

B34 WE JOIN A BRITISH CAR RALLYE

PROJECT: EUROPE 2011

SUBJECT: B34 WE JOIN A BRITISH CAR RALLYE SCRIPT

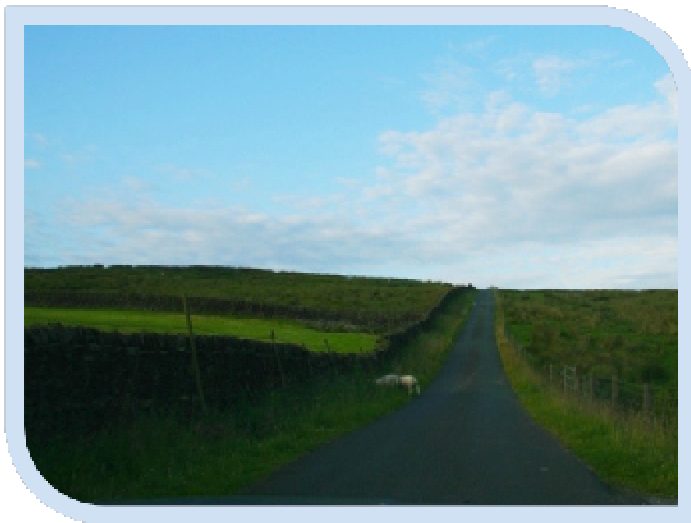
DATE: 24 JULY 2011

It was a Sunday and we were invited to participate in a typical car club rallye in England's north country. "Be at the Craven Heifer Pub in Skipton no later than 10:30 AM and we'll introduce you round," said John Chatburn, a friend of Chris Bratt's. John and his wife Marjorie have been long time club rallye participants since he finished restoring a 1961 MG A. His is not a commissioned restoration. John took it apart, replaced or restored what was needed and put it back together in his own garage with his own hands. To say he is quite proud of it is an understatement.

We again demonstrated our remarkable talent for getting lost and rolled into Skipton as the group was starting their engines. It was an average turnout for a local club rallye and attracted 19 cars including a Morgan 4/4, Triumph Stag and TR6, Lotus Elan + 2, Fiat 500, Wolseley 1500, Morris Minor and a spate of MG's...mostly B's. Ours was the only T series representative. Unfortunately, no pictures because they'd only be of rear- ends leaving.

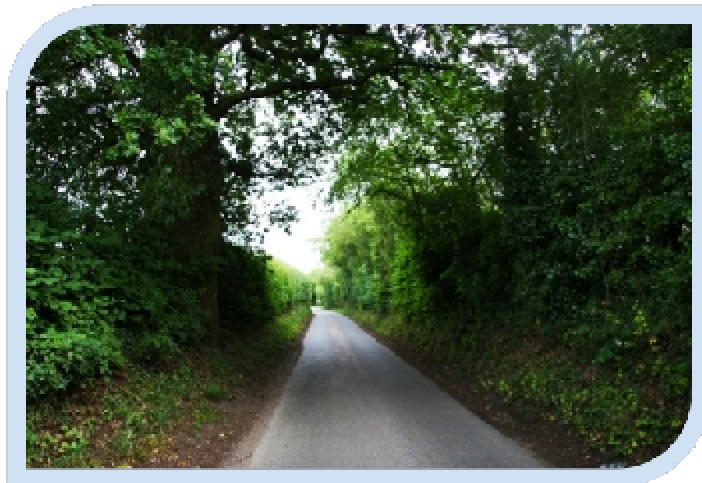


John and Marjorie were waiting for us and, since the skies were threatening, helped wrap our luggage in plastic provided by Chris Bratt before we left Arnside. The Chatburns thoughtfully agreed to hold back on the throttle so we could follow them through a course laid out by demonic minds.



Up and down we went over highland hills swept clean of shrubbery by continuous winds and passed pastures kept weed free by sheep that casually wander from field to field over the bumpy roads. The tormenting rains began and the casual sweep of the remaining wiper was not enough to remove the fear of collecting ram's horns as a new hood ornament.

Then we plunged down the hills into bog country with country roads so narrow that we got grass stains on both fenders at the same time. Louise, with teeth clenched, said she wasn't having fun anymore.



We added to our own difficulties by neglecting to park the luggage somewhere before the start of the rallye and the rain. This burdened us with 150 pounds of un-sprung weight in the rear of the car, a canvas roof with slits for windows and a phlegmatic wiper that shut off after every jolt from the bumpy road



After checking the luggage rack for possible damage at the 50 mile point, we decided to call it quits and offered our apologies to the Chatburns. It was all Marjorie could do to keep from showering us with kisses and hugs. It appears she'd been badgering John to stop miles before and, to make her point, quit reading the rallye route instructions to him. For all we know, we might have been following a lost car. Being a practical man, John decided to call it a day.



At their suggestion we repaired to the Tempest Arms pub that proudly displays a sign declaring, "It's official. The Tempest Arms. UK pub of the year 2011". It was Sunday afternoon crowded and full of atmosphere as well. From a hefty menu I selected the pork belly roast with mash and boiled vegetables while Louise chose a special salad that contained items that she described as "strange things." Both were good, enjoyed and devoured.



The Chatburns graciously invited us to their home to watch the end of the televised Formula 1 race at Silverstone, England. What luck; complete strangers who both enjoy watching professional motor racing. John was also eager to look into the problem caused by our door opening on the motorway. He's been without a project since completing the MG A restoration and set upon the problem like a bird dog chasing a pheasant. Once completed, he cast eyes on the luggage rack but we ran out of hours. Marjorie and John, ever the perfect hosts, insisted we spend the night and even prepared a lavish breakfast the following morning. Imagine...all this from perfect strangers. Best of all, they're strangers no more. These types of people will certainly be the part of the MG experience that we will miss the most.



Next we're off to Stratford Upon Avon to soak up a little British culture...after a stop at Iron Bridge.

Tally ho.
Louise and Ray