winners, Mark and Richard Hughes from Armagh, re-live their 'amazing' Bajan adventure...

Amazing!

Amazing...what more can I say? From when I caught the first glimpse of the gorgeous turquoise sea surrounding the beautiful Barbadian island, it truly was a trip to remember.

When we arrived, we were met by some members of the Barbados Rally Club. Our taxi man, Shaun (of Bajan Tours), my brother Richard and I were given a warm welcome, in various meanings of the word!

Such was the heat and humidity, my glasses even steamed up when I stepped off the plane! Thank

goodness for air conditioning!

We were then taken to our hotel, the Divi Southwinds, which was situated on the south west coast and only around 100 metres from the beach. That was first on the agenda for us...straight into the sea! The water there remains around 27 degrees Celsius, so there was no problem getting in, and definitely no need for a wetsuit! That's when I think it hit me. I'm in Barbados!

That night, we were taken to an evening for the



event sponsors, which was our first real taste of the hospitality and friendliness of the people. It was as if we had known them already and were just meeting again.

That night was an early one, however, after the long day's travelling and the fact that 10pm there was 3am back home as far as my body was concerned!

The next morning, we received our hire car from Stoutes car rentals...a Suzuki Jimny. It was a great job for getting around. The island has some amazing sights to be seen, from the flatter plains and sugar cane fields of the south, to the hilly forested areas in the north.

On the Saturday, I saw the biggest scrutiny for a rally that I've ever seen!

These people love motorsport and it was plain to see as the crowds gathered to mix with the cars, drivers and crews preparing for the Caribbean's biggest annual

international rally.

This was my first opportunity to see the cars, a lot of which were very different to what we at home. Some had huge, mad spoilers, chrome alloys, colourful paintjobs and a Mark 2 Escort was even decked out with Christmas lights for the night stages!

The Shell V-power King of the Hill event, which is a hillclimb contested over four stages, took place on the Sunday. This event is used to set the seeding for the upcoming rally.

We were looked after well, being picked up at the hotel and brought to the VIP truck on the stage where we had an excellent view with food and refreshments laid on for us. Here we experienced the enthusiasm of the locals gathered in their hundreds, all cheering on their respective drivers.

After the hillclimb, it was back to service at Simpson Motors to see how everyone had got on. Unfortunately for the only Northern Ireland team, Glenn Campbell's Micra had broken a driveshaft which had put a premature end to his day. Meanwhile, the Scottish Mackay



Motorsport Anglia WRC was having fuelling problems. Thankfully, both cars were fixed for the main rally.

So with the first taste of Barbadian motorsport over us, we had almost a week to wait before the rally itself got underway. However, we weren't left twiddling our thumbs!

On the Monday evening, a pig roast was hosted by the rally chairman, Barry Gale. It was the first time that I'd seen this done, and I must say it made for tasty cuisine!

On the Tuesday, we headed down to the boatyard and set sail aboard the "Jammin" catamaran for a five hour cruise up the west coast. Here we got the chance to do some snorkelling where we were able to see turtles swimming along amongst us, as well as hundreds of fish flashing

past at our fingertips!

The crew even swam refreshments out to us while relaxing on lilos! It was definitely an experience not to be missed if you find yourself lucky enough to have the chance.

We went to see Harrison's limestone caves on the Wednesday before going back to the hotel where the drivers' briefing was taking place...not to mention the obligatory social gathering afterwards!

On the Thursday, we headed to Vaucluse racetrack to watch some pre-rally testing. The sun was beaming down as usual, and it was a good chance to get to know some of the drivers. We even got a few spins out in a Mark 2 Escort. Thanks to Geoff Bell for that!

In the evening, we went to rally central where a fish fry was taking place. We sampled some flying fish and dolphin which were both quite tasty.

As the night went on, the songs started from Team Mackay and Team Tartan, and good craic was had by all. Then we had a day off on Friday, before the rally started on the

next day.

Here it was then...Saturday morning and the start of the rally! We were picked up as usual at 8am and taken to the VIP marquee. It gave us a grandstand view of the stage and we were provided with meals throughout the day.

This is where you could really feel the buzz of the crowds lining the stage, especially when something went wrong or someone went a little bit too sideways...at which point the fans would erupt in cheers, whistles and claps!

We were taken to various stages over the weekend, all of which provided plenty of entertainment. Again,



the people were so hospitable, stopping us to offer a drink or some shade under their umbrellas.

The highlight of the rally would have to be the super special stage. It was the last stage of the rally and was run under the cover of darkness.

The stage was set with raised ground halfway around, providing a natural grandstand for the thousands of spectators. It really was super special! As each dual came to an end with the leading car crossing the finish line, the cheers sent shivers down your spine!

The rally came to a close with the prize giving which took place on the Monday afternoon. It ran on into the evening with Roger Skeete taking the victory laurels.

That just left Tuesday morning to pack up and get ready for home again. It really was a great prize to win. I can't think of a better holiday that I could have won. For anyone thinking of going, I can't recommend it enough. Thanks to all who made it happen. We really had a blast! But I only have one problem now...I want to go back next year!