

Rally TR Pyrenees: Part 1

Vineyards, Valleys

When the Liege–Brescia–Liege Rally ended in the July of 2019, all the crews were affected by just what a significant event it had been and what incredible memories, experiences and friends it had gifted everyone who had taken part.

So, little wonder then, that there was a strong desire to do it all again! But could we really re-create the same magic? Would it still be as much fun and would the crews remain as competitive?

The idea was to not simply just re-run the same event, but instead to take the same spirit, challenge and experience to a different part of the world. That part of the world, suggested Malcolm McKay, our organiser for the event, would be the Pyrenees and the 10-day route would combine the same mix of map navigation and precision regularity circuit tests as before. This time, however, the route would take us across the French Pyrenees from Toulouse to Spain's Atlantic coast, before heading inland to La Rioja and south-east to Aragon, then through Catalunya and Andorra to finish in Carcassonne's historic walled city.

It would also take place in October, just before the first snowfalls on the upper-most peaks, but also at the more-bearable end of the Spanish summer.

Rally TR Pyrenees was thus born and the event was launched in the live arena at the Triumph Weekend, Stratford-upon-Avon, in August 2019. The concept was shared with the readers of *TR Action* and almost instantaneously entries began to come in for the event penned for October 2021.

Back then, the autumn of two years hence seemed like such a long way away; little did we all know just how drastically life would change in the world in that

period of time before we would set off for the start of this epic rally. Right up until the very last moment, it was unclear whether it would be possible to run the event at all. COVID had brought European travel to a standstill, hotels were closed or facing bankruptcy and Spain, a key stage of the rally's route, was identified on the UK Government's 'red list' with essential travel only allowed and lengthy periods of quarantine for those returning.

Add to that the apparent complications of new Brexit paperwork and you might have thought things were bad enough, but a week before the event, a fuel shortage hit the UK and panic buyers had cleaned out the forecourts of the very petrol we needed to use to get us to the ports. Despite all these adversities, however, things in the world settled and eased sufficiently enough to allow the Rally TR Pyrenees to get underway - and what a relief it was.

'Settled' and 'at ease' were two adjectives not at all relevant to my own situation however, as the postponed Round Britain Reliability Run had been moved to the weekend just before we were due to leave. This event saw me drive a different TR6 with my friend, Richard Chapman, from Knebworth to John O'Groats, down to Land's End and back to Knebworth, covering 2,000 miles in just 48 hours non-

stop. Of course, with the vows made to the charity to raise sponsorship a year ago, we had to press on.

Additionally, there was the usual challenge of clearing the desk sufficiently of work to get away for the two weeks required to take part - not an easy task for the self-employed!

But, get away I did and with the effects of the Round Britain Run still inflicting bleary eyes and regular yawns, I awoke at dawn on a damp, grey Wednesday morning in October to the sound of a pair of TR6s arriving on my drive. Those cars were piloted by Alan Wilkinson with his navigator, Sarah, and of course, Dave Burgess, here to fetch the final team member - me!

The TR6 was the same 1972, ex-American spec car that Dave Burgess and I had campaigned back in 2019 when it showed flawless reliability, comfort and speed - mainly due to Dave's skilful restoration and diligent preparation. It was the natural steed then for our next big adventure and it felt good to be back alongside Dave as part of our duo that had done so well two years ago - could we do any better this time? More to the point, what hilarious place names would we mispronounce and what scrapes would we end up getting into? All would be revealed. 

& vultures

Wayne Scott



The road narrows through Gorges St Georges



Above the clouds



Pyrenean Griffon Vulture



Smiles all around as the mountain roads entertain

This time, my packing was well rehearsed and, within moments, vacuum bags were slid into the boot containing all the clothes I needed. My laptop bag containing a portable office for the fortnight was crammed in and my 'nav' bag was wedged into the passenger footwell containing the now infamous Amazon-bought egg-timer, highlighter pens and other essentials. After a brief stop for a cooked brekkie, we were on the road and heading for the Channel Tunnel.

If we had been judged by our initial navigation then we would have been on the back foot right from the start, as not only did we manage to miss the exit onto the A14 from the A1 but we also managed to find ourselves going the wrong way around the M25. I turned to Dave and calmly suggested that, "if this navigating thing is going to work, you really need to listen to my directions..." The message was received loud and clear, even over the singing six-cylinder Triumph engine

sucking through its twin SU carburettors.

The journey through France over the following two days was long, but a particular highlight for me was driving Dave's left-hand drive TR6 through the streets of Paris, another life goal ticked off. Another was a chance meeting of Malcolm McKay, our organiser, at a service station near Limoges. But, after two days of endless Peagé gates and motorways and via a short visit to one of Dave's old friends at their farm in the French countryside, we arrived in Toulouse. There were a couple of other early arrivals too, the GTR4 Dove of Nick & Sharon Waller and the TR4 of David Liddell and Helen Ruud were already tucked up in the car park. This year, we had learned from our previous mistakes and had arrived with plenty of time in hand to settle in, get signed on and most importantly, start getting the maps plotted. As per two years ago, we were handed a ring binder containing our control sign on sheet, a book of bewildering-looking

photo controls and unpronounceable place names and a doorstep-sized wedge of maps on which to plot them.

It made a difference to plot these maps with rested eyes, in the company of others and, crucially, in daylight. I got a few days highlighted up with notes written and the rough locations of controls circled, but dare not plot too far into the future for fear of forgetting important points.

After being reunited with old friends and starting the new friendships that would endure the next 10 days at the social dinner before the start, the next morning saw the stickered-up and rally-plated TRs set off for their first day hunting down the first photo controls. The atmosphere was electric as we left the hotel car park in Toulouse, if perhaps tinged with a little nervous anticipation from those on their first event.

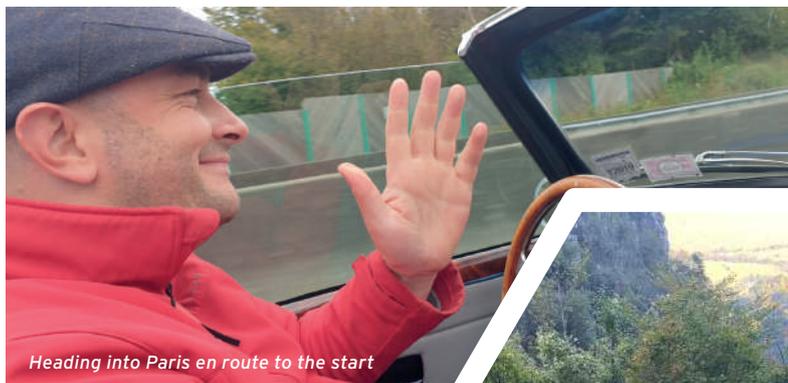
One crew had returned to take on the Authentic class after winning the Spirit category in a TR4A two years previously. The hugely talented pair, Mike Jones



Getting ready for the off in Toulouse



At the start in Toulouse



Heading into Paris en route to the start



Lourios - Ichere



My office for 10 days



Dawn on Day One in Toulouse



Karl and Alan Boulton delivered a strong performance in Car S12



John and Dominique Sharpe in their gorgeous TR5



Watching the vultures at lunchtime



Phil and Dawn Brown pick their way through the karts



Nick and Sharon Waller in the Dove they have owned since the late 1970s



Graham Hills and Ray Mason in their TR4A



David Liddell and Helen Ruud



Julian and Sara Riley



Jeffery Givens and Moritz Krohne on the first of the circuit regularity tests

and Liz Wakefield, were this time in a 1960 TR3A and from the early stages would prove to be strong favourites.

The countryside around Toulouse was pretty, rolling fertile farmland with acres of spent sunflower fields stretched out in front of us as all the crews got to grips with the event, warmed themselves into the rhythm of the rally and got into the frame of mind needed to carry them through the next 10 days.

There was not much time to get in the

groove though, before we were thrust into the first of our regularity tests. It cannot be stressed enough just how important these tests are to sorting out the leader board. These are invariably the deciding factors between the most competitive crews and require utmost concentration, driver skill, navigation accuracy and, above all - teamwork.

We arrived at the Kart Circuit International at Aigues - Vives amid a busy race weekend for young kart racers,

both male and female. It was inspiring to see so many young girls taking on the lads out on track and, who knows, amongst the many vans, caravans and karts we saw, there could have been some superstars of the future amongst them. Hopefully, they'll remember fondly the day that their racing was disrupted by a field of old TRs turning up to do a regularity challenge on their track!

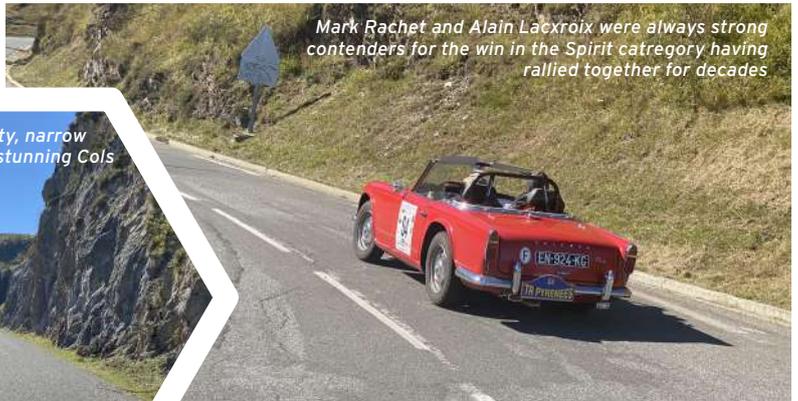
The challenge was straightforward. Leave the start line, circulate



David Hankin and James Butler in hot pursuit



Twisting through the Pyrenees



Mark Rachtet and Alain Lacroix were always strong contenders for the win in the Spirit category having rallied together for decades

Tight, twisty, narrow roads across stunning Cols



The louvred bonnet gives clues as to what this TR2's history might have involved



A rural French stop over

one whole lap and cross the finish line in exactly 100.8 seconds. There is a penalty point for every whole second slower or faster than the target time and bragging rights in the bar for the person most sideways or stopping astride with the most amount of tyre smoke (not really, but we liked to think so!).

Luckily, the length of the circuit is given in the roadbook, which allowed me to set our newly acquired Brantz trip meter to half distance in order to give us a time check at a point where, if we were a long way off, we still had time to do something about it! This was a rather professional-looking addition to our kit for this year as two years ago we realised the importance of the navigator knowing how far we had travelled point to point with some degree of accuracy! It was also advantageous to have an accurate speedo on board as well in the navigator's eyeline because,

of course, sat navs are strictly forbidden. Fear not though, the now infamous Amazon-bought egg timer was back and dutifully affixed via a clip to my road book; it's an old pal that has served me well!

Happily, Dave and I remembered the system we had learned two years previously and it all clicked into place like we'd never been away. "Best so far," shouted Malcolm on timing as we stopped astride the finish line. "That's all we needed to be," I thought as we made our way to lunch. Others did well too and after a clean sheet of photo controls after the superb lunch hosted at the Kart Circuit, it was enough to tie for first place with three other crews: S4, the TR4 of Mark Rachtet and Alan Lacroix; S20 the TR6 of Paul & Sandra Heaney; and S17, the TR6 of Peter Dracup and Andrew Swain. At this point I should explain the classes. The field is split into two: 'Authentic', for 1950s TRs that would have competed in

the Liege-Brescia-Liege rally in period (the format on which this rally is based) and 'Spirit' for basically everything from after that point in history. The format works brilliantly and ensures that not only do the side-screen cars get to compete closely between each other, but also that everyone has more of a chance of being rewarded with some silverware for their efforts.

The oldest TR on the rally was a drop dead gorgeous short door 1954 TR2 in white, with an unusual louvred bonnet perhaps giving a clue as to its previous history in club motorsport during its long and colourful life. Terry Mower and Stephen James were its pilots and were justifiably beaming with pride as we photographed the car weaving and winding its way down the Cols later that day and I gritted my teeth against the effects of car sickness all in the name of photographic art for *TR Action* magazine.

Elsewhere in the Authentic category, we also met on the road another very special TR3A driven by Jeffery Givens. Jeff had once again shipped his TR3A, which he has owned for over 50 years, over from Kansas to take part with his friend, Moritz Krohne from Germany, on navigation. One of his new additions to the car this time was an extremely wide rear-view mirror situated on top of his dashboard, right in the middle of the car. This, for Jeff, served the purpose of giving him better rear-view visibility when driving, but for us behind, following at pace along a tight and twisty road, it served the purpose of showing us just how much fun he was having by clearly conveying to us his huge grin and occasional giggle as he sawed away at the steering wheel on his TR3A. The mirror was good enough for me to count Jeff's teeth from where I was sat, so it was clear that he was having a great time!

It was during one of the evening dinners that Jeff shared a story from the early days of his ownership of his TR3A. It was in the late 1960s when Jeff was a new recruit training in the army. He had set off for a training camp loaded up with equipment and colleagues when the wheel fell off! The replacement of the wheel had caused them to arrive late at camp and Jeff had parked up on a gravel bar by the river. Next morning, he awoke to the news that his TR3A had been stolen! They looked and searched for clues as to how it had been pinched during the night but none were found, until one of the 'privates', a cool, calm and collected sort of lad, was relieving himself in the river whilst smoking a cigarette. "I know where your car is," he said casually. Jeff ran over and asked him where it was. Pointing down at the river the private said, "It's there, look." Jeff described peering into the water and making out two headlights staring back at him. The lads all pulled it out of the river and left the car out in the midday sun. Amazingly, with a bit of fettling, the car drove Jeff home. But it stunk to high heaven and Jeff had to beg his mother for a loan to buy a new interior.

The route threaded crews upward in altitude, after leaving the karting circuit and a superb lunch behind. It was surprising just how quickly we found ourselves deep into the 'mountains proper' of the Pyrenees. The first of many breath-taking roads greeted us here, the Gorges de Saint-Georges. This can only be described as a canyon, where the road is cut deep into the side of the rocky gorge, occasionally ducking under it through a network of crudely drilled tunnels. The ravine is formed by the Aude River and is one of the so-called 'balcony' roads. It's easy to see why they gained this name, as it runs as a single-track road along the mountainside with nowhere to easily pass another vehicle for many kilometres.

Yet higher we climbed, above the clouds and steeply into the Pyrenees heading for St Girons and St Lizier. The mountain passes were starting to



Dawn on the Col De Tourmalet - simply stunning



A very British queue for fuel



Climbing into the mountains



David Liddell giving it the beans up one of the Cols



come thick and fast and it was only the first day; Port de Pailheres, Col de Port, Col des Caougnous, Col de Pegures, Col de Portel, Col de Crouzette - we were in the thick of it now, or should I say, the thin of it - as the altitude was already having an effect on oxygen levels for cars and passengers. The navigation varied from the damn tricky to the pleasantly straightforward and everything in between.

Day one ended at Le Domaine Du Palais Des Evêques, which we learned had only just re-opened weeks before having bankrupted its previous owner. It was easy to see how that could have happened; the place was huge and palace-like in its dimensions. Rather than rooms, we were accommodated in mini apartments but the real attraction was the simply stunning elevated views from the restaurant balcony at breakfast. Malcolm explained that we had been lucky to have seen this hotel re-open because our intended venue had shut for COVID, never to re-open again, a story that would re-occur many times during the course of this event.

Day two was nothing short of spectacular. The rally entered Tour De France country and within moments were back to bagging the summits of Cols, many of which served as control points on the rally. The views were spectacular, the roads quiet and the mountains towered above our humble little TRs as we snaked and weaved our way through valleys and over plateaus. Occasionally, we would happen upon a small town or village where we would be greeted by waves and cheers of approval from the locals. One such place, St Bêat on the River Garonne was once known as the key to France, owing to its strategically placed location near the naturally occurring fortification of mountains. The town had been dominated by marble quarrying and had provided the raw materials to build the Palace of Versailles during its heyday.

Today also saw us reach the highest point

of the rally so far, on the Col De Tourmalet. If that name rings a bell, then that's because this is one of the most famous climbs on the Tour De France. Indeed, the tarmac was still chalked up with messages of encouragement for the cyclists, as were many of the other roads on the Cols during day two. The air was thin up here at 2,115 metres and it really made us appreciate just what a feat of human endurance it is to race a bicycle up here. For us, it was all too tiring to contemplate so, after consuming lunch at a viewpoint just off the summit, we headed for the valley bottom, our hotel and a beer, for we would return here the next day.

In Luz St Saveur, we managed to bring a taste of the UK to France by jamming up the single petrol pump in the town and creating a long queue of people waiting to fill up. Then it was off to soak up the sun on the terrace of the Hotel De Montaigu and swap stories of the day we had all enjoyed over a pint or three of a cheeky German blonde called Grimbergen, a perfect companion to the stunning vista that surrounded us.

The next morning, any thick heads from Mademoiselle Grimbergen had to be quickly shaken off for, at what felt like the middle of the night, we were off on day three. An early start was essential today as the rally route had been severely affected by a road closure ahead, forcing us back up and over the Col De Tourmalet to find an alternative route. The ridiculously early start would prove worth it though today.

It was great to see the husband-and-wife team of Mark & Jane marshalling the event once again and chasing the field in their orange Lotus Elise. They signed us in and out every day and even handed us our lunch packs for the day ahead. Whilst their professionalism as marshals was unwavering, when it was time to party, they were very much part of the family. As were the crew of our mechanical support van - there to lend a hand or parts, but use them at your peril for their spanner work carried a significant number of penalty points!

Plotting our way through the eerie darkness, the TR crews headed back over the Col de Tourmalet. It was chilly, with temperatures on the climb up significantly sub-zero, but oh, what an incredible sight. We neared the summit and watched in utter wonder as dawn broke across the ceiling of France and the orange glow of sunrise danced and leapt across the rocky peaks of the Pyrenees. We stopped and tried in vain to capture the enormity of the moment on camera and decided that regardless of the icy chill, this was an essential roof down moment, so down came the hood on the TR6.

It was during the ascent of this stunning mountain pass at dawn that we had the opportunity to follow and marvel at Car 5 in the Authentic category. The TR3A of Iain & Lois Paul, VHP 529 has a significant history as support and recce car to Ken Richardson's works team of the 1950s, a story well documented in these pages. You can argue all you like about what is and what is not a 'works car', but in that moment as the mountains were draped in the fresh light of a new dawn, to follow and watch that period-equipped Apple Green TR3A as it crackled and rasped its way up the mountains was one of the most evocative moments I've ever had with TRs and a stark reminder of just how important it is to ensure that our motorsport and transport heritage remains on the road and moving for future generations to enjoy. Lois was doing all the driving on this event as Iain had badly injured his shoulder just days before they were due to leave and she did a superb job of hustling the little but significant TR3A over some of Europe's most challenging roads.

Rough and exposed mountain tops were contrasted by enchanting, wooded valleys and ancient forests that filled the valley bottoms, accented by the occasional rocky outcrop or river gorge. The Col d'Aubisque at 1709 metres was one of the most beautiful and remote of all the roads so far and a speed limit of 25 km/h forced us to soak it all up. We then ascended the Col de la Pierre St Martin and crossed

Stunning mountain vistas around every corner can easily distract from the job in hand - and why not!



Ascending the Cols



It focuses your mind when you peer over your door edge and see this view at the bottom of a sheer drop



Lush green wooded valleys against the backdrop of harsh mountain tops



Col de Tourmalet and a stop for refreshments to soak it all in



Col De Tourmalet



Crossing into Spain via the Col D'Aubisque



Collecting another photo control

Navigating the Rally TR Pyrenees

The rally is devised to be fun for both those with a competitive streak who want to win and also those who just fancy a pleasant drive. The rally took the best elements from more-conventional historic rallies and added its own, unique twist to ensure it is fun, exciting and enjoyable for all crews.

Though the Pyrenees were not as widely rallied as the Alps and Dolomites in the 1950s, they were not forgotten, featuring on major events such as the Monte Carlo Rally, which had a control at San Sebastian, and the Tour De France, which once existed as a car rally as well as a bicycle race!

The route is specified, as it was in the 1950s, by a list of place names which crews must plot on the maps provided and then take the shortest route on roads marked on the map between those two points. To ensure crews take the correct route, photo controls are dotted along the route with penalty points for each one missed. Ultimately, the crew at the end of the rally with the least number of penalty points will emerge victorious. For added extra excitement, there are circuit regularity tests, which often prove to be the deciding factors on these rallies. Marshalls check the photos of all the controls at the end of each day at check-in and the location must be recognisable and show the car and door number or rally plate clearly in shot.



into Spain via a tight, twisty road with pitch black tunnels cut into the rock that felt like we were falling into an abyss at every turn.

A further contrast came at the end of the day when we found ourselves negotiating rush hour in the city of Donostia San Sebastian. This coastal city is a popular resort in the Basque country area of Northern Spain and, despite the hustle and bustle of city life, local people still took time to stop on the streets and photograph the cars going by, wave at us and even blow the occasional kiss in our

direction. The old TRs haven't lost it

Our hotel was impressive enough from the outside as we parked the TRs up and unloaded our bags under the impressive archway, but the best was yet to come. The concierge guided us to the nearby underground car park that had been cordoned off for us and, after a COVID pass and passport check, we headed to our rooms. Nothing quite prepared me for the treat that lay within though, as I approached the balcony doors and flung them wide to be greeted with an open view

of La Concha beach, the Bay of Biscay and the sound of the waves rushing towards the hundreds of swimmers enjoying the last of the summer sun, all overlooked by the impressive castle, now hotel, of Igeldo that stands high above the bay and city.

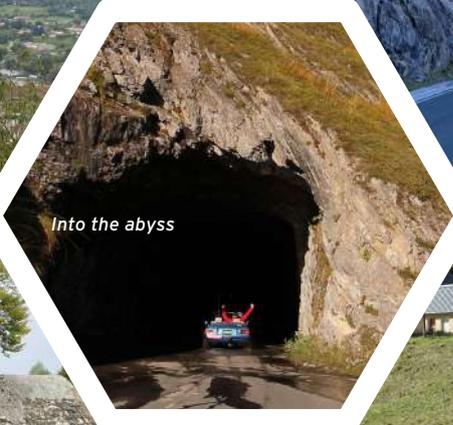
That evening, I treated myself to another Grimbergen from the waiter and sat in the seafront café overlooking the beach and promenade to plot the next couple of days' worth of maps. I instantly fell for San Sebastian and so, as the restaurant bar filled up with the spirited chatter



The backdrop to breakfast on Day 2



A change of landscape as we head deeper into Spain



Into the abyss



One of the ancient chapels along the route, this one served as a control point



Paul and Jan Gerring enjoyed a steady first few days



Crudely cut through the rock, the road leads through the gorge

of the rally crews assembling for pre-dinner drinks, I stole myself away to discover more. Walking bare foot and ankle deep in the Atlantic for the length of the beach was just the tonic after a hot and sweaty day of navigation. Further down the beach, I dwelled a while to listen to one of the DJs in an open-air nightclub playing Latin house music, creating the perfect soundtrack to a beautiful evening. Heading into the city revealed metropolitan streets woven like a tapestry amongst ancient buildings and squares. Constitution square with its impressive façade could remind you of a mini St Mark's from Venice; the St Mary's Basilica with its lofty stance above the city dominates and the ornate theatre building gives clues as to the cultural history of this small but perfectly formed coastal city in contrast to the reality of the many conflicts it has witnessed throughout the centuries.

Day four saw us navigate our way out of the complex streets of San Sebastian and bid a reluctant farewell to the Hotel De Londres Y De Inglaterra and it's fair to say that none of us truly wanted to leave. The route out was not helped by one of the tunnels that runs parallel to the seafront being closed by an accident. It is moments like this that really tests a crew's teamwork and patience with each other as the navigator desperately looks for road signs or landmarks for inspiration and the driver must put his trust in the directions, despite at times feeling like he's going around in circles.

It's so easy to lose concentration and miss a crucial turning or control point. Sometimes in Car S14, this occurs because of something that happens beyond our control. For example, at one moment a bird appeared quite suddenly out of a bush at the side of the road and regrettably hit the windscreen and ricocheted off my cap. Luckily, my hat remained firmly in place. So surprised were we about this event, though, and the subsequent joke about the River Arga and large ovens in cottages, that we sailed past our turning only to realise we had gone wrong when we crossed the border back into France! Other times, it was purely because we were deep into some highly intellectual conversation, such as the relevance of soaps like EastEnders and their potential brain-rotting damage to society, causing us to casually sail past a control only to have to double back and go and get it.

The first of our controls on day four was found on the twisty road up to Igeldo; the next an obscure bus stop before we headed up into the mountains once again to find a mountain pass summit. We arrived at the summit only to find it crowded with cars, meaning that we sailed straight past. As we began to descend, I became really uneasy about the direction and length of travel. "I really don't like this; I think we've missed it!" I shouted. Indeed, we had. For a fleeting moment, we



Port De Bales



The TRS in its natural habitat

Ian Vincent and David Wilson in their TR3A as vultures circled overhead



Port De Bales and Car number 1



Col D'Azet 1580m



Looking over the Col De Tourmalet



The TRS makes light work of the Cols and passes



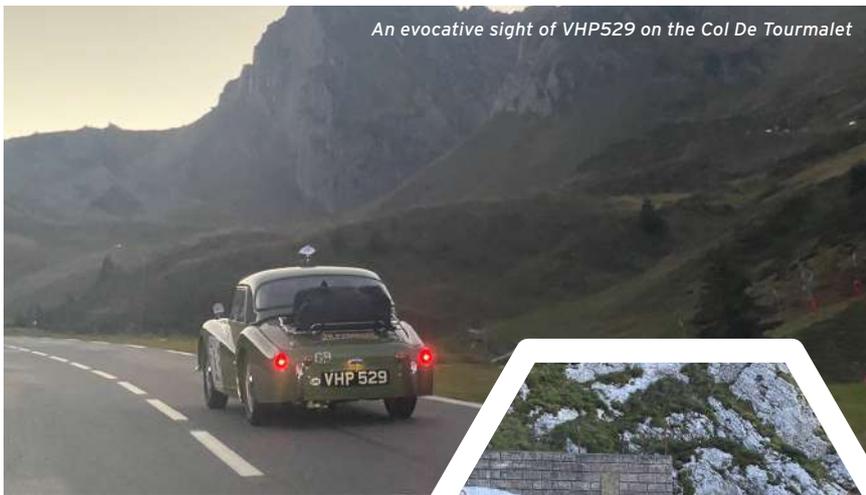
The rat pack - Lois and Iain Paul, David Hankin and James Butler with Paul and Jan Gerring in the TRS tribute



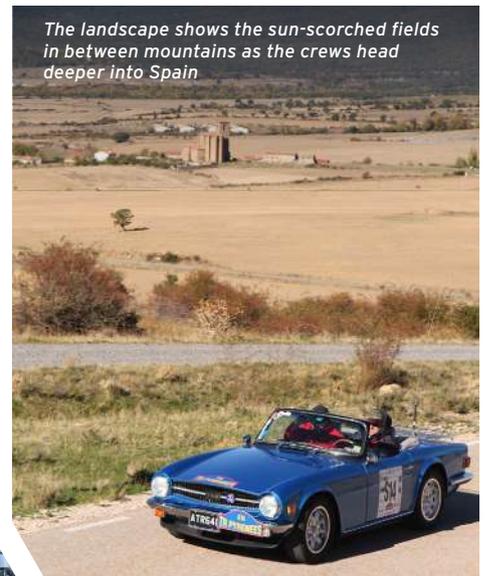
David Hankin and James Butler enjoying a lunchtime view



Leaving at the crack of dawn to head back up and over the Col De Tourmalet on Day 3



An evocative sight of VHP529 on the Col De Tourmalet



The landscape shows the sun-scorched fields in between mountains as the crews head deeper into Spain



Dave Burgess explains the 25 km per hour speed limit to an incredulous Paul Gerring



Puerto de Lizarraga



The infamous control, we went back and bagged it only for it to be cancelled

had simply lost concentration (again, due to a highly intellectual debate, this time on the censoring of politically incorrect jokes by the late great Morecambe and Wise) and sailed past the control. We quickly double-backed and headed up the mountain pass from where we had just descended. It seemed steeper on the way back up. Eventually, much to the amusement of a group of cyclists, who saw us pass them three times in total, we found the control, bagged our photograph and got back on track. We had lost some time, but as we were ahead already it wasn't too serious. After a few more miles we came across the 'roof-rack boys', David Hankin and James Butler, eating their lunch with Paul, Jan and 'Marmite the Marmot' Gerring in the TRS tribute.

"You missed that last control, didn't you?" said Paul with a glint in his eye. It was not like Paul to gloat, so I had an inkling that there was a punchline coming to all this. "Yes, but we soon realised and went back to get it - no drama," I replied. The glint widened to a wry smile, "Yeah but, they've only gone and cancelled it because it was too busy up there to stop! Sorry boys!" I sat



Terry Mower and Stephen James in their TR2, the oldest car on the event

on the wall, trying not to think too much about all this and quietly ate my lunch, which consisted of a ham sandwich and a football-sized orange. To paraphrase Steve McQueen in the 1971 film 'Le Mans' - it can happen to you, and then it can happen to you again - that's motorsport.

My mind was quickly taken off the injustice of all this though, as I gazed aloft to watch a group of absolutely massive Griffon vultures circling overhead. These birds have a golden crop of feathers around their heads and a plane-like wingspan of

over 2.5 metres, tipped with huge, black, finger-like feathers at the end of each wing. They soar majestically over the Pyrenees with a prehistoric quality that makes them feel, to the observer, as if they are somehow responsible for guarding these mountains. This part of the Spanish Pyrenees is particularly well known for these birds, but all is not as well as it seems. The Pyrenees population has been severely affected by a European Commission ruling stating that due to a danger of transmitting BSE disease, no carcasses either of farm animals, road



VHP 529 arriving at Circuito De Navarra



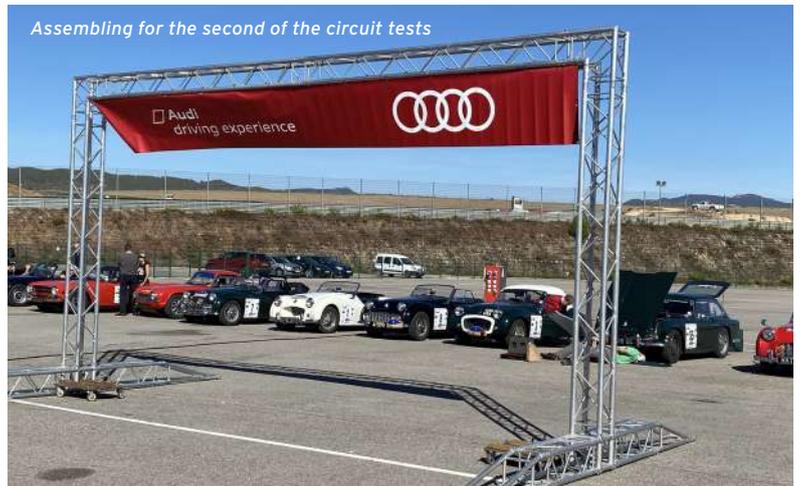
Liz Wakefield and Mike Jones out first on track



Trying the TRS on for size



Lining up at the Circuito De Navarra



Assembling for the second of the circuit tests

kill or wildlife must be left on fields or road verges. This has critically lowered food availability and has led to, not only a dramatic dip in numbers, but also conflict with local farmers as there are now reports of Spanish Griffon vultures turning to live prey in their desperate search for food. These birds are big enough to carry off household pets and even lame adult sheep and goats from high up on the mountains.

In May 2013, a 52-year-old woman was hiking in the Pyrenees, had fallen off a cliff to her death and was eaten by Griffon

vultures before rescue workers were able to recover her body, leaving only her clothes and a few of her bones. Due to her being the first human to be documented being eaten by Griffon vultures, the story brought worldwide attention to the problems in this part of Spain and the issue remains a sore point of debate between farmers, the government and ecologists. The knowledge of all this was running through my mind as we decided that hanging about on the mountainside with this lot eyeing up our sandwiches was no longer an option and

we jumped into the TRs ready to leave - I suggested that perhaps putting the roof up might be a good idea, but Dave didn't seem to understand the significance. Not the moment then for the high-torque starter solenoid on the TR6 to fail to engage, leaving us having to bump start the car! We did this hurriedly and hit the road and it was to be a niggle that would stay with us for the remainder of the rally. On descending this particular part of the Pyrenees, it became quickly obvious that the landscape was changing dramatically

and that we were entering the central belt of Northern Spain. Lush, green valleys gave way to parched-looking fields and the orange and tan hues of a dusty, rock-strewn landscape that was dotted with remote farms desperately eking a living from these harsh, sun-scorched surroundings.

The Benedictine Monasterio de Irache was passed in the town of Iratxe where a monastery has been present since the eighth century. It marked our entry into the Navarra region of Spain and hosted the area's first university from 1615-1824. It's due to be converted into a Parador soon (a luxury historic hotel) but of more interest is the Bodegas Irache. This wine cave was donated to the monastery by King Sancho IV of Navarra in 1072 and to this day refreshes weary passers-by with a free glass of wine.

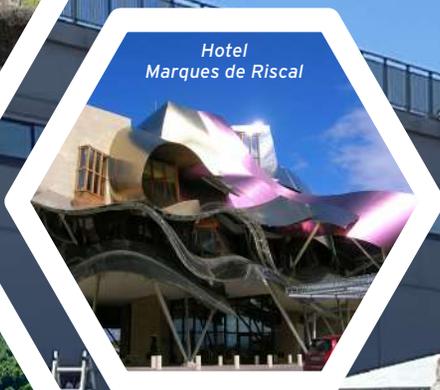
None for us though, as both driver and navigator needed razor-sharp concentration and focus for the final part of day four. The circuit regularity test at the impressive Circuito De Los Arcos, Navarra, where the leader board would get shaken up dramatically as the TR crews would find themselves at a crucial turning point in the rally.

In the next issue of *TR Action* we re-join the TR Rally Pyrenees as the next two circuit tests throw the results sheet into high drama, the rally crews stay in a monastery and head to the old capital of the Roman Empire in Tarragona, some TRs get pulled over a river by a metal rope and things are touch and go for Car S18, the TR6 of John & Kim Durden, after a serious collision looks set to take them out of the rally - can they get the car repaired in time? Find out in the next issue!



Rally TR Pyrenees: Part 2

Dogs, Deer &



Dodgy Turns

Wayne Scott

We pick up the story, where we left off in part one, at the Circuito De Los Arcos, Navarra, where the leader board was about to get dramatically shaken up at this critical turning point in the rally.

This was the challenge in this event that I was most nervous about. As we approached the Circuito de los Arcos, Navarra, and I realised the scale of the place, adrenalin started to flow, my heart was thumping and an intense focus fell over me as I tried to prepare myself for the job that lay ahead. Until now, the circuit tests had been run on small, friendly karting circuits. This one, though, was on a scale more akin to Donington or Brands Hatch in the UK. This was serious and I was determined not to make an utter mess of it like I had done two-years before on the Liege - Brescia - Liege. That mistake had haunted me ever since when, despite getting our regularity times spot on, I threw it all away by mis-counting the number of laps that we'd completed and picking up penalties for not coming into the pits early enough. It was not going to happen again - I told myself.

The depths of Navarra appear at first to be dry and barren. Quite an inhospitable place in the middle of summer I imagine, when the soaring temperatures bake the surrounding countryside. My nerves about the regularity test were not eased at all by the howling of Formula 3 engines circulating the circuit as we entered the parking area behind the expansive pitlane. Our slot would commence just as soon as they had finished. This gave me a chance to weigh up the job and get a feeling for the layout of the circuit. Luckily, we were able to stand on the very top of the pit building and look over most of the circuit. I also noticed the huge factory on the horizon, KYB Advanced Manufacturing, where shock absorbers and other suspension components are produced for the upper echelons of motorsport applications.

This was our lap consistency test. The challenge being, to drive out onto the circuit starting from the pitlane. Carry out one sighting lap and then as we crossed

the start/finish line - we started our stopwatch to time the first lap. That lap set our target time, that we must match exactly within a tenth of a second for the next two consecutive laps. On the third lap, we had to come in or our transponder (which was logging our times) would count an extra lap and we would be dealt a penalty.

This is a huge challenge for the navigator and driver alike. Furthermore, each competitor is travelling at their own pace, some faster, some slower - so you must factor in passing slower cars and allowing faster cars by in picking your consistent line around the circuit. I approached it by picking landmarks around the circuit and making note on the 'bogey lap' of what time we went past each one, to give an accurate indication of how well we were doing at various points on the following two laps.

There is a great deal of debate amongst the competitors as to whether you should drive it slow or fast. We opted for slow, risky because it's easy to find yourself ahead or behind and needing a lot more track to correct a deficit, but it did allow me more time to accurately plot those landmark times.

We only dropped 2-tenths across two laps and Dave put that down to an incorrect gear selection at the end of lap two, but never mind, we took the responsibility equally as a team and, anyway, it was sufficient to secure us the lead in the Spirit category. We marked the occasion with what is now a traditional reward within our team - the celebratory mint. Every milestone, control, successful navigation was always marked in Car S14 with a celebratory mint and they would vary from Softmints to Strongmints and then eventually some weird Spanish mints that were more like a cross between Halls soothers and Fisherman's friends.

We would not be alone on that top spot though because we learned, with great

admiration, that car number S4, the TR4 driven by Mark Racht and Alain Lacroix from Belgium, had 'zeroed' the test and got each one of their laps bang on! Not only that, but we saw them come past us and they were flying! We were all in awe of their incredible skill honed over many decades rallying together in TRs.

On the way, we were treated to a twisty drive through wooded hillsides. Here we followed the youngest car on the rally, the very late, 1976 Russet Brown-coloured TR6 of Paul and Sandra Heaney. It was a car that would have been sold alongside the all-new TR7 in the showrooms of America at the time as production had a crossover across the Atlantic. Today, it's a well-campaigned rally car that the Heaneys are clearly having an immense amount of fun with.

We were in for a superb night in La Rioja and it began, for most crews, with a tour of the Eguren Ugarte Vineyard and wine tasting, which was all enjoyed in the shadow of the distant Pyrenees on a wonderful, balmy evening.

You would think that reading a map would be a relatively danger-free exercise. However, for one crew, it posed a significant risk that could have ended in disaster! Jeff Roberts shared with me over a night cap the most incredible story from earlier in the rally. The midday sun in Spain, even in October, is pretty intense and it's fair to say that the maps for this part of the world only seem to be in small scale. So, Jeff's wife, Lesley, who was navigating, was using a 'navigator's potty' - basically a big magnifying glass in the bottom of a small bucket that sits on your lap. Jeff told an open-mouthed group of us that he had been filling with petrol when he noticed smoke rising from the dash. On closer inspection, it turned out to be the maps on fire, in Lesley's lap, as a result of the sun shining on the magnifying glass! Given that Jeff had a fuel hose in his hand and, we





A procession of TRs to start the day



Jeff and Lesley Roberts

Authentic winners -
Liz Wakefield & Mike Jones
(TR3A)



On track everyone had their own pace



all know what us blokes are like with our aim in a panic, it's lucky a sprinkling of unleaded wasn't added into the mix as well! Suffice to say all was well in the end, but the maps that day had a big black hole in them!

The next morning, the inevitable hangovers had to be shaken fast as we needed to be on the road early. A bizarre building to our left came into view in Elciego, like a miniature Guggenheim. Malcolm later told me that it was a famous winery, over 100 years old that produces one of Spain's most distinguished wines in the La Rioja region called Marqués de Riscal. The modern-day building opened in 2006 and was the work of the Canadian architect Frank Gehry, best known for his work in the actual Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao!

The countryside here was dominated by castles (castillos) and bodegas (wine caves). These buildings, often ancient, some now hotels, were woven into the rocky, sometimes arid landscape of this part of Northern Spain. Monasteries were dotted across the mountain-sides and our wonderful route twisted and crested between them. Today, the TR crews took on a variety of urban conurbations as well, with tight streets and at least five mountain passes, scaling as high as 1,710m.

Before reaching those mountain passes, though, there were several miles of what I can only describe as open prairie land. Coming from the Fens, it reminded me a bit of home, only less fertile, dustier looking. Roads were long and straight with an isolated feeling of the American mid-West about them. So much so, that Dave and I found ourselves humming the theme tune from the film 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' out loud. This was quite different from the 'Jurassic Park' theme music that had felt so fitting in the wild mountain-top forests from earlier in the rally!

A mist descended here as we pressed on, eventually finding our way through a confusing little town called Matelabrerías. This place was spooky. We took a wrong turn and found ourselves deep into the tight cobbled streets, barely a donkey's shoulder width across and all through this deserted little town played Spanish folk music through cone-shaped loudspeakers mounted on every lamp and telegraph post. Occasionally, the eerie music would be interrupted by an enthusiastic voice ranting religious messages in Spanish before returning to the music. "I'm sure I've seen a horror film set in a place like this," I said nervously to Dave. "Let's not breakdown here," he replied (with expletives removed). "We'll never be seen again!" (with more expletives removed).

"Can you play the banjo?" I asked. I didn't wait for a reply. I already knew the answer.

The rally is a test of reliability as well as a navigation at this stage and we were all starting to feel that we were entering the phase of attrition now. First, it was the Le Mans replica TRS of Paul and Jan

Gerring that came to grief in Borobia with an airlock in the cooling system. A number of other competitors had even more problems, one of whom removed a fuel tank on the side of the road! But with each issue, everyone stopped and rallied around, some holding spanners, some supplying parts, others supplying moral support. Eventually, all mechanical issues were resolved without the need for our mechanics to get involved which, of course, carried a ten-point penalty.

Ian Barker and Sheila Hutton were struggling with intermittent fuel issues, as well as Sheila's injured knee. Nothing could hold them back though and, of course, they would go on and complete the rally and laugh in the face of this adversity.

At this stage, just one TR had retired when Mark and Sarah Rainer re-joined us in San Sebastian with a hire car after a catastrophic gearbox failure

and yes, you guessed it, they had paid to rebuild it especially for the trip!

The roads were getting rougher as well and more challenging for the cars. At one point we had to dive off the metalled road and hit a dusty gravel track in search of a remote chapel, one of the controls along the route.

But, after a brief stop at a gorgeous blue lagoon, we all made it to the grand accommodation of the Monasterio de Piedra at Nuevalos, a vast, grand hotel based in a monastery, preserved as it would have been hundreds of years ago. It was a building that amazed at every turn of every grand corridor. I shaved my head and threw on a brown dressing gown to get into the spirit of things.

The monastery was founded in 1194 by Alfonso II of Aragon and is now a national monument.

The following day, we headed ever further

towards the Mediterranean Sea and ended the day in Morella, where a special display area had been provided for us by the local town. It was a short day and we were due to finish in time for lunch, which was a godsend for me as I was feeling rough, very rough. With every glance at the map, I was hit with a violent wave of nausea. Not ideal because in our pace notes I found the line, 'beware severe potholes + trucks'. Well, if ever there was an understatement, that was it.

But why was I feeling so ill, was it something I ate, was this dehydration or perhaps I had drunk some dodgy water? I didn't know, all I hoped was that it wasn't "the big C".

There were TR-sized holes in the mountain tracks that we clambered up and instantly I felt more as if we were attempting an off-road trial than a road rally, as the TR6 crashed and protested over every crater.



Nick and Sharon Waller



Spanish towns



Transponders on at Circuito De Navarra



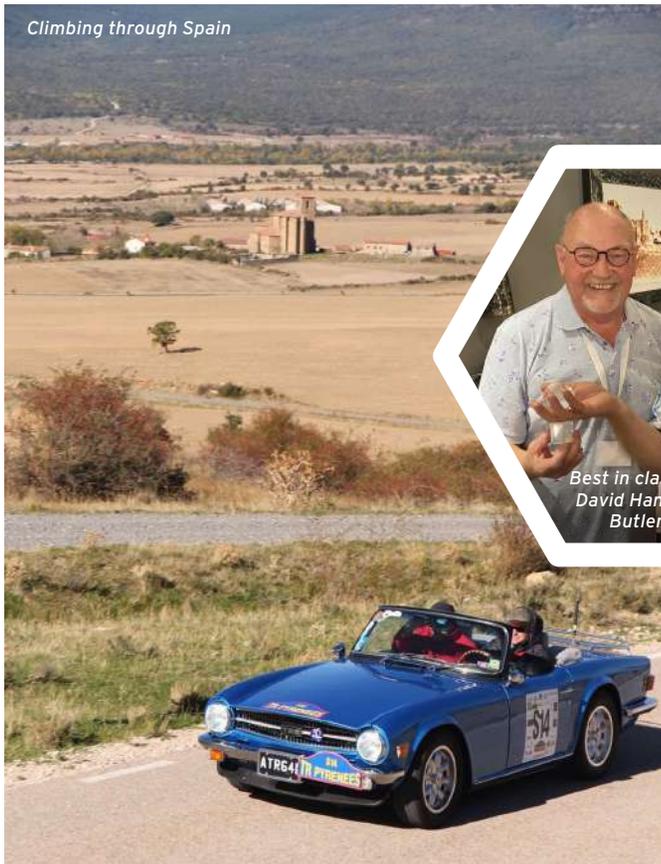
An amazing regularity time by John and Dominique Sharpe



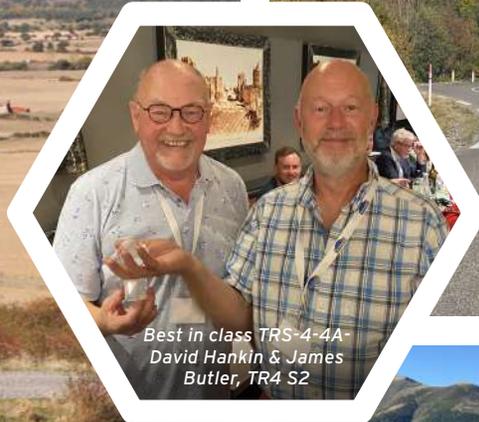
Amazing roads



Chateau de Peyrepertuse



Climbing through Spain



Best in class TRS-4-4A-
David Hankin & James
Butler, TR4 S2



Diesel TR6 of Alan Wilkinson



Heading into the mountains once again

It was remote country as well, if anything was to happen up here there would be little hope of rescue for many hours, maybe even days. My thoughts turned to those meat-starved Griffon Vultures again and I urged Dave to 'take utmost care'.

Ultimately, the holes in the poor excuse for a road were in fact the least of our worries. We arrived at a junction, the car in front had some confusion, but with conviction and confidence I shouted "bear right"! I should have followed that with "dog right" though, as upon passing through a group of dwellings barely enough to qualify as a hamlet in England, I was aware of a lady on a bank above us to the left shouting. Then from the right suddenly sprung two huge dogs: one was an Alsatian, the other a native wolf-scaring hound that are common in these parts for protecting sheep from the last few remaining wolves that occasionally descend from the mountains. The first mighty mut dodged our front bumper by inches, the Alsatian was not so lucky and

was struck square on the backside by our front-mounted rally plate. It skidded across the floor before leaping up and running off on the same trajectory as before - as if nothing had happened. It was a good job we were not 'pressing on' in the usual manner at that point - otherwise Dave would have been gifted some new fur seat covers for the TR6.

We escaped with nothing more than a cracked rally plate, but for John and Kim Durden, in the TR6 S18 - they were less lucky after their encounter with some local wildlife. This time a deer on the descent into Morella. We had heard about the incident when we arrived in the town. We struggled to find our display area, where the cars were assembled outside the city walls, in the shadow of the ancient Nevera Gate.

Then we saw it.

John and Kim arrived at the display area with a very, very bent front end on their TR6 and we all agreed that they had been lucky to escape injury. The TR6, remarkably,

was still driveable and just in need of a front headlamp, which was duly ordered and sent ahead to the hotel in Tarragona.

I was vaguely aware of the heroic mechanical repairs to replace the clutch master cylinder on the TR4 of David Hankin and James Butler as I was feeling slightly delirious with nausea and light-headedness brought about, perhaps, by some dodgy water from the night before.

At 2pm, I retired to bed to try and sleep it off.

I managed to emerge for dinner and even have a wander around the beautiful, quaint streets of Morella during the evening. But, it was a rough night and at one point I even took a lateral flow test on the advice of James Butler, event doctor, which thankfully was negative. The consequences on everyone of contracting COVID on the event didn't bear thinking about. Whilst it was never as bad again, I battled this sickness right up until the very last day and put it all down to the monks in the monastery

spiking my water with an ancient lurgy. Still, at least it curtailed the alcohol consumption for a while. Much to everyone's surprise when their amusement was piqued by me ordering a Liptons Lemon Tea at the bar that night! Even the bar staff were confused!

Morella was a charming little place, a sort of Spanish 'York' if you like. An incredibly high castle is supported by mediaeval walls that encircle the town. The town council kindly put on security guards to watch the cars overnight and, in the morning, with temperatures around freezing, we left

Morella, crossing by a Roman aqueduct and heading eastwards towards the Mediterranean Sea.

Our first control came in El Pinell de Brai. Your first reaction when you arrive in this remote rural town is 'what happened here?' The answer is the Spanish Civil War in 1936-39. So many of the destroyed houses have been left untouched, like time capsules serving as a reminder of the long-lasting effects of conflict on an area.

Today saw our final circuit test at the Circuit de Mora d'ebre, but before we got

there, we had to navigate the charming unpowered car ferry from Miravet over the River Ebro. This ferry has been conveying motorists across the torrent - like Ebro since 1946. The ferryman took our three Euros and used just a braided steel cable, the power of the current and his skill to get three cars at a time across - all without the need for an engine.

The next circuit test, like the first of the rally, required us to set a target time of 100.8 seconds from leaving the pit lane to re-entering after one lap via



A dirt track lead us to this remote chapel



Heading into Andorra



Spirit of the event - Iain and Lois Paul



Back into France



Julian and Sara Riley



Deer damage



E-type that looks like a D-type in Andorra



Prairie lands



Iain and Lois heading into Cordona

a slalom of tyres. There was barely time to think, plan or consider a strategy before we were summoned on to take our turn. We had just one shot at this. I had a plan, have one stopwatch counting down and the other counting up and to watch the Brantz to tell me where roughly where half-way was to give us a mid-point check on progress. It was a complex, tight and twisty circuit. I counted us down from 10 seconds to our target time, we were early as the finish line was in sight. Crews can't slow up sharply or stop otherwise penalties are given - we had to get this right. The last few moments were all a bit of a blur but, after we stopped astride, I looked up and Malcolm waved his stopwatch in the air and declared, "How did you do that?!" in utter disbelief! We had nailed it - 100.8 seconds exactly precise.

John and Dominique Sharp did well in their drop-dead gorgeous TR5 as well, with a time of 100.83, but nobody else would get as close.

This just shows how close and competitive the closing stages of the rally have become. This is down to Formula One-size margins now, or the sort of timing that the World Rally Championship would be proud of. Speaking of which, on exiting the circuit after our test, we joined the road immediately behind one Sebastian Ogier. The Frenchman has won the WRC eight times so far and was in transit between stages. It took us a while to figure out why this WRC car, revving at about 8,000RPM down the motorway, was on the road in front of us, then it dawned on us - it was Rally of Catalunya Week and we had inadvertently joined the convoy of the world's best rally talent heading to their next championship stage. I think we fitted in quite well in a TR6 and even the crowds waved at us in admiration!

After that excitement, the crews were thrown a tricky navigation control to finish

the day with, before entering the ancient Mediterranean city of Tarragona. This city, once capital of the Roman Empire for a short time, has all sorts of Roman ruins to fascinate the visitor including a Roman amphitheatre just minutes from the hotel.

All the crews enjoyed dinner in the warm, balmy heat of the city square. There was a party atmosphere to this city, with its hundreds of bars and restaurants. Despite the strict pandemic restrictions requiring every waiter to scan your vaccination pass before serving you, it was great to watch local revellers out enjoying Friday night as normal.

Just a couple of days ago, we had been on the coast of the Atlantic, now we crossed the country and met the Mediterranean and we paid the beach a visit at night-time to say we'd seen both coastlines. On the way back to the hotel, our route took us along the pavement and past the roller shutter door behind which 28 TRs were busy sleeping in the underground car park - amazingly from the pavement outside - the familiar aroma of TR engines, fuel, oil and other wonderful smells could be detected on the breeze!

From Tarragona we had to take a detour off our plotted route, as our section had been requisitioned by the Rally Catalunya and was now a WRC stage, so we had to find our own way around.

One of our controls on the way, however, took us to the Classic Motor Club Del Bages in Sant Joan De Vilatorrada. This is the headquarters of one of Spain's most active classic car clubs and just around the corner from their Club HQ, was home to the amazing collection of Jaume Jubert. Toni Tacho and Roger Grandia hosted us with snacks, a welcome speech introducing the club and the many cars in the Jubert collection.

For some crews, it was a chance to take advantage of the extended stop and fix some niggles. It was the turn of the

Gerring's TRS to have some attention again, this time to the Overdrive. Hunting down the electrical issue saw Dave Burgess lying in the footwell, feet aloft fiddling with the logic box wiring under the dash. In the end, it turned out to be a failed solenoid, which was changed instead. It was the first time Dave had attracted the attention of the paparazzi by having his legs in the air though!

After an extended lunch break and having had our route books signed and stamped, we headed for the mountains of Andorra. The town of Cardona lay between us and the border and was, at one time, considered the most important fortress in Catalonia. The Castle at Cardona was constructed by a chap named Wilfred the Hairy in 886 - no, honest. During the 14th century, this place was home to the Dukes of Cardona, or 'kings without crowns' owing to their extensive lands. In 1714, the garrison was one of the last to surrender to the Bourbon troops of King Phillip V and, as a result, the fort remains to this day, a symbol of suppressed Catalanian nationalism.

Passports at the ready, we entered Andorra via an impressive border control and one thing became immediately clear; this place has more petrol stations per square mile than anywhere else on earth! I can't exaggerate the fact that there is a petrol station of various brands, one after another, one after the next. Take your pick, they are all here from Gulf to BP, Shell to Texaco, Esso and Repsol. Before you ask, plenty of E5 and Super Unleaded as well.

The National Motor Museum of Andorra offered, not only our final check point of the day, but also an amazing collection of cars, bikes and motoring ephemera across three floors and a basement. Rare oddities like a Parisian built Hotchkiss to a D-type that was actually an E-type with a look-alike body kit on it. An amazing place and just like their obsession with fuel stations, it was clear that Andorrans love the motor car as well, even our hotel foyer had



Jason Carrodus -
Stephen Hill - 1957 Triumph TR3A



Veteran cars in Andorra



Threading through cliffs and gorges



On the oddly named "Silent Route" pass that wasn't so silent that day



Tarragona



Posing for a group shot



Unpowered ferry of the River Ebro



Monasterio de Piedra



Stunning autumnal colours



Concours Award - 1968 TR5, John & Dominique Sharpe



Kicking up the dust



Moritz confirms he's having fun with Jeff Givens



Karl and Alan Boulton doing well at the regularity test



Per and Inger drove from Norway



Ladies' Prize - Liz Wakefield



Morella's city walls



Remote fortified farms



S7 Graham Hills - Ray Mason - 1965 Triumph TR4A



Morella

a 1960s Porsche on display alongside a rare Springfield bodied Rolls-Royce.

I spent the evening before dinner plotting our last day on the maps overlooking a ski-slope from my balcony in the Hotel Nordic. Snow had not fallen yet and the ski lifts seemed to pointlessly thread their way up the very soft and lush-looking grassy slopes, abandoned and swaying with a sort of expectant anticipation in the breeze.

In just a few weeks' time, this whole area would be a metre or so deep in snow and the crowds of garishly coloured tourists would be flocking up the mountain for the start of the ski season.

The next morning, we left after a buffet breakfast and emerged from the warm depths of the hotel underground car park into arctic conditions. The temperature had plummeted and by the time we had reached

the summit of Port d'Envalira, the highest point on our whole rally, the temperature was down at -3 and ice was visible on the side of the roads. Almost every car coughed and spluttered its way up here, the engines had barely time to warm up before reaching such high altitudes. We stopped at the summit, our first control at a breathtaking 2,408 metres and unbelievably then filled up with fuel at a choice



Awards were presented to:

SPIRIT CATEGORY

1st overall: **Dave Burgess & Wayne Scott**, TR6 S14

2nd: **Mark Rachet & Alain Lacroix**, TR4 S4

3rd: **Paul & Sandra Heaney**, TR6 S20

Best in class TRS/4/4A: **David Hankin & James Butler**, TR4 S2

Best in class TR5/6: **Peter Dracup & Andrew Swain**, TR6 S17

AUTHENTIC CATEGORY

1st: **Liz Wakefield & Mike Jones**, TR3A car 9

2nd: **Julian & Sara Riley**, TR2 car 3

3rd: **Jason Carrodus & Stephen Hill**, TR3 car 4

OTHER AWARDS

Best Driver: **Dave Burgess** (we'll never hear the end of this now!)

Best Navigator: **Jan Gerring**

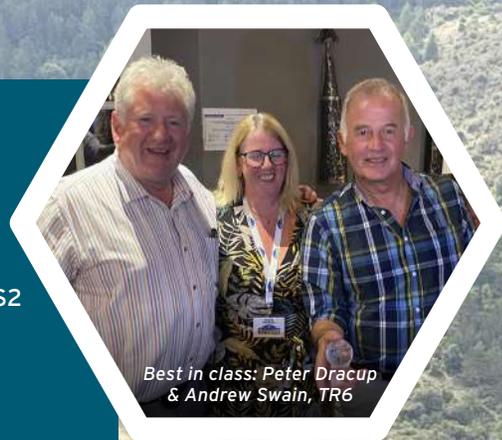
Veteran's Award: 1954 TR2, **Terry Mower & Stephen James**

Concours Award: 1968 TR5, **John & Dominique Sharpe**

Ladies' Prize: **Liz Wakefield**

Spirit of the Rally: **Lois & Iain Paul**, Works TR3A

Best TR Team: **Smokey & the Bandits, Alan Wilkinson & Sarah (TR6 Diesel), Liz & Mike (TR3), David Burgess & Wayne Scott (TR6)**



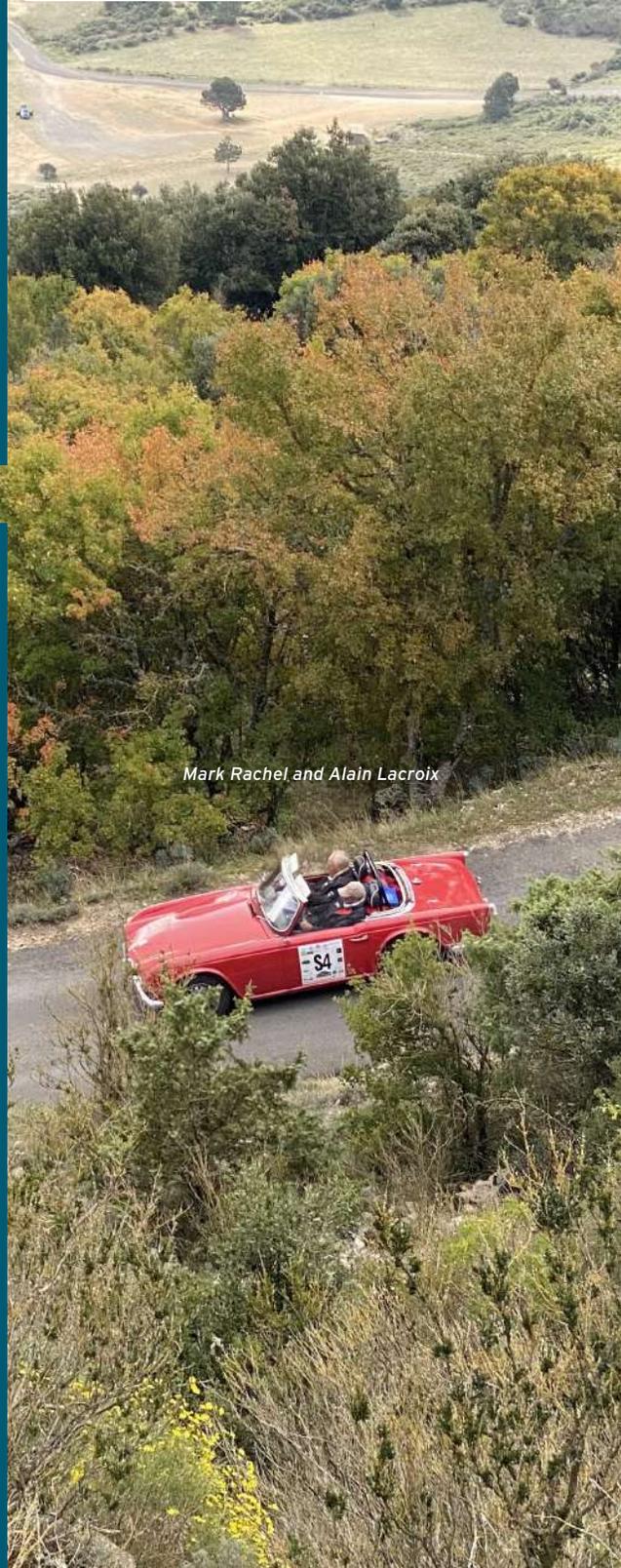
Best in class: Peter Dracup & Andrew Swain, TR6

AUTHENTIC CATEGORY

1. Terry Mower/Stephen James - 1954 Triumph TR2
2. Phil and Dawn Brown - 1955 Triumph TR2
3. Julian and Sara Riley - 1955 Triumph TR2
4. Jason Carrodus/Stephen Hill - 1957 Triumph TR3A
5. Iain and Lois Paul - 1957 Works Triumph TR3A
6. Jeff Givens/Moritz Krohne - 1959 Triumph TR3A
7. Ian Vincent/David Wilson - 1959 Triumph TR3A
8. Andy Jackson/John Broadley - 1960 Triumph TR3A
9. Liz Wakefield/Mike Jones - 1960 Triumph TR3A

SPIRIT CATEGORY

- S1 Paul and Jan Gerring - 1960 spec. Triumph TRS
- S2 David Hankin/James Butler - 1961 Triumph TR4
- S3 David Liddell/Helen Ruud - 1963 Triumph TR4
- S4 Mark Rachet/Alain Lacroix - 1963 Triumph TR4
- S5 Nick and Sharon Waller - 1963 Triumph GTR4 Dove
- S6 Jeff and Lesley Roberts - 1964 Triumph TR4
- S7 Graham Hills/Ray Mason - 1965 Triumph TR4A
- S8 withdrawn
- S9 Mark and Sarah Rainer - 1968 Triumph TR5
- S10 Simon Leifer/Lee Mariner - 1968 Triumph TR5
- S11 John and Dominique Sharpe - 1968 Triumph TR5
- S12 Karl and Alan Boulton - 1969 Triumph TR6
- S13 withdrawn
- S14 Dave Burgess/Wayne Scott - Triumph TR6
- S15 Per Formo/Inger Buene - 1972 Triumph TR6
- S16 Ian Barker/Sheila Hutton - 1972 Triumph TR6
- S17 Peter Dracup/Andrew Swain - 1973 Triumph TR6
- S18 John and Kim Durden - 1973 Triumph TR6
- S19 Alan Wilkinson/Sarah Southwell - 1969 Triumph TR6 Diesel
- S20 Paul and Sandra Heaney - 1976 Triumph TR6



Mark Rachel and Alain Lacroix

of two mountain-top petrol stations and descended to join the lengthy queue to leave Andorra via the border control.

We crossed into France and immediately the landscape changed to lush wooded valleys, river gorges and gentle sloping farmland in between the spikes of mountains. Mont Louis and Villefranche de Conflent were both UNESCO World Heritage Sites and steeped in history. You get a sense of the great conflict that the border here has seen in times past. The Mont Louis citadel walls house a fortress designed to withstand artillery attacks from Spain completed in 1682. It remains property of the French Army and, in 1949, an experimental solar furnace was built that used sunlight focused by mirrors to generate 50kW. Enough to melt ore and extract pure substances at 3,500 degrees centigrade.

One of the natural highlights was Gorges de Galamus, where the TRs made their way through the tight twisting road cut into the rock face high above monk's dwellings, which were barely visible, small houses clinging to the side of the cliff.

Then the intrepid crews were treated to a climb up to the breath-taking (literally) Chateau de Peyrepertuse - which looked like a movie set, such was the grandeur and spectacle of views it provided across the valleys below. Someone had even taken the time here to write 'Alan' several times in chalk on the road. We assumed this was for cyclists of course, but nice to think it was the fans of Alan Wilkinson willing his BMW diesel-powered TR6 to the top of the slopes! There were a few tricky navigation tests to conquer today as well.

Part of the skill of navigating and instructing your driver to take the correct route is sorting out how to pronounce place names. We operated a phonetic approach, with injected comedy value - just to keep our attention. For example:

Salles - sur - l'hers = Sally's sore hairs
Gorges de St Georges = Gorgeous georges
Col de Catchaudegue = Col da Kajagoo goo
La Bastide = The bast... you get the idea...

My favourite placename of the trip didn't need any phonetic translation - it was simply spelled 'Pratdip'. That kept us giggling for at least 20 miles.

Then, all of a sudden, we fell off the mountains and into the fairy-tale city of Carcassonne. This walled citadel would provide a stunning and atmospheric backdrop to the end of the rally. The cars lined up outside the citadel gates, the tourists flocked to have their photos taken and then, as evening descended, the TRs formed a victory procession, led by the winner of the Spirit category carrying a local dignitary, through the walls and into the narrow-cobbled streets of their Citadel - normally out of bounds to motor vehicles.

Who was that winner of the Spirit category? Well, it was us. Dave Burgess and Wayne Scott in the TR6



Julian and Sara Riley climbing



Best navigator - Jan Gerring



Carcassonne played host to the evening celebrations



Carcassonne's Citadel





Hotel foyer



Dave's got his feet up



Per and Inger



La Rioja

Karl and Alan Boulton



Best Driver- Dave Burgess



The youngest TR on the event



Micro cars in the collection at Classic Motor Club del Bages



Gathering at the finish line



2nd place Mark Rachet and Alain Lacroix



Jason Carrodus & Stephen Hill, TR3 car 4



Spirit overall winners - Dave Burgess - Wayne Scott (TR6)



The winning team



Phil and Dawn Brown

wearing the number S14. In the authentic class, Liz Wakefield and Mike Jones had taken the win in their TR3A and both of us by only a two-point margin over those in second.

It was a fitting location for the end to such an incredible journey. Everyone who made it to the end had something to celebrate, just the achievement of completing the rally was reward enough. Dave and I revelled in our achievement. Two years ago, we arrived as rank outsiders armed only with good drinking trousers, enthusiasm and an egg-timer from Amazon. This time, our ability to work as a team

together, take it seriously when required, have a laugh most of the time and more than anything just enjoy each other's company had paid off and delivered us an amazing victorious achievement.

We had all completed a rally in the old tradition, combining endurance, tricky navigation, tight timing on tests, wonderful driving on challenging roads through stunning scenery and above all, we had created great memories together.

The evening concluded with the awards dinner in Espace Fontgrande, a restaurant just down the road from the Hotel de la Cité within the walls of Carcassonne. The next

morning, we all said our goodbyes. However, this time when we bade each other farewell, it was not tinged with the sadness of realising it was all over now - rather with the expectant excitement that, in fact, we would all be seeing each other to do it all again very soon.

Where and when we will all embark on our next great adventure, we don't know yet, but one thing is for sure, we will be having the time of our lives when we do!

A big thank you to Malcolm and Helena McKay. To little Fiona and to the marshals Mark and Jane Smith, and the mechanics, who are all very much part of the TR family.