

H.R.C.R. Montreuil Classic Rally Tour – 2004 Henny Cate

Henny Cate describes a pleasant rally through North West France last autumn.

The Montreuil Rally, the last in the H.R.C.R series of 2004, took place in northern France on the weekend October 9th/10th. The start was by J9 on the A16 Autoroute between Calais & Boulogne at the Aire des Deux Caps. There were two sections on Saturday afternoon, so a reasonably early ferry from Dover was required.

There were 55 entries. The start saw three Tigers parked together quite by chance: No.46 ACU 355B John & Moira Hilberry, No.28 FYC 735C Trevor Part & Douglas Morgan and Car no.13 (BNH 612C) which had Peter Boyce navigating me. STOC members Graham & Sue Cowland were also present but in their Saab Sonnet – a rare and remarkable machine painted Lamborghini orange.

The Tiger runs 205 60 14 Goodyears, so the odometer is not accurate. (*Are they ever?. Ed*) Peter has refined the conversion factor, so that landmarks on the route card show up pretty well at the correct mileage but this means converting organiser's miles to Tiger miles – achieved by laboriously multiplying all the former by 0.91. Of course this is not as accurate as a tripometer but the Clerk of the Course fools around with the average speed quite often, the tripometer class suffers surprisingly hefty time penalties at the controls, which are at unknown locations – generally round a blind corner.

After the two sections run on Saturday afternoon we finished at the Hermitage Hotel in the old part of Montreuil. This proved very agreeable, though it was fully booked for dinner, so we found an excellent restaurant about two minutes away. At this stage we were leading the Odometer class and about 20th overall.

On Sunday the route took us in four sections further south, with stops at Auxi le Chateau, Doullens and Hesdin. We were fortunate with the weather and the area offers some interesting roads in very pleasant scenery with small hamlets and villages but mainly open country. There was a worrying number of locals all with shotguns and dogs in the fields as it was the "Fete de Sang". This is tough if you are a rabbit but Tigers are a protected species. I was thinking that

this regularity can be rather dull, trundling along at 29mph or whatever comes into the organiser's mind, when we came to a diversion round a village. This is normally signed by large, triangular orange arrows. We followed these and the locals waved happily to the old cars but at a T junction a group of lads waved us rather frantically in the direction of the arrow. Sure enough, they had reversed the arrow and sent us up the creek big-time! We were 5 minutes adrift and Peter reckoned we'd blown it. However since we did not know where the next time control might be, I felt the Tiger might just haul us back on schedule. This required some very enjoyable quick motoring



Tigers of Henny, John & Trevor - taking the Aire

These rallies are decided purely on regularity and most of the entrants are equipped with Halda, Brandtz or some other trip meter and the dashboards look like an airliner's cockpit. There is a separate class for those who like the simple life and we ran in the Odometer class. Peter and I did the HRCR 2003 Ardennes Rally in the Tiger and finished in the top ten, ahead of twenty or so Tripmeter class cars, so we were hopeful of a decent result.

and we dropped just one second at the next control. We were well ahead in the class after five sections. Organiser Simon Rossiter is well known for inserting a sting in the tail in the last stage and we were hoping to survive. We came to a crossroads, the instruction was straight on but there was a timing point just about on the right arm of the crossroads but effectively at the roadside. We went in and incurred a pile of penalties for arriving early and a further 300 points for missing out the control, which of course was straight on. Simon would never have got away with this in GB, as it would involve the rally route crossing itself at the crossroads, since the route went straight on to the control we missed and then returned to the one at the junction where obviously we were early. Instead of a total of some 90 penalties, we finished with 572!. The leaders, in a Riley 1.5 had dropped only 16 seconds until the fateful crossroads but they made the same mistake & somehow finished behind us. The Hilberrys were also caught out.

On Sunday evening we had the Rally Dinner at the Hermitage Hotel. The results showed two Triumphs at the top of the table: a GT6 with a total 21 penalty points and a 2.5 PI saloon second with 40 penalties. All the Tigers finished up on page 2 of the results in the bottom third; enough said !



Montreuil - 30Kms from Calais

One meets interesting people driving an assortment of tough cars. At the Rally Dinner we sat with the Sunbeam folk and a couple driving a Morris Minor. A Morris Minor? Surely it must have had Downton conversion? No, it had a large exhaust, huge rear mudguards with bilateral air intakes, louvres cut in the boot lid and two front seats offset to accommodate the engine. The engine? This was a Rover V8, stroked to 4 ½ litres and yes, it was turbocharged !! I understand the boot was full of radiator. The couple also had a

4WD Golf with a VR6 engine at each end & eight grandchildren – cap that !

I was worried that the Tiger has the “wrong” wheels, tyres, brakes etc and might not be eligible. It is clear from the Morris Minor’s that the interpretation of eligibility is fairly relaxed as indeed was the whole event. We left home in Cheshire at midday on Friday, staying near Dover that night and were back on Monday evening after an enjoyable weekend. BNH 612C behaved

perfectly, in spite of running car No 13.

Henny Cate

I fully endorse Henny’s recommendation of Montreuil & only a short run from Calais. So if you planning a booze cruise do the shopping and skip Calais – the Tiger will take 6 cases of wine, just ! Ed.



Fellow entrant – the go fast ‘Moggie’

These weekend HRCR events are excellent value. The entry fee of £500 covers a car and two people for two nights B & B, one dinner and return ferry Dover – Calais. The roads are not chassis breaking and generally very well chosen in quite pleasant countryside. 26