



Dragon / Y Ddraig Jensen Owners Club — South Wales Area

Still Summer 2006

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Put the Pedal to the Metal

Though at the time of writing it is now three days ago, as I am still very much in recovery mode from my cousins stag weekend in Riga, Latvia, I am extremely grateful to Bodfan for writing such a fine article for this issue allowing me to simply select copy and paste... Thanks again to Bodfan for organising the next meet – more on that later - but as this is being organised in a very central South Wales area, this is surely one of the best opportunities for members rights across our region to attend so I hope to see many new faces at what looks to be another fine meeting. But without further ado, here are Bodfans excellent reports on recent events.

TWO REPORTS AND AN ANNOUNCEMENT

We incorporated last month's meet of the SWJOC into the International Weekend and, as the latest JOC Magazine does not cover that occasion I thought to report a little of the activity and allow you to get all the real details from the next issue of the magazine.

THREE CASTLES REGULARITY TRIAL

Firstly, though, some information about the Three Castles Rally. In short no Jensen or Jensen crew won anything. More accuracy reveals that both Jensen crews retired from the competitive part of the rally, though both upheld the tradition of this area by maintaining the high social and gastronomic profile set and kept by us, doing so throughout the rally's duration. Richard, Pam, Bev and I had a fabulous time, the Captain and his mate taking their 541R; Bev and I the GT, which Bev had insisted on buying for rallying purposes.

The beauty of this type of this classic rally is that it is run in conjunction with a tour and it is in that that we all ended up. In Richard and Pam's case "the drop" to the tour occurred at the end of day one. In ours about three and a half hours later, though on day two.

Our retirement coincided with a timing point situated a few yards from a country pub's carpark and so Bev and I repaired to the pub.

I think Pam and Richard's retirement was less technically founded than ours, Pam's oft expressed concern about all those rules and the need to keep to them taking an eventual precedence. Howsoever that may be (who's a lawyer then?) She did not neglect her navigational duties during the rest of the rally, though, it has to be said, she has developed a wholly different and novel approach to Tulip road books; that is to say, "ignore them". Pam developed a new style of plot and bash rallying, plotting a map route from breakfast to luncheon; and, three and a half hours later, from luncheon to dinner. I understand that, Europe wide, rally organisers are adding a third category to rally entries so that from now on their format will be, "rally, tour or Pamfest".

On the Wednesday of the rally (briefing, scrutineering and practice) we watched a hard driven 541R on a twisting, awkward practice test but from too far to get a photograph of it. As our rally numbers were too far apart for us to glimpse Pam and Richard during the next three days rallying here is a shot of them starting the rally on day one.

We dropped out due to the technical problems with the trip metering equipment that I had had fitted to the car and had had re-fitted to try and resolve problems which had manifested themselves just a few days before departure for the rally.

The tests went well, bar the first two, where learning the car's limits in extremis and over confidence in its braking abilities meant we did not set the best time in passing those tests. The over confidence resulted in our leaving the course and collecting a marker cone, which wedged itself between the nearside front wheel and wheel arch. The rest of that twisting, tight course felt like driving a tank. I took about six minutes after the test to release the cone. In the test we were three seconds behind the class fastest time but on returning for the last test of the day to the same course we got class lead by 4 seconds and felt better about things after that.

The work I'd done to the engine, carburettors, suspension etc proved well worth it, so that we set class lead in all subsequent tests which were officially recorded and unofficially did so in all those that we did after retiring. The choice of a Jensen GT for classic rallying purposes seems vindicated, though Bev expressed a view that we needed to modify the car to the snarling, spitting, fire breathing, porsche beating 2.2 litre conversion that Martin Shirley is trying to convince us to have. Post the rally her enthusiasm for this idea has waned somewhat so when we next meet I would be grateful if you would all mention how right she was and generally wonderful an idea she had.

The pictures of the GT are of two different tests, both fabulous hill climbs, the longer of which, at about 2.7 miles, we finished, due to the numerous stop astrides written into the test, with our brakes smoking.

It was the regularity sections which scuttled our rally. There are sections of narrow, difficult but public roads, which must be driven at different, slow average speeds; say 18.5mph for, say, 3.71 miles and then 22mph for 1.11 miles and so on.

They are deliberately convoluted courses designed to throw a navigator, who has to direct the driver from a Tulip road book. Slots of distances can vary down to 17.6 yards. Timing points are set at undisclosed positions on the route and they have to be stopped at (astride a line) at the precise time one should have taken to cover the distance from the start or the last timing point at the precise required average speed. Penalty points are given for each second early or late. You can imagine the accuracy of navigating /driving which is required. The best crews get results such as 3 minutes 7 seconds out in the entire distance of a rally from London to Cape Town.

Our distance and speed equipment was malfunctioning by running slow or fast or, at times, accurately and so speed and distance could not be accurately measured.

I tried to sort speed by running on the rev counter and prepared tables of revs. in different gears for each mile per hour from 15 to 30mph. I suspect the greatest flaw here will have been my maths., given the need to convert speed to revs. and the different gear ratios for second third and fourth. The one to one ratio of a GT in fifth gear allowed even me to sort that one out accurately.

Anyway things went from bad to worse on the second day's second regularity; the whole works stopping working. So, no speedos, odometer, trip meter or rally trip metres. Cattlegrids caused each such malfunction and though I got things working again by deliberately bumping the car over obstacles the sixth such total equipment failure meant we decided to pull out of the rally and just follow the course so we could drive the tests, all of which are challenging and enormous fun.

Our disappointment was alleviated by the company of Pam and Richard and with the addition of Irish friends of ours joining us each evening such as to make a sixsome to see off most carousers. What a trip!

JOC INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND

On, then, to the International weekend. Some SWJOC success and an impressive past president's cup winner's display, putting these cars in pride of place and the public eye and organised by Ed, need to be reported, together with a wonderful turnout of pre-war cars.

Importantly Ritchie's election (shouldn't this being Ritchie and Donna's election?) as JOC concourse secretary is to be noted and congratulated. We, in this area, know his/their dedication to the club and hard work. Others will, shortly, also learn of it. Congratulations and every success, both.

But the real news is the mystery surrounding Kevin's raised bonnet....

6am on Sunday, the concourse judgement day. Bev and I are out to clean the Interceptor. Only one other is abroad.

Kevin's bonnet is at the port but Kevin is not the other abroad. Why, we asked ourselves? No answer came. We cleaned and cleaned and cleaned.

There is a rule. At 10am all cleaning must stop. For hours the car park had been a hive of activity but not so in Kev's case. I had worried for some hours that some new rule had been introduced requiring bonnets to be raised for the judges' benefit. I need not have.

At about 9.35 Kevin appeared. Such panache, such aplomb, I thought. But no!. Never before have I seen him tizzed. He was not his concourse self - and he's an expert, remember.

I will say nothing of the 4.30am end to the previous evening or his 5am cleaning of his car, dressed, what else, in black tie and tuxedo. Nor will I mention his decision to change to get at the really dirty work or his exhausted slump, still in full black tie order, into an armchair in his room, let alone his awakening about 9.30am.

Instead I will simply record our gratitude for his advice, tuition, help and preparedness to lend his very technical, cleaning kit, which helped us enormously I am delighted to be able to record, in both the above reports, the continuation of SWJOC's hedonistic style.

NEXT MEET

To the future then, or at least our next meeting.

This is on the 30th July 2006 and we meet at 11am at the Castle Car Park, LLandoverly and members should park in the part of the car park immediately under the Castle and Mound. From there we'll run to and around LLyn Brianne, down to Abergwesyn and on to Garth, where we will turn for Brecon running over the Epynt to get there. This route is 40 odd miles through magnificent country and allows a choice of stops for photo opportunities. Do not leave the road that I will lead over the Epynt as the army (it's one of their training ranges) shoot at things not on the main road. Luncheon will be at Bishop's Meadow, a Motel/Roadhouse with magnificent views of the Beacons.

I need to know numbers to confirm the booking. Bishop's Meadow will extend the Sunday Lunch Menu, which normally ends at about 2pm, when we will be arriving, if people want. If you want the Sunday Lunch Menu please let me know by 5pm Saturday evening, 29th July 2006 on 01443 412137 and in any event confirm if you are coming. Otherwise the usual menu will be available.

I look forward to seeing you all.

JENSENA HAPUS
BODFAN

Note From Ed...

I would like to echo Richard's words of thanks to Bodfan for his excellent article and his organising of what looks to be, as always, a great afternoon out.

Having recovered from the fantastic time had by all at the International, we look forward to meeting members again and particularly due to the excellent location of the next meet hopefully, many new faces.

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