



For Immediate Release:

Tiger roars to success winning class at Tour Ireland



Earlier this month (12-15 May) Chairman Jeremy Holden competed in the 'Tour Ireland' rally - driving a very rare 1964 Sunbeam Tiger ex-Works Rally Car, one of only seven Rootes Group works ever made. Jeremy Holden and his navigator Angelica Fuentes Garcia scooped first in class award in what was a tough and challenging rally plagued with wet slippery track conditions and numerous potholes on the closed road stages.

Unlike many fellow competitors Jeremy and Angelica completed the rally unaided, with no support crew or spanner required. This was quite a feat in itself; many other vehicles didn't make it across the finish line.

Speaking about the rally, Jeremy Holden said 'I was a bit apprehensive being paired with co-driver Angelica Fuentes, not only is she a professional rally navigator and driver, but she has won numerous races, and has taken part in over 200 rallies including 30 times at La Carrerra Panamericana Rally, Mexico. I was conscious that Angelica and I had never raced together before, had no time to test, and was competing in a vehicle that had literally just undergone major restoration days before, and had no support crew. The Tiger had not raced competitively since 1993 and ironically one year (to the day) after I bought it, it had been restored and we were thrashing it around Southern Ireland and the UK on the same day'.

He continued 'expectations to win were high, and we had everything stacked up against us, which made the win even more satisfying. I would like to extend a big thank you to Hardy Hall Restorations – what a grand job they have done, and to Gauge Pilot for the navigational aid'.

'Tour Ireland' was a new event for 2015 organised by Tour Britannia and sponsored by Holden. The tour started and finished at the HQ in Llandudno, North Wales and included 24 hours in Ireland, using the high-speed ferry from Holyhead to Dublin. The Irish leg has four closed-road stages in the Wicklow Mountains as well as a race at Mondello Park.

The duo competed in Jeremy's ex works Sunbeam Tiger, which has very recently undergone a full restoration with much of the cars originality being preserved. Jeremy's model (The AHP 294B) features the original Ford 4.2 Litre V8 engine. It made its debut at the 1964 Geneva Rally, just three months after it was registered, where 'Tiny' Lewis and Barry Hughes took the controls and edged the car to victory. Heralded as the most campaigned of the seven Tiger models, highlights for this particular car include being driven by Maurice Gatsonides in the 1965 Monte Carlo Rally, as well as by Peter Harper in the 1966 Monte. Other successes include a spell of endurance racing at the Zandvoort circuit, shattering Dutch National Records in

3, 6, 12 and 24 hour categories where it averaged a speed of 75.47mph over the course of 23 hours, despite regularly pulling into the pit lane to be topped up with water. The car so impressed Gatsonides that he christened it "Thunderbus".

In 1965, AHP was forced to retire from the Alpine Rally when the car caught fire. A rear brake shoe failed and the resulting debris damaged the hydraulics sending a jet of highly flammable brake fluid onto a hot brake drum with inevitable results. In the ensuing blaze, all the fire extinguishers were used up to quell the flames and the resulting damage is part of the reason why the car was returned to the Competition Department at Rootes for a full rebuild.

Despite lying unused in the 70s & 80s and being prepared for classic rallying in the early 1990s, a full (FIA spec) rebuild by Hardy Hall Restorations was needed. AHP is now in fine fettle and retains many period competition features including the 288 limited slip diff, the long-range saddle tank fitted in the boot, quick-rack steering, the original works hardtop badged "1966 Marathon de la Route", period Halda rally instruments and the fly-off handbrake specially made for Peter Harper to aid his cornering technique. Indeed all the interior trim is original, including the driver's seat which was specially tailored to suit Peter Harper's long-shanked frame.

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