

Caribbean dream was worthwhile for Nigel

But Worswick's Barbados Rally ends on low note

By **ANDY CRYER**
Sports editor

IT was meant to be a once in a lifetime experience but the Barbados Rally is becoming a summer habit Nigel Worswick is struggling to give up.

The Great Harwood rally driver's second experience of the Sol Rally Barbados may have ended in ultimate disappointment but that wasn't enough to stop him returning with a host of "fantastic memories".

After an impressive 29th place finish in his Caribbean debut a year ago, he returned in the Worswick Engineering Ford Escort MkII with high hopes of improvement after an engine transplant, moved it up a class.

Mechanical problems were eventually to prove their downfall but, despite having to withdraw towards the end of the rally, Worswick is already considering another return next year.

He said: "Just like last year's event, I really enjoyed it. It was absolutely brilliant. Last year it was supposed to be a once in a lifetime opportunity.

"But we enjoyed it so much, it came round to making a decision and – with the entrance fees reduced – we decided to make it a twice in a lifetime and do it again.

"I don't know if we will go again, it is very tempting though. The amount of people who have been going there for 12 years, having originally only planned on going once, shows how good it is.

"What else is there to do for your summer holiday? Summer holidays are great but you can only read or drink a beer for so long. I get bored and this is the ideal combination."

Entering the rally is no last minute decision – with the car needing to be ready a month before the event to be shipped to Barbados.

"You have to have the car ready a good month before the rally to get

ISLAND EFFORT Blackburn rally ace Nigel Worswick and co-driver Lindsey Pilkington in their Ford Escort Mk2 at the Barbados Rally, as the crowds gathered on the Caribbean island, inset



it to the boat, so you have to be organised, but we did that," he said.

"We arrived a week before the rally. The weekend before they have a king of the hill race, which is just one stage. There were a

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Rally driver Nigel Worswick

massive amount of spectators, thousands of people watching it.

"You have four runs up the king of the hill to determine your starting position in the rally.

"We were seeded 70 in the race, out of 105, with the higher number the faster the car and we finished

CARIBBEAN CRUISE Worswick and Pilkington rallying in Barbados before they hit mechanical problems

32nd, which we were fairly happy with.

"That meant we started 40th for the real rally. The King of the Hill was a great experience. Thousands of people were watching and it was like a day long party."

Improvement for him and co driver Lindsey Pilkington looked on the cards well into the second day of competition, until a throttle position sensor problem forced their withdrawal.

It wasn't enough to ruin their experience but did leave the pair reflecting on 'what might have been'.

He said: "We then had the rest of the week to get the car ready for the rally. We started the rally fine but after the third stage our

starter motor failed and that meant we had to be careful because we could not afford to stall or spin.

"We came back to service though and spotted the suspension bracket in the body shell had cracked.

"This was serious and not safe to carry on. We had 20 minutes to sort it out. I said 'if we can't fix it we would not be able to carry on'.

"We tried to weld it but the welding equipment didn't work so we drove up to a local team and a local mechanic Roger Field did a brilliant job with the welding. I was happy so we got to the next stage at the last minute.

"We finished the day 22nd overall and, having finished 29th last year, we were very happy and went into the second day thinking we could have ended up 14th. Unfortunately with about four stages to go, our throttle position sensor fell off and the engine went dead.

"So with three stages left we decided to pull out when we still had an engine. It was a very tough decision but overall we had a fantastic time and met some fantastic people."

Worswick and Pilkington will be guest speakers at Clitheroe & DMC, on Tuesday June 26, at Waddington Social Club, talking about their trip to Barbados, at 8.30pm.