



Drive It Day 2012

“The Day was rather grey and gloomy as the intrepid adventurers headed off into the great unknown.”

Roughly translated this is :

“ My god it was wet as myself, Alison, Brian and Marion Franklin and Ian and Gerry Ball left the Kingfisher for a picnic in Tatton Park “

Ian led the route out taking in bottom Mossley down to the main junction at Staley Vegas, after heading down to Ashton a quick blast down the M60 saw us taking the junction for the A34.

From here Ian then headed through Gatley and then down the B5166 towards Styal.

Lots of standing water everywhere and indeed Ian and Gerry were nearly swamped by a 4x4 coming the other way.

Anyway after meandering down the country lanes we passed a few other classics Morris / Triumphs etc but not a wave from any of them. Perhaps they like me were struggling to see through the misty screen before them.

Then we reached our first goal of the day, this being the tunnel under the runway at Manchester Airport. For some reason we all appear to have driven with higher revs in order to lift the exhaust note to an exuberant rumble.



From there we headed for Ashley and entered Tatton Park at the main Northern Entrance. As you can see from the picture we decided to set up camp under the tree's by the Mere, some shelter from the wind we thought. Thankfully Ian had brought a gazebo so we settled down to a leisurely picnic.

After this it was decided that in order to warm up a coffee house was required, and we retired to the courtyard coffee house and shops.

We finally left Tatton by the Knutsford exit and again ably led by Ian headed for the A34 at Handforth.

Leaving the M60 at Ashton we finally parted company on the borders of Mossley as we all headed our separate ways.

Thanks again to Ian for leading the way and for bringing the Gazebo.

With the amount of rain / standing water he has since suggested that we could form a new “ Sub committee “

Martin



The Origins of Dry if Day BRISTOL, 23-25 APRIL 1900

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April 1900 marked the first time a competitive motorsport event was seen in the Bristol area when, on the 23rd of that month, the city was host to the 1000 mile round Britain Reliability Trial at the end of its first day. Indeed, apart from some races at the Crystal Palace velodrome in 1899, this three-week long event really signalled the beginning of motorsport in the UK.

Back at the dawn of the 20th century motor cars were rare in Britain, these new vehicles being enjoyed by relatively few, well-off, individuals. And a large part of the populace were not too appreciative of these wealthy joyriders speeding around, kicking up great dustclouds and running down livestock. With usual means of travel and transport then being by either horse or railway, those with established interests in bloodstock or the railways were also concerned that this new form of transport, only legalised four years earlier in 1896, would pose a threat to their investments.

To help the fledgling British motor industry publicly demonstrate that motors were desirable and legitimate vehicles, and not just rich boys toys, Claude Johnson, Secretary of the Automobile Club (the forerunner of the RAC), conceived a 1000 mile trial over some of the most demanding roads of England and Scotland, with exhibitions of the competing vehicles in the major towns and cities visited en-route. Such an event would not only demonstrate the reliability and performance of the motors, but also allow people, many of whom would not even have seen a car before, a close-up view of these vehicles. The Trial, from London to Edinburgh and back, was scheduled over three weeks from 23rd April to 12th May.

Motoring enthusiasts and the budding motor industry accepted this challenge, 83 entries being received. A mix of trade entries, with 'professional' drivers, and private individuals, this encompassed a wide variety of vehicles, petrol and steam powered, from one-person motor tricycles to large family wagonettes, and even a Daimler bus; from voiturettes to 12 HP giants such as CS Rolls' Panhard, the fastest car in the country at that time. Looking down the entry list only the name of Peugeot remains unchanged today as a car maker, but other names, such as Benz, Napier, Daimler (one such driven by JD Siddeley), and Wolseley (driven by Herbert Austin) are still familiar. There was one lady entrant, Mrs. Bazalgette in a 3HP Benz Ideal, while some Frenchmen added a continental flavour.

While the accent may have been on reliability rather than speed, there was after all a maximum legal limit of 12 mph then in force (and the Trial regulations denied drawing any advantage from exceeding this, or 8 mph through towns and villages) the overall event did include a number of optional timed tests, such as hillclimbs in the Lake District and Scotland, and a 1-mile speed trial at Welbeck Park in Nottinghamshire - the first outright speed competitions in the UK.

Bristol, however, was just to be the staging post at the end of the first day's 118.5 mile run along the old coaching road (the A4) from London. By the time cars reached Bath heavy rain had fallen making progress over the greasy tramlines and soaked sett paved streets of the town particularly difficult. Following a stop in Bath for tea, the route led on through Saltford and Keynsham, with cars nominally scheduled to reach Bristol at 6.40 pm, where the inward control was manned by Messrs. CD Edbrooke and TD Willard. The Bristol organising committee had provided a sting in the tail for the first day however, as before reaching their final stopping place, the Drill Hall on Queens Road, competitors had to tackle the stiff climb up Park Street.

First to arrive in Bristol, just after 4pm, was CS Rolls' Panhard, with other early arrivals including SF Edge in an 8HP Napier and John Scott Montagu in his 12HP Daimler. Many took the hill with ease, in front of large crowds on College Green and Park Street itself, but some of the low-powered single- or twin-cylinder cars just struggled up in first gear, helped by their dismounted passengers pushing at the rear, while a few had to go round by Colston Street and Park Row to avoid the climb.

The Bristol Times & Mirror reporter recorded that "with so many engines driven by petroleum spirit there was a noticeable odour, but it was not strong enough to be entirely disagreeable. The motors generally seemed to be under splendid control, and the ease with which the steering apparatus worked was generally remarked upon by the spectators." One vehicle perhaps not so under control had been the Simms 'Motor Wheel', a front-wheel-drive tricycle, steered through the rear wheel, which, having already skidded and overturned on the tramlines in Bath, repeated that exercise in Brislington, and turned up in a "most dilapidated condition", although the driver was unhurt and finished within his time allowance. The cars had to negotiate some road works at the lower end of Queens Road where the Bristol Tramways Company had their lines up, leaving just enough room to get through and park up in the Drill Hall, where Messrs. W Kemp, J Broadrib, and Dr. ED Bernard were in charge. There they could all be viewed by the public between 6.30 and 11pm (admission 2 shillings), although the stragglers, beset by various difficulties, were still arriving until shortly after midnight.

While a few had dropped out en-route, most had eventually arrived safely, and but for the enforced 12 mph average it was reckoned that three times that speed could have easily been achieved by the more powerful cars. The Bristol Times & Mirror noted: "A trip from London to Bristol in a day demonstrated well the capabilities of motor vehicles to fit between an express train and driving behind relays of good horses."

Next morning, Tuesday, cars were taken out of the hall, to have the dust of the previous days run cleaned off, and "Queens Road, Park Street, and other thoroughfares were full of bustle, the cars were whisking about in all directions" - the first signs of traffic congestion in the city, perhaps? Back inside the Hall, the cars were once more on display to the public (noon to 6pm, one shilling; 6pm to 10pm, sixpence, with the proceeds going to the Lord Mayor's Boer War fund) with a good crowd taking the opportunity to inspect them and listen to explanations from the owners and drivers and, in the evening, also listen to the band of Gloucestershire Regiment 'City of Bristol' Battalion.

On a grey and cold Wednesday morning the cars filed out of the Drill Hall ten minutes before the due start time of 7am for the 92.5-mile run to Birmingham. A large gathering of spectators were on hand to see them off, in order of their arrival on Monday, the route leading up Whiteladies Road, Redland Park Road, Clyde Road, Zetland Road and Gloucester Road to Horfield Barracks and the Bristol outward control. Leaving there at 30 second intervals, they continued via Almondsbury and Thornbury Station (control: Messrs. Stewart Irwin and William Sindry) and onto Gloucester, where the first car arrived at the breakfast halt shortly after 9am.

Three weeks later, having travelled via Birmingham, Manchester, Carlisle, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield and Nottingham, 49 of the original 65 starters arrived back in London to be officially classified as finishers, with private entrant Charles Stuart Rolls in his Panhard receiving the Gold Medal award. Overall the event was judged to be a great success, putting motoring and the motor industry on the map in the UK.©

“Just back from a very wet but stimulating Cadwell.

Race report 22nd April 2012.

Alistair performed great under the circumstances, qualifying 9th. His first race he finished 6 out of 28 starters. This was in almost undriveable conditions where in places the spray was so bad the only reason you knew you were behind another car was the dull glow of his rain light. Many went off but Alistair kept it on the black stuff (most of the time) and drove a very good race. His in car video revealed just how difficult the conditions were including avoiding a very dangerous overtaking manoeuvre by a guy Alistair was himself overtaking. It also revealed his car aquaplaning in various areas where the car started to veer off line at high speed when crossing standing water lying across the whole track

The second race on the Sunday, conditions started fine, so we were almost ready to change settings when I spotted a big black cloud on the horizon! We delayed things and were prepared to alter antiroll bar settings, shock settings and tyre pressures in the assembly area immediately before the race. In the event we decided to keep it as per the previous day.

Into the race and Alistair was flying. He was right on the tail of third place Derek Rogers (previous world karting champion and a very experienced racer!). Conditions were dodgy to put it mildly, as some of the track was fairly dry with other parts wet. Alistair had been behind Derek for several laps and attempted overtaking many times, though Cadwell is a very narrow track and overtaking a determined competitor is notoriously difficult. We watched from the pitwall as they came round onto the pit straight and Alistair put the power on early in an attempt to get a slingshot past Derek, unfortunately this is probably the only section of track under trees and I reckon that made that particular section even more greasy. He spun but controlled it ending up on the grass facing the wrong way and the engine cut out. (Webbers don't like being spun round). Unfortunately he couldn't get her going and his race was over. Fortunately, however he managed to avoid hitting the tyres and so it was only his pride that was slightly dented!

He later explained that he considered holding his position. Fourth would be a very good position and his best finish so far. However, due to his sitting his finals in a month, he is not racing at many meetings this year and so is not interested in accumulating points, so he decided to “go for it”. A podium finish would have been fantastic, but it wasn't to be.

Anyhow, well done Ali on a great and brave weekends racing.”

Photos to follow on the website soon.

Cheers for now,

Mike Littlewood