RALLY XIIITH VIRÉE DES COLS VOSGIENS 2012 (THE VCV)

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ALSACE A VIEILLES ANGLAISES
A.V.A. F.F.V.E.
CLASSIC RALLYE THUNER-GRETENER
XIIIème VIREE DES COLS VOSGIENS
10 - 13 Mai 2012

Having competed in a number of Historic rallies in France in the past, I was very interested when my friend John Chamberlain, who lives close to Cognac, suggested that I try the "VCV". This is not a sprint event but an outing of navigation and regularity sections taking in the Vosgean Passes.

The event is a weekend road rally with the central hotel in Molsheim, and is divided into three basic areas of competition: a touring category which is the most straightforward of the three, a GT section which is a stage more difficult, and the "Experts" category and which is the most difficult-and as I had Colin Francis, OBE, as navigator with me it was suggested that we enter this category. This was to prove the wrong decision for many reasons! We should have "thought small, rather than big."

The start of the Rally was in Rosheim and the organisation for scrutineering was first class-and very friendly. Apart from my pal John we were the only Brits and the organisers treated us very well; after all we had come from "overseas!"

Friday 11th May and around one hundred cars began the event which was divided into four sections until lunch, with four more sections in the afternoon, totalling 346kms. The roadbook was a combination of Tulip, with and without distances to work with - something which we did not get the hang of until well into the morning, by which time our penalties were heading towards the stratosphere. We thought that after lunch we would improve. In true French style lunch was a sight to behold, and in comparison to most British rallies a lesson in how to cater for hungry rally people. (I might add that three weeks later I competed in Ireland and the lunches/dinners were of a similar standard, so we can do it if we try!) The first day ended at the Hotel Diana where again we were looked after extremely well.

The following day took us from Rosheim northwards again through some very beautiful countryside and no traffic (one thing we Brits appreciate when rallying in France is the sheer size of the country which means there are usually less people to contend with (so long as you keep away from the major cities).

As far as being competitive went, we were not having a good event, so any thoughts of a good result were soon forgotten. This was the first event for the car - a Lancia Fulvia and I was beginning to think about the previous 24 years rallying a Porsche 356 with its reliability, as we were having a few small problems which did not help us; but still, we were enjoying the day.

The front-runners included a certain Mr. Joseph Lambert who has been having a good year with wins on the Monte Carlo Historique amongst others, and he in fact went on to win the VCV in grand style.

The final part of the event went from La Petite Pierre to the lunch stop at Dettwiller and then on to Bischoffsheim where the competitive part of the weekend finished. In total the distance for the whole event was 655 kilometres and took in some spectacular views.

As is the practice the results and awards were presented in a sports complex on the Sunday morning and the whole event finished on a very friendly and positive note.

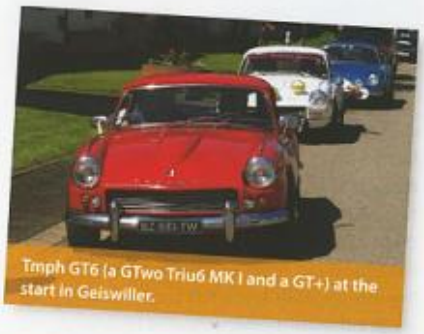
We did not feature anywhere in the top runners, due to our inability to get to grips with the "style" of the event; all rallies have their own individual style, and hopefully in the future we will be able to do a lot better.

The good thing about taking part in an event in the Northern part of France is that it is a relatively easy journey to make with the tunnel etc, and I can recommend the organisation for putting on a well organised and hospitable event.

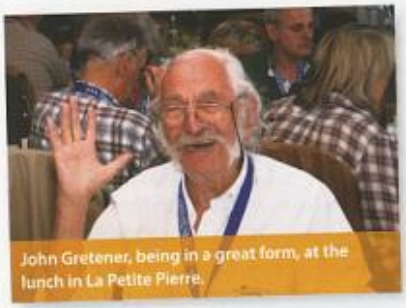
Our thanks go to Daniel Melle for his enthusiasm and kindness to us-and I hope he will attract more entries from the UK in the future. Our most positive contribution to the week-end was the fact that we carried a steel hard top from the UK for Daniel's TR6 on our trailer - so we achieved something!"



Jean-Jacques Thuner (CH) winner in Le Mans 65 in the 1150 Class, giving his enlightened commentaries during the special run in Phalsbourg.



Tmph GT6 (a GTwo Triu6 MK I and a GT+) at the start in Geiswiller.



John Gretener, being in a great form, at the lunch in La Petite Pierre.



The rally closed park at the Kettler Enterprise in Rosheim.



The '74 Triumph TR6 N° 17 of Stéphane De Smedt, President of the FBVA (Belgium Old Cars Federation) at the start of the stage III B in Geiswiller.