

Paris-Vienna Rally

13-18 June

Looking for the sound of music...



The 1969 Jaguar E-Type of Irvine Laidlaw and Tony Davies. Photo: Simon Childs

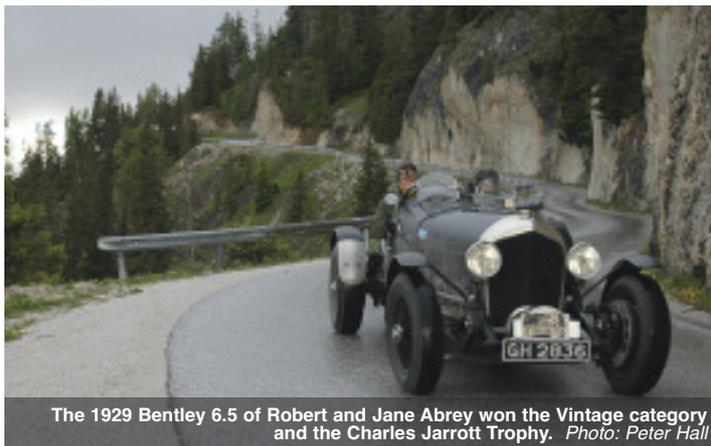
A trip from Paris to Vienna in mid-June in a 1969 Jaguar Eagle E-Type Roadster sounded a very attractive invitation from Irvine Laidlaw with whom I had recently had the pleasure of doing HERO's Scottish Malts, writes *Tony Davies*.

Surely the rally was bound to be blessed with good weather and many 'The hills are alive...' scenic moments. The organisers, Rally Round UK, were new to yours truly (and I guess to most of the usual *oldSTAGER* audience) and this added to the attraction of something unknown. But yes, you've guessed; the good weather never materialised (apart from a few hours on days towards the end of the event) and I'm sure that, hidden in the clouds, there were indeed many scenic moments to do justice to Julie Andrews. Nevertheless, the Rally Round organisation is to be welcomed as another UK organising team to join the likes of ERA and HERO as providers of top-flight events. Not difficult to predict really, as names such as Heidi Winterbourne, Fred Bent as Clerk of the Course, Paul Wignall as his Deputy, Tony and Christine Newman, George and Liz Mullins, Lee and Sue Vincent, Peter Rushforth, John Bayliss, David and Suzie Astle and David and Wendy Brown have all joined the usual Rally Round team under the effective direction of Liz Wenman.

The rally, for cars of a pre-1969 type (the oldest being a 1905 Bianchi Speedster 50 HP), started just south of Paris at the Chateau du Bourron near Fontainebleau on Tuesday 14 June and ended the following Saturday at Baden Bei Wein just south of Vienna. The format was similar to other events of its type with a Tulip Road Book, expertly put together by Fred and Paul, containing four-five regularities (mostly self-starts) per day together with a fair sprinkling of the usual tests on private ground. A large-scale map book with the route pre-marked was also provided in case we got lost or needed to cut and run.

The first day, from Fontainebleau to Gerardmer, introduced us gently to the competition with a practice regularity (always a good idea to relax the nerves) near Fleurigny. A short coffee stop at Aix-en-Othe was followed by the second reg. near Sommeval and then to a very nice lunch in Les Riceys.

The afternoon started with the Crepan Regularity, with the first of several LWR triangles, followed by a navigation link section with a Route Check question to be answered en route (so no going to sleep!). The Bois de Montavoire regularity followed, with the event's first section of gravel, and after a short tea stop the second of Fred's navigation section with several multi-choice questions to answer as we wended our way further eastwards via the Col du Mont le Fourche regularity with 4



The 1929 Bentley 6.5 of Robert and Jane Abrey won the Vintage category and the Charles Jarrott Trophy. Photo: Peter Hall

ITPs to the Beau Rivage Hotel in Gerardmer. A welcome sight I'm sure to those in cars with no weather protection!

Overnight results showed that David Royds/Natasha Newman in their 1917 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost were leading the Veteran category; Keith Graham and Sue Hoffman in their 1935 Bentley Derby VDP were leading the Vintageant Category whilst yours truly with Irvine Laidlaw had somehow managed to keep the Classic pack at bay.

Yes it was raining again on Wednesday morning as we left for Lindau on Lake

Konstanz. At the end of the day some were looking forward to sampling the delights of a Zeppelin flight from its Friedrichshafen base on the shores of the lake. The day kicked off with a short test on the former Andros Trophy ice-racing venue at Xonrupt. Slippery, yes, so discretion and valour sprang to mind although inevitably some overdid the enthusiasm with the resulting seconds added to their times. An old favourite, the Col de Bramont, was the first reg of the day quickly followed by a coffee stop in the Vue des Alpes restaurant at the top of the Ballon with the promise of splendid alpine views. Suffice to say 'null points' for the views during our visit. Freudenstein was our next reg before another splendid lunch in Badenweiler, after which, a variation on a theme was provided by the Black Forest regularity which ran at a constant 47kph throughout and Fred had, as well as the usual landmarks, very kindly provided an Ave. Speed table. Very useful, as the first ITP was 7.56 kms. after the start with no intervening landmarks.

The afternoon consisted of a navigational section only, via a very nice apple strudel café it has to be said, to enable everyone to get to Friedrichshafen in time for the Zeppelin flight. Unfortunately no-one had told the weather Gods and the flight was sadly cancelled; very disappointing for those who were due to fly. So a rather busy road section to the Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Lindau was the anticlimax.

Thursday dawned wet again for a morning in Bavaria starting with the Gestraz reg before coffee and a TC at Missem-Wilhams. Another of Fred's navigation sections followed close to Augsburg and then the first of the John Brown type 'descriptive' Jogularities, Olberger Weiher, before lunch at Bad Bayersoien.

Immediately after lunch the Bayersoier See reg started the afternoon competition. Tea in Wornsmuhl preceded the Nikalasreuth reg where David and Wendy Brown were manning the only ITP on a seat near the finish. Such comfort and caring for the marshals. The Tatzelwurmstrasse was to be the final reg of the day but roadworks on the main road meant that this was used as an 'Umleitung' causing cancellation of the section; very wise. However, we were all looking forward to the first visit to one of the Austrian OAMTC driver training facilities for a couple of tests at the end of the day. We weren't disappointed with the first containing a couple of blind brows and the second a section on the skid pan surface towards the end. All seemed to enjoy the experience although an apparently suicidal photographer towards the end of the second test was rather distracting*. Organisers please note.

The results declared in the Hotel Gut Brandhof at Saalfelden confirmed that David and Natasha, on 499, had retained their lead in the Veteran category; Keith and Sue, on 206, were still leading the Vintageant category with no change at the top of the Classic category.

Day 4 started damp once again as we made our way to the Dientner Sattel for the day's first reg. A 50kph reg with one RC at the top and a table to help maintain the required speed was on the menu. Fred was starting to turn the screws a little now as ITPs were no longer necessarily at landmarks on the Tulips. Flachau was our coffee stop before tackling the Flauchauwinkl reg, another descriptive challenge with a speed change just before the ITP. Sneaky Fred! The third reg of the day was the Nokalmstrasse, one of Austria's famous toll roads. 48kph average for 21kms. with one RC and ITPs not necessarily at landmarks (table or landmarks (or both) - your choice) was the challenge and, with no rain, good views as well. Spoilt we were.

A LWR about two-thirds through caught a few out but most made it without too many penalties. A super lunch followed in the Glockenhutte at the top.

Another navigation section followed lunch before the Wobringer reg with a sneaky LWR between a few houses caused a problem for some. Lee and Sue Vincent were smiling when we arrived! ▶

A quick cup of tea at the Hotel Ferners Rosenhof in Murau followed before the last reg of the day over the Solk Pass at 1788 metres. Steeper down than up in our direction of travel so sensibly the ITP was at the top. After a PC at the Hotel Spanberger next up were two tests up the Stoderzinken toll road. Each was about 3.5kms long so time for the drivers to have a fling. Not too wild mind you as there are some big drops. Apparently I was the only navigator to have a smile on their face when we reached the top. All that was left was a return down the hill and make our way to the Schloss Pichlarn, the overnight hotel.

End of day results showed that Peter Roberts and Colin Beasley in their 1905 Bianchi Speedster had crept into the lead in the Veteran category on 3341 whilst Robert and Jane Abrey in their 1929 Bentley 6.5 on 588 had moved into the lead in the Vintageant category. There was no significant change in the Classic category with David Alderson and Dennis Greenslade in their 1967 Volvo 123GT consolidating their second place.

The last day dawned a little brighter after some overnight rain. The first reg of the day was a manned start - there's a novelty. Another navigation section followed with a series of nine tunnels where the length of each tunnel had to be recorded as route checks before the second reg at Greifsteiner. The final timing point was located in a wood yard that caused the loss of a few seconds for most crews. The Hotel Schwarzer Adler hotel in Mariazell was our lunch venue and parking in the town square had been kindly agreed by the Mayor of Mariazell. The next reg, Gasthof Kalte Kuchl, was so named as the second ITP turned out to be in the middle of the outbuildings after slotting left off the road. No wonder Fred said that we would become better acquainted with the Gasthof! Lunch was taken at the Restaurant Kaiser Franz Josef in Rohr.

One more descriptive reg followed, Grabenweg, with a couple of ITPs in gravel lay-bys, before we visited another OAMTC centre at Teesdorf for the final two tests. Both were high-speed ventures driving the tracks on sight.

All that remained was the ceremonial finish in the Kurpark at Baden Bei Wein before the evening celebrations in the Schloss Weikersdorf Hotel. A great end to a very enjoyable event and an organisation to look out for if you are looking for an event that is a little different. And yes I admire greatly those hardy souls in Veteran and Vintageant cars but don't envy them in bad weather.

Veteran Category Peter Roberts/Colin Beasley (1905 Bianci Speedster) 8721 points
Vintageant section Robert and Jane Abrey (1929 Bentley 6.5) 1300 points
1st Overall and winners of the The Charles Jarrott Trophy Classic section
 Irvine Laidlaw/Tony Davies (1969 Jaguar Eagle E-Type Roadster) 980 points



1905 Bianchi Speedster 50HP of Peter Roberts and Colin Beasley won the Veteran category, pictured at the TC on the summit of Solk Pass. Photo: Peter Hall



1967 Volvo Amazon 123GT of David Alderson and Dennis Greenslade on the 'skid pan' at Saalfelden in Austria. Photo: Peter Hall

* Peter Hall comments: "Simon Childs has been among Britain's top car magazine snappers (*Fast Lane, Top Gear, Octane* etc) for 30 years, and between powersliding Ferrari F40s and Porsche 917s he hasn't come to any harm yet. He knows exactly what he's doing..."

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