

square right and got stuck. It turned the whole rally on its head, but Paul and I just had to get our heads down and finish the job.

The final two stages were nerve racking and to say I drove cautiously would be an understatement. Reaching the end of the final test was a huge relief. To return in Finland, get two wins and lead the championship...the dream was on again!

### *IRC return*

Just before SWRC France, we tested with Sainteloc for Sanremo. I had added the event in September but from the time of doing so, I had some apprehension.

I knew the rally would bring the memories of June flooding back but if I was to continue on my path, this was another hurdle I needed to overcome. Even seeing the (Peugeot) 207 touched a nerve. Sitting in the car at first was an ordeal and we took it very easy for the first few runs. The Sainteloc team were very patient and the test



turned out very well.

We only had a day off after winning in France and by the Tuesday we were back on recce duty. The stages are very similar to that of Sicily, twists and turns, and a lot of armco barriers. Again, like

the test, I needed a little time to adjust. After getting to grips with my feelings, I got down to work and put in the usual detailed recce.

The 44km, Ronde stage stood out from the start. We anticipated there would be a lot of notes. Usually my reference is one page per kilometre but we couldn't believe there was 88 in total by the end!

On to the rally and we bedded ourselves in over the Friday's afternoon loop. On stage four, Ronde, I got a good rhythm from the start and was delighted with third fastest. It's hard to beat the

local boys but fifth overnight was pleasing.

On the Saturday morning, my confidence was high and again I found a good rhythm on the morning opener. We gained a place to fourth by passing Stefano Albertini but the Italian retook the position after stage six.

There were four stages to go and I was enjoying the fight but you never know what's around the corner. In this case, it was a puncture.

We dropped three minutes and were back to sixth. Over the closing loop, I decided to keep pushing so to get two second fastest and a third fastest time was satisfying.

On the finish ramp, I discovered that I had been awarded the Colin McRae IRC Flat Out Trophy. What a way to end. This one was for you, TED.

Well, that was yet another big month over and by the looks of things, a bigger one is to come. Bring on Rally Spain and the SWRC Finale!