FEBRUARY 2018 ISSUE 303

TR ACTION



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Tourism Ireland
WINNER

A TR Register publication for all TR enthusiasts past, present & future

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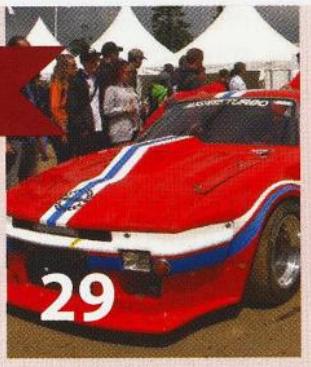
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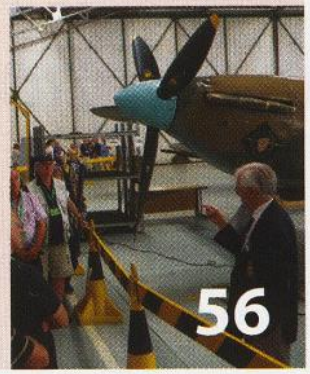














A stop on the way to Fort William.

DANIEL MELLE

Trip to Scotland for club "Alsace & Vielles Anglaises"

My name is Daniel Melle and I am the chairman of an old English cars owners club located in the North-East of France called "Alsace & Vielles Anglaises". Each year, I organize an outing for our club members; this year, I arranged for fifteen teams (cars and driver +/- passenger) from our club to Scotland.



I am also member of the UK TR Register and was delighted to receive Mick Forey's email in January to overseas members, explaining how he wanted to improve contact with foreign members. In my reply, I told him about our outing and that I should be very glad if we could meet members of the Scottish TR Register Section and drive together as part of our trip.

Booking hotels for fifteen teams proved very time consuming and Peter Johnston, a British gentleman living in France and a good friend of mine, was a great help with all this. Mick Forey suggested I use "We're Only Here for the Beer" for contacts and so I contacted Steve Mutch - the beginning of a special story.

Wednesday, May 24th: Bischoffsheim – Waterloo, 450 kilometres, 280 miles.

"D" Day! "Start your engines, gentlemen!" We were one team down, due to illness. Several grouping points were planned: the first at our home, in Bischoffsheim, then in Phaslbourg, near a WW II Sherman tank, the third in a very good inn chosen by Françoise and Marc Collard, the "Café Le Walhaff" in Luxembourg where we have our lunch. Our first hotel in Waterloo is near the 1815 Memorial.

Thursday, May the 25th: Waterloo – Rotterdam P&O Ferries : 205 kilometres, 127 miles.

A light mist covers the plain of Waterloo, as it did on June 18th in 1815, the day of the famous battle. At 10 o'clock all the cars are on the start line. Eliane Guiraud and her friend John Schutte, a Flying Dutchman, join us for our lunch stop at Etten-Leur, in a very lovely restaurant "Het Havenhuis". After a fine lunch, we leave "The House of the Harbour" and head to the P&O Ferries quay in Rotterdam, the greatest harbour in Europe. We can embark from 5 o'clock but one member has lost his passport, so our number is reduced. An oily sea gives us a calm crossing.



Day 3, Carter Bar. This is it, we are in Scotland.



A very warm welcome from Steve Mutch.

Friday, May 26th: Hull – Edinburgh via the Old Mill Inn in Durham: 411 kilometres, 255 miles.

A bright and warm sun welcomed our thirteen cars in Hull. We head in the direction of Durham, skirting the coast, driving very carefully, because it is the first time on UK roads for the most of us. Especially in the roundabouts where the navigator is essential!

At the Old Mill Inn in Durham we meet with Geoff Mansfield and his friends. Geoff came with a splendid Jaguar C-Type Replica. But there were also a lot of different TRs : TR4, TR4A IRS, TR5 and TR6. Over a ploughman's lunch we get better acquainted and share our many old car stories. After lunch we head to our hotel in Edinburgh; a t 5:00 pm, we are at Carter Bar, the border between England and Scotland - time to take a break and breathe for this first time the atmosphere of Scotland. A great moment!

Saturday, May 27th: A day of a welcome rest for our old cars.

We rent a bus to visit the City of Edinburgh. Brigitte Swainson, a French woman, is our very lovely guide and gives us all the explanations about this beautiful town, its amazing story and its imposing castle. After a good lunch in the Ghillie Dhu, an old Church converted into a restaurant, Brigitte takes us to the National Museum of Scotland: an amazing place where we meet, amongst others, Mary Stuart and James Watt, the ancestor of the guillotine and the famous sheep Dolly, Saturn V and the Mini of Sir Alec Issigonis!

Sunday, May 28th: Edinburgh - Banchory via Braemar and Balmoral Castle: 260 kilometres, 161 miles.

The first complete day in Scotland. There are a few clouds, unable to hide a radiant sun. After Stirling, we leave the highway and discover the remarkable site of Kilbryde. This beautiful little castle has a famous garden. Its owner, a great lover of old cars, presents us his property. After this short meeting, we carry on to Braemar. In Braemar, the reserved inn is closed, but the owner is present and promises us our meal in less than an hour. A part of the afternoon is dedicated to visiting Balmoral Castle, summer residence of the Queen. This beautiful 50.000-acre area exudes serenity. After this beautiful moment, we take to the road again, direction Banchory Lodge in Banchory, for a lovely welcome! There, a complete surprise, waiting for us is Alan Gibb, the Scottish Co-Ordinator of the TR Register, and his green Swallow Doretti. He accepts our invitation to join us for a warm evening which continues very late…

Monday, May 29th: Banchory – Boat of Garten via the Glenfiddich Distillery in Dufftown: 190 kilometres, 118 miles.

A great day begins - the first real meeting with the Scottish TR Register members. For a few months, we were in contact by mail and by phone, and agreed to meet at Regent Street in Keith. As we enter the car park. Denise and Dave Balsover and Anne and Steve Mutch are waiting for us.

Steve Mutch says: *"After many emails we finely get to meet Daniel and Dominique and the rest of the Euro crew with not only their lovely TRs but a mixture of beautiful British and Euro classics. Their perfect English put us to shame but it meant we all got off to a great start and with the weather being half decent they were clearly having a great trip, with no mechanical problems thus far. After getting to know each other Daniel showed me the trip portfolio which we found very impressive, a well-documented time line colour brochure issued to all the cars. Does this guy ever sleep? It must have taken ages to make up. I was also impressed with the way each car was packed with all their holiday luggage and enough room in a TR3 for a decent tool kit with spare parts!*

We affixed our car badges that Daniel had made for us and set off up scenic Speyside heading for Glenfiddich distillery in Dufftown, which has one of the best visitor centres in the area, good choice Daniel, where we had a lovely lunch with our new friends.

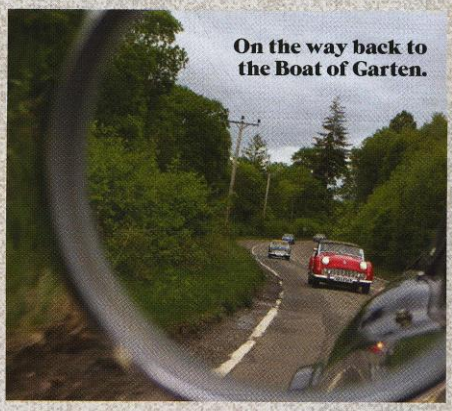
I'm glad it was a bank holiday Monday as it gave us the opportunity to meet up and it would have been great to drive further on to Boat of Garten and spend the evening in their company, but Anne and I had to be on the road again after lunch. →



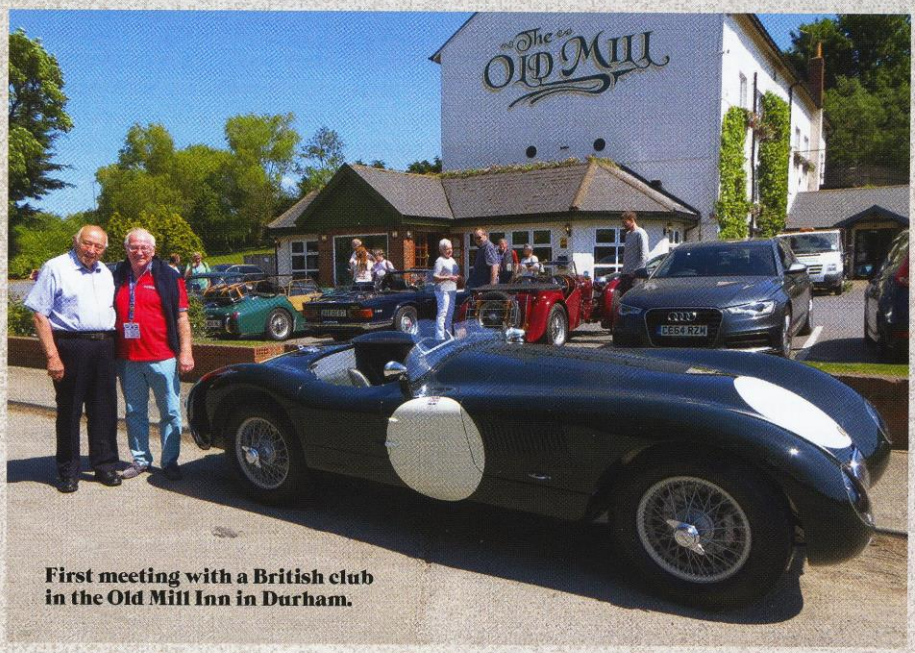
A short stop at Kilbryde Castle.



Alan Gibb's Swallow Doretti between French Triumphs in the car park.



On the way back to the Boat of Garten.



First meeting with a British club in the Old Mill Inn in Durham.

→ *It is good to see a line of classics driving alone the rural roads.*

We wished them well and reassured them that the Loch Ness Monster does exist and they would have a fair chance of seeing him on the drive they planned round the Loch the following day.

We very much enjoyed our time with the "Alsace & Vieilles Anglaises" crew; lovely people."

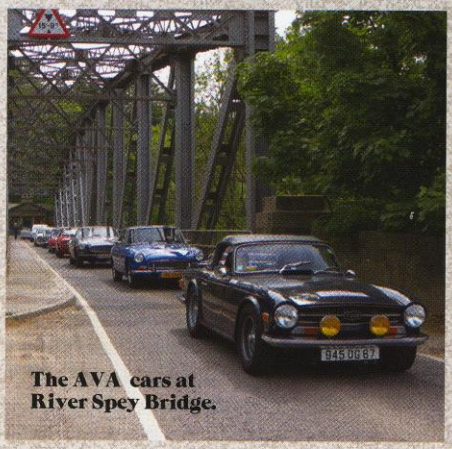
Tuesday May 30th: Boat of Garten – Loch Ness – Drumnadrochit – Boat of Garten : 186 kilometres, 116 miles.

The ride of the day leads us to Loch Ness, the place to be when you visit Scotland. We leave Boat of Garten, turn left on the A82 in Inverness and drive along the lake on its left bank to Drumnadrochit. We made some stops, to infuse this so special atmosphere, touch this dark water and all scrutinize the surface of this famous loch for a long time. We are overwhelmed by the majesty of the site. After this amazing contact, we take our lunch in the Loch Ness Inn in Drumnadrochit. In the afternoon, we continue on the road to the end of the lake in Fort Augustus and drive back to Daviot. Again, the landscapes are fabulous and many stops allow us to admire them. Back to The Boat Hotel for the evening.

Wednesday May 31st: Boat of Garten – Eilean Donan Castle – Fort William: 186 kilometres, 116 miles.

We travel to the XIIIth Century Eilean Donan Castle for a second meeting with Scottish members of the TR Register, for a nice ride with lovely TR owners! We reach the meeting point near the Kessockbridge at the arranged time and four cars are waiting on us: Christine and Bob Milton, Iain and Joy Barker, Lesley and Bruce Kelly all in a TR4 and George Mac Donald und Hugh Finney in a TR6.

Christine Milton says: *"After a number of emails between France and Scotland we were delighted to be invited to join Daniel and Co on a part of their journey. Three cars from the TR Group plus one member whose vehicle was under repair agreed to meet up at the North end of the Kessock Bridge. Our first sighting of our French counterparts was as we approached the dual carriageway Marie flashed past waving furiously to us. On meeting our visitors we sensed a great feeling of joie de vivre, everyone was happy and smiling and even seemed to understand my halting French although it was unnecessary as they all spoke good English. We were given an identity badge by Daniel - a very thoughtful gesture. It was agreed that Bob should take the lead on this part of our journey and so we departed heading towards Garve. Even with an overcast sky the hills and loch had their own beauty. As Daniel hadn't mentioned stopping we phoned him to suggest a stop at Loch Carron. Dropping into Loch Carron the wild rhododendrons did not disappoint. The sides of the road were a blaze of colour. We alighted at Loch Carron to stretch our legs and of course take photographs. One lady desperate for a cup of tea asked Daniel if she had time, on being told no she responded by saying you are pulling my leg and held up her limb as an offering. It was so funny. Back into our vehicles we now headed for the Strome ferry Bypass and on to Eilean Donan Castle. Suddenly the sun came out, we were so delighted for our visitors. Again lots of chats and a lovely meal in the restaurant. May I say we were very impressed with the meticulous attention to detail of the itinerary book which Daniel showed to us. Hours of research I imagine, hats off to you Daniel. Our lasting memory is of a group of very happy people going into the castle and waving au revoir".*



The AVA cars at River Spey Bridge.

After this nice and too short meeting, we continued the trip to Fort William. We drove along Loch Cluanie, Loch Loyne, Loch Garry and Loch Lochy which all offered us wonderful landscapes: a spotless sky and the waters of the different lochs were an amazing brilliant blue. Our cars had a reserved space on arrival at the Alexandra Hotel in Fort William.

Thursday, June 1st: Fort William – The Glen Coe – Benmore – Balmaha : 156 kilometres, 97 miles.

At the last moment, before the start, a modification is planned; we drive along both banks of the Loch Eil, than along the right bank of Loch Linnhe on the A861 till Corran where we take the ferry to reach Inchree. From there, we use the A82 in Glen Coe. As in the Film "Skyfall", when 007 drives with "M" to his manor, the sky is low and the clouds are dark… an amazing feeling invades us!

At 12 o'clock, under pouring rain, we arrive at the Ben More Lodge for lunch. The weather is ugly, but the welcome in this inn is fine. After our meal, we must repair an overheating engine. The cooler's thermostatic switch is out of order and so it is shunted. The journey goes on to Balmaha on the bank of the Loch Lomond, a very nice place.

Friday, June 2nd: Balmaha – St Boswells – Hadrian's Wall – Carlisle: 304 kilometres, 189 miles.

The last day in Scotland; as usual, the weather is very fine. We leave the Oak Tree Inn as head to St Boswells, via Pathhead and Carfraemill. There, we have a very lovely welcome in the Buccleuch Arms Inn. After a very good meal, the thirteen cars head south to Chollerford and on to Carlisle. At Housesteads, we stop for a short visit to the Roman Fort, a very well preserved part of Hadrian's Wall which was built in the first Century (122-128).



Happy people meeting at Loch Carron.

Saturday, June 3rd: Carlisle – Scotch Corner – Wetherby – Hull : 280 kilometres, 174 miles.

"Start your engines, gentlemen!" The last stage in the United Kingdom, again with bright sun illuminating the day. We make a few last stops to better imbue us with this magical atmosphere. After lunch at the Sir Dukes Inn in Wetherby we head to the P&O Ferries quay. Our wonderful journey in Scotland was now over and we embarked, our heads full of splendid memories. After dinner, we climb on deck and we witness a wonderful sunset at the stern of the ship, a magnificent goodbye from the United Kingdom!

Sunday, June 4th: Rotterdam – Marche en Famenne – Bischoffsheim : 607 kilometres, 377 miles.

Back on the continent. The group splits with the French and Swiss crews heading to Marche-en-Famenne, location of our lunch in Belgium. Then it is 324 kilometres (201 miles) to our home in Bischoffsheim (Alsace). We all keep fabulous memories of this journey in Scotland, especially of these beautiful landscapes, of this particular atmosphere, and of these exceptional meetings with these so friendly members of the Scottish TR Register!

In conclusion, Steve Mutch says: *"Good memories of our Euro friends' tour of the Highlands, haste ye back."*



Checking for monsters at Loch Ness.