

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

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CLASS ACT FOR COOKIE

British Rally Driver Louise Cook contested her first rally outside of the UK this weekend, the Exotic Green Rally of Etten-Leur, Holland. Cookie took the time to work on her tarmac technique and with the event made up of high speed corners and high speed braking down to slow tight corners, the rally was the perfect event to practice. The female driver was warmly welcomed to Holland, the Dutch showed an enormous amount of support which made Cookie feel at home. The rally consisted of 12 stages and around 120 stage miles.

"The first three stages went well, we had a small note error which led to overshooting a hairpin and it took a little while to get into my pace notes because there was so many fast corners. I got to grips with it by stage two but my tyres were not happy. They were turning into marshmallow and they were not giving the best feedback on the stages, especially braking. It was strange being abroad, I thought it would just feel the same, but little things, like the start line clocks were different, and oil cans for chicanes instead of hay bales, made it all feel quite surreal. I soon got stuck in

to the rally though." Said Cookie.

The third stage was a route around a large Industrial Estate which you looped around three times.

"Normally I am knocking on the doors drumming up sponsorship on Industrial Estates, so it was ironic to be driving flat out round one, I loved it! By the second loop you knew the track, so it was good to be able to concentrate on driving technique rather than where I was going." Said Cook.

In first service, the crew found the tyres had turned to chewing gum!

"We didn't have a large selection of tyres with us, we were just using our old tyres until there was nothing left of them to keep costs down. So, we only had medium and soft tyres. The Dutch tarmac is so abrasive! We normally can work the tyres really hard before getting any heat into them in the UK, but they were being demolished in Holland. So, with no options, we ran the same compound all day. I adapted my driving style and tried to make everything more progressive to save the rubber a little. They held up luckily, though our times were obviously suffering." Said Louise.

The rally continued to challenge Cookie, driving with slicks on the mud, cobbles, sand and gravel, road sections that UK stages do not contain. The rally ran smoothly until the last three stages when the engine would not rev above 5000, a strange electrical fault had developed.

"We flicked the kill switch off and back on mid stage which seemed to cure it for a while. Then a couple of miles down the road and it was playing up again. Our times dropped right down, which was a shame as we were leading our class. We still managed to hold onto 1st in class and 32nd overall from the 65 entries. I am chuffed to bits with the result, especially with it being my first overseas event. I hope it is a sign of the future." Said Louise.

With a little more tarmac experience, Cookie feels a lot more confident about going to her next British Rally Championship round, the Ulster Rally in Northern Ireland. It is now back to drumming up the support needed to contest the next BRC round for Cookie.

For more details e-mail louise_brc@hotmail.co.uk or check out www.cutecookie.co.uk



COOKIES CORNER

"A massive thanks to DFDS Seaways for enabling me to do my first rally overseas. It was great to get some more tarmac miles under my belt and I couldn't have done it without them and all of my sponsors. A huge thank you to the rally, to all the spectators for making me feel so welcome and also to the lady who brought over a beer from the bar before I went over the finish line in Etten-Leur high street, saying she was so proud of how I had driven and I was an inspiration, doing it for the girls!"



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