

Louise takes on the Challenge



A new competitor on Rally Isle of Man this year is Louise Cook who is competing in the Challenge event and taking to the unique Manx lanes – and the entire Challenge championship - for the first time.

After finishing second in the Lady Quest rally competition a few years ago, Louise did her BARS test at the Higgins Forest Experience Rally School to gain her license and went on to contest her first event, the Rockingham Stages in a borrowed Peugeot 205. From there she went on to refine her driving techniques on multiple trips to the frozen lakes in Sweden.

But in late 2007 disaster struck for Louise when her father Robert became seriously ill with cancer. Robert was the reason behind Louise's passion for cars, being a car designer by profession and having aided in the design of the ever popular Ford Escort MkII. Robert came to a number of rallies including Rally Isle of Man when he assisted Stefan Davis during his BRC campaign. He always loved the buzz of the island, making the Isle of Man a memory filled place for Louise. Her father passed away July 9th 2008.

Louise followed in the footsteps of her father and was awarded a scholarship in car design at Coventry University. Although she went on to complete a diploma in car design but the passion of the driving of a car than designing was the forefront of Louise's mind, so at the end of 2009 she did all she could to compete.

Luxuries such as owning a road car had to go as Louise gave her all to ensure a season of rallying happened this year. Louise has had over 500 sponsorship meetings and has worked night and day to raise support. Louise is currently lying 13th in the British Rally Championship Challenge and 4th Junior driver.

You can count on one hand still the events Louise has contested - the Isle of Man Challenge Rally will be her fifth only event.

"The Isle of Man is a truly special place, not only because of my father's love for the beauty of the place when he visited but the whole atmosphere and the nature of the people. The roads are ridiculously technical and if I can get my head around the lines and bumps I know it will spring board me further for the Ulster Rally," said Louise.

The Isle of Man Challenge Rally is a non-scoring event, the pressures of the rally being held on the anniversary of her fathers passing and the nature of the rally means Louise is set on a 90% rally. She will develop her understanding and pace notes for a good attack in 2011.

"With a 90% strategy and no points at stake I can soak up all the knowledge without my competitive streak getting in the way. I also have some Reiger 3 way dampers fitted to the Fiesta so I can hopefully get the car really dialled in and have a great set up for next years event." said Louise.

Louise is hoping to be out in a new build Ford Fiesta, but development problems have forced the project to be delayed so far this season. The team are pushing hard to have the car ready but the points scoring round next time out in Ulster will remain the priority.

Louise will be co-driven by rally driver Stefan Davis this weekend.

