

Great Sheds I have Owned

A Dumb and dumber history of the RBRR - Andy Pearce



Whilst filling in the 2010 entry form I couldn't help but ponder over the previous six runs Ben "Homer" Hobson and I had taken part in and thought I would jot down a few memories and take a look

RBRR 1996

Car: 1978 Dolomite Sprint

History

This car ended up officially in my possession in late '95. I had repaired the front of the engine a year earlier after the front sprocket parted company with the cam. When the clutch expired, the owner (an ex-girlfriend) swapped the car with me for an XR2 engined MK 3 Escort (still sporting its 1.1L badge!). With the clutch replaced and car pressed into everyday service I picked up an old copy of Practical Classics whilst on a night shift and read about the RBRR – it must have been a report on the '94 event - and there and then decided to join the club and enter the "Zanussi Sprint" – so called as the front sub frame mounts were repaired using sections of metal cut from an old washing machine. Preparations for the event were completely bugged when the front sprocket came off again.

Preparation

Salvation came in the form of a second hand engine and box spotted in the CT classifieds. After an 800 mile round trip to darkest Norfolk with Homer and a transit van we had an engine. Several other washing machines were cut up to get it through the MOT and a 300 pound back street re-spray would hold the rust off for a month or so.

The Run

The start was amazing, living in Boonieland I hadn't seen so many Triumphs before. The car ran great apart from the O/D sticking in due to a dodgy solenoid, I fanned around checking the wiring etc but to no avail, you just had to get used to the O/D disengaging 10 to 20 minutes after you had flicked the switch – more importantly we also discovered a great chippy in Fort William.

As Homer and I have known each other since our infant school days our humour hasn't really developed much past this school boy level. By the first fuel stop the humour had reached an intellectual



high for us with the purchase of a copy of Viz which had some interesting 'Cut Out' car stickers which were applied to the inside of the rear window. Oh how we laughed at the Dorchester Honda stop when we watched a rather well-to-do lady from a TR examine our rear window and proceed to ask her partner what "Caution dog's eggs in transit" and "We're speeding because we're touching cloth" meant.

Other stuff in 1996

Music – *The charts looked pretty dire in October '96 with Boyzone and The Spice Girls topping the charts.*

Cars – *The McLaren F1 road car was King, Damon Hill would be F1 champion.*

Politics – *John Major was busy boffing mad cow Edwina Curry*

Petrol – *Average price of a gallon for the year – £2.40*

RBRR 1998

*Car: 1976 Triumph 2500TC
(The Big Red Bus)*

History

I rescued the car from the grasp of banger racers for the princely sum of £175 and had it trailered directly to Dale at Moordale Motors – this was to be the beginning of a great friendship!

Preparation

New inner/outer sills, some floor sections and an MOT were carried out

in time for the 1998 event. I took it on a testing run up to Cumbria a week before the event (I was now living in London) but the return journey went tits up when the clutch master failed and I returned to Twickenham on an RAC wagon. I was really hacked off as I had to go to the Drivers Meeting at The Plough in my work's van and not only had the clutch master failed but the rocker shaft had run dry causing lots of wear and rattles. I fixed all these problems with a couple of days to spare

The Run

The Bus ran great on the event only needing a bit of tinkering with the timing due to a bit of pinking. Nigel Gair appeared at my shoulder as soon as I popped the bonnet at the "Scotch Pie" halt. He lent a hand and his strobe, another friendship formed, we managed to blag two scotch pies each here! (*That probably explains why I didn't get any that year – Ed!*)

Lasting memories of the Run were tooling it past another 2500 on the A30 hitting the ton just before the dual carriage way ran out – it wasn't all 'duelled back' in those days – (I'm sure you mean 70 – Ed) and being one of the first crews at L.E. – oh and Homer having a "chocolate starfish" moment with an oncoming Mercedes in Scotland somewhere (*obviously a Cumbrian confection which I have not yet encountered – Ed*)

Other stuff in 1998

Music – *The charts were crap, first two No1s of October were B*itched and Billie Piper (although she made amends for this by getting naked a lot in “Secret Dairy of a Call Girl” which cheered up a lot of middle aged men who had previously watched her in Doctor Who and dreamed of “doing a bit of time travel” with her.*

Cars – *It wasn't much better on this front – take a look at the top ten best sellers below, any future classics in there? I think not.*

1. Ford Fiesta
2. Ford Escort
3. Ford Mondeo
4. Vauxhall Vectra
5. Renault Megane
6. Vauxhall Astra
7. Vauxhall Corsa
8. Peugeot 306
9. Rover 200
10. Rover 400

Politics – *Tony “Bliar” Blair had been morphed out of some slightly left of right wing ‘spin doctor think tank’ and was being controlled by his evil creator Cherie to inflict further misery on the nation’s motorists with stealth taxes galore and the constant monitoring of our movements via the misuse of new camera technology.*

Petrol – *Average price of a gallon for the year – £2.79*

RBRR 2000

Car: 1973 2000 Auto

History

This was a lovely original one owner 2000 (far too good for me really). I bought it from an ex-RAF Spitfire pilot in his 80s. Ill health had forced him to sell his prized Triumph – it had only covered 30,000 miles in his 17 years of ownership driving to the golf course and back. It was an emotional moment when I picked the car up a week after viewing it and he made a donation to the RBRR charity after I explained what I planned to do with the car. I was holding back the now tweaked “Big Red Bus” for our first Classic Rally, the London – Lisbon starting the weekend after the RBRR.

I received a letter from his widow not long after the RBRR explaining how pleased he was that the car had gone to an enthusiast in the Club. I had to sell the car on in 2001 to fund other stuff but I was very pleased to see it crop up



driven by another club member on the 2004 event. It resurfaced again last year on E-Bay still looking good, I hope it's in good hands.

Preparation

The biggest Job I had to do was clean out the fuel tank and fuel line as it had sat for a long time in the old boy's garage, I went through about 20 inline fuel filters on the run-up to the event.

The Run

The car ran at a steady pace as only a 2000 auto can so we amused ourselves by wearing comedy wigs whilst driving. The only real trouble we had was allowing the car to run low on fuel and stirring up some crud in the tank. This meant an unscheduled route change to get fuel before going into Wales for the first time on the run. Ben did a superb job with the maps, plotting a route to get us to the halt on time courtesy of some unsympathetic thrashing of the normally sedate auto.

Other stuff in 2000

Music – *Oh dear me not really worth going there – All Saints held the No1 spot in early October knocking Mariah Carey and Westlife off the No1 spot.*

Cars – *another boring bestsellers list:*

1. Ford Focus
2. Vauxhall Astra
3. Ford Fiesta
4. Vauxhall Corsa
5. Peugeot 206
6. Vauxhall Vectra
7. Ford Mondeo
8. Renault Megane
9. Renault Clio
10. Volkswagen Golf

Worse still F1 was now in the grip of Ferrari and Schumacher (dull and duller)

Politics – *In the UK fuel protests kicked off in September when prices peaked at around £4.00 per gallon*

Petrol – *Average price of a gallon for the year – around £3.50*

RBRR 2004

Car – 1972 GT6 Mk3

History

Dale put me onto this car. It had lain dormant in a garage for several years but was in excellent condition and had had plenty of modification work carried out by the previous owner. Triple Webers, uprated gearbox, overdrive and diff, balanced engine etc, etc. All this work had been carried out in the late 80s and reflected the best of what was out there at the time. It was still a flyer and with a bit of TLC I had it competing in 5 tough road rallies throughout 2004 the highlight being the Targa Rusticana only weeks before the RBRR.



Preparation

All that was needed before the run was some more gaffer tape on the ripped Webasto sun-roof and a new back box to replace the one left in a Welsh forest on the Targa a few weeks before.

The Run

The start was made very special for both Homer and myself as we were given a large Ginsters sticker to put on the bonnet. Homer celebrated this 100miles into the run by tucking into his first ‘meat based savoury forecourt gourmet special’ of the event, a ‘Spicy Chicken Slice’. Not happy with just the pastry and filling he inadvertently ate

half the cardboard packaging too. The car completed the run perfectly unlike Homer's bowels. We capped the event off with a large 'brown trouser' moment leaving the finish, narrowly avoiding parking the GT6 in a Volvo at 50 mph.

Other stuff in 2004

Music – Robbie bloody Williams was everywhere.

Cars – bestsellers (if you can be bothered)

1. Ford Focus
2. Vauxhall Corsa
3. Ford Fiesta
4. Peugeot 206
5. Renault Megane
6. Vauxhall Astra
7. Renault Clio
8. Volkswagen Golf
9. Ford Mondeo
10. Peugeot 307

F1 was Mr Schumacher's.

Politics – The Economy was in the capable hands of Blair and Brown, what could possibly go wrong?

Petrol – Average price of a gallon for the year – £3.80.

RBRR 2006

Car: 1966 2000 MK1
"The Original Shed"

History

Rescued in 2005 this was a solid old lump in several bits cobbled together in time for the 2005 10CR which it completed.

Preparation

A bit of a service along with some 'Shedtune' treatment and stickers and it was ready for the 2006 RBRR.

The Run

This was a bit of a plod but great fun. We added a bit of 'Blood Sports' by taking out Bambi at speed during a detour home to pick up a spare shocker for a stricken Stag waiting for us at Exeter services.



Other stuff in 2006

Music – Dull as 2004!

Cars – Just as dull!

Politics – B&B were doing a grand job leading us safely away from a "Boom to Bust" culture!

Petrol – Average price of a gallon for the year – £3.93.



RBRR 2008

Car – 1967 2000 Mk1
"The Cairo Taxi"



History

This car has been with me since 2000 and is prepared as a bit of a road rally 'worksalike' car.

Preparation

During the build up for the 2008 event I got myself banned from driving for six months, this gave me ample time whilst unemployed to tinker around with bits I found in the shed and use them to 'improve' the car.

The Run

This was the best one we had ever been on. We were very chilled out as a team, the car was cobbled together with second hand parts or stuff made in the shed and it drove and felt great.

The humour in the car was at it's usual gutter level – the highlight being an impromptu emergency pooh stop for Homer in a park and ride car park (A.A. Milne would have been grateful to you for rescuing that little bear – Ed).

Not only did he pick the best seat-less, stainless steel bowled, low quality paper, conveniences in Cornwall but as he was climbing back in the car lamenting his luck in toilet stop choice, a seagull returned the compliment on him ...oh how I laughed.

Other stuff

Music – There was none

Cars – Nothing affordable worth buying but Lewis was on his way to becoming F1 World Champion.

Politics – Now that Mr. Blair had legged it we were all about to go bust under the guidance of Mr. Brown.

Petrol – Average price of a gallon for the year – £4.83 – Ouch!

You really are going to get me shot you know Andy, the 'editing' I've had to do to this lavatorially obsessed piece has just taken me 3 hours. Most of it I hid, some of it I couldn't, the rest I didn't even understand! (Good Lad) – Ed.