

Nova-powering

TONY SHIELDS' Nova continued its ascendance by winning the Gladstone Tyres Three Swans Rally. Shields and navigator Jim Kitson brought the Amriks of Yorkshire 1300 flyer home almost a minute and a half ahead of Pete Smith in the Swift Caravans/Formula One Engineering RS2000 that is normally used by Ron Beecroft. Smith also took along Mike Kidd, Beecroft's 1986 navigator designate. John Mennell and Chris Jarvis in their Sunbeam 1600 came closest to challenging Shields and Kitson but a fall dropped them to 14th at the finish.

Run on maps 100, 101 and 106 and using 185 miles of the Yorkshire Wolds, Selby and District MC's event provided the season's opener for the ANCC Yorkshire Shell Oils League and Teesside MSG championships. Last year's winners Tony Jenkins/John Holdsworth were the first of 83 crews to leave the Hazelbush Cafe near York. One hour was allowed for plotting and some of the expert crews required nearly all of the 60m to put Clerk-of-the-Course David John's tricky route onto the maps. Smith/Kidd were second seeds and should have been followed out of MTC1 by Ken Skidmore/Charlie Woodward but the K&N Motorsport Sunbeam refused to start initially then started late after being hot wired. Shields/Kitson ran at four and Pete Wells/John Staker at five. The latter crew took the place of Geoff Birkett/Dave Orrick who were unable to locate the large tyres required for the Northern Auto Sport Manta. Fast local crews filled the next 10 places.

Twelve sections had been arranged, all timed to the second. The first selective, starting in Buttercrambe Moor Wood saw three of the top 10 exit the rally. Skidmore's throttle cable broke to add to his earlier problems and on being repaired broke again, so his Sunbeam was taken home in pieces. A second Sunbeam in trouble was that of Les Clark/Judith Flavell, running at number 10, the Rally Repaints of Selby team leader, pulled out with a cracked water pump casing. The third retirement qualified Wells/Staker when the shortest distance was taken when they ran off into the ditch on the serious bend on the rally at

third on 11m 10s in the Aston Insurance Services RS2000. Cotton/Sumpner were in fourth place until this section but the Sunbeam ran out of fuel before the selective finish and the crew took time out to put a gallon in and dropped back two places as a result.

At the halfway point Mennell/Jarvis held the lead with a total of 26m 02s from Smith/Kidd on 26m 47s and Shields/Kitson 27m 05s. But the strain was starting to show. Shields' Nova had blown out some of its oil on the long straights and required a good top-up. Smith's RS2000 was proving even more thirsty, for lubricant was blowing out of the camshaft rear oil seal and contaminating the clutch.

The second half of the route took crews north onto sheet 101. The first selective of this leg used the yellows around Cottam and finished at Foxholes. Jenkins/Holdsworth let Smith/Kidd past when they were caught in the heavy mist that affected high ground. Smith/Kidd went on to take the quickest time with 4m 53s which put them a minute closer to Mennell/Jarvis. Shields/Kitson took second fastest on 5m 19s despite overshooting three consecutive junctions at the start and finish of Octon white. Mennell/Jarvis caught Cotton/Sumpner in the fog and pulled past on the B1253 only to overshoot the slot into the white that Shields had missed, which allowed Cotton back in front. Cotton/Sumpner took advantage and located the next two slots accurately to pull back 44s on Mennell/Jarvis.

The flying little Vauxhall was

quickest on the water stage, passing Jenkins/Holdsworth on the way. The time 5m 13s put Shields/Kitson into the lead. Mennell/Jarvis had the next best time for this section but took a short cut along a footpath and in doing so missed a secret check on the triangle at 960765 and were penalised with a fall. Smith/Kidd held third quickest with 6m 19s, but then had to take a little detour for more oil. The white RS2000 got through an incredible ten gallons of the stuff in the second half.

Moving west onto map 100 the fog lifted for selective nine over Thorpe Basset Wold and Grimston Brow. Shields/Kitson extended their lead with 4m 31s. Back on home ground, Mennell/Jarvis equalled this time but their fall had dropped them back. After a patchy performance in the first half Retchless/Richardson had got themselves organised and took third quickest on this section with 4m 47s.

Hoping for a change of fortune, Mennell/Jarvis pressed on taking the Langton-Menethorpe section with 2m 55s from Shields, Jenkins and Retchless all of whom tied on 3m 21s. Selective 11 used the Castle Howard road passing through the gatehouses and finishing on Welburn white. Mennell/Jarvis topped the times again with 1m 57s but Shields/Kitson were only a second behind. Roy Jarvis/Jane Campbell in the Jarvis-built Kadett 1.3 were joint third through the flying gatehouse along with Cotton/Sumpner, both on 2m 13s.

On the final section by Crambe, Shields almost lost the event when the Nova's electrics cut-out, but life returned to the wires and he went on to take a final fastest time with 1m 57s. Retchless/Richardson took a second on 2m 01s, with Smith/Kidd 2m 05s. The Three Swans had proved to be a tough but enjoyable event and Shields/Kitson emerged worthy winners.

R.S.
1. T. Shields/G. Kitson (Nova 1.3) 49m 04s; 2. P. Smith/M. Kidd (RS2000) 50m 55s; 3. T. Jenkins/G. Holdsworth (RS2000) 56m 24s; 4. C. Cotton/R. Sumpner (Sunbeam 1.6) 58m 12s; 5. S. Retchless/J. Richardson (RS2000) 58m 44s; 6. P. Billam/C. Billam (RS2000) 59m 56s; 7. R. Jarvis/G. Campbell (Kadett 1.3) 60m 47s; 8. C. Stringman/P. Burns (RS2000) 66m 07s; 9. A. Etherington/L. Walker (Chevette 2.3) 68m 55s; 10. L. Firth/S. Argent (RS2000) 67m 23s.