

Day 7 Prague to České Budějovice (288.2 km)

20 June 2022

The phrase 'time spent on reconnaissance is never wasted', often attributed to military leaders, easily applies to a rally organisation. As a result of Fred Gallagher's efforts today we played our very own Bohemian Rhapsody and enjoyed some of the best back roads money can buy in a day packed with five Regularities and a rallycross Test.

Prague was a great place for a day off so, as dawn broke, the well rested crews faced the stark realisation that they really did have to get up and back on the road. Luckily, on the way out of town, we were swimming against the Monday morning tide and eased our way through the amazing architecture of this beautiful city and into the countryside without any trouble at all.

It was still hot but, we were told, the weather was going to change over the course of the day with scattered thundery showers along the route. Just before the first Time Control in the Stará Myslivna in Benešov the promised storm broke complete with thunder, lightning and a rain of biblical proportions. The former hunting lodge of Emperor Franz Josef turned out to be a fine place to dry out. From the walls hung with trophies and body parts we could see that, back in the day, he'd also been a crack shot.

We spent much of the morning in the valley of the Vltava river, which flows through central Prague. On the way to the first Regularity in Radic the fields were filled with vivid

white and red poppies making an extraordinary sight under the leaden skies. The solar powered roasting of the last few days had turned into a light steaming for the crews as they made their way through the section towards Fred Gallagher and Loren Price at the final control.

Next in the road book was the rallycross Test in Sedlčany. Two laps of a now slippery circuit saw a three way Fiat, Porsche and Bentley shootout in the RTG "run what you brung" sliders cup. Local boy Otakar Chládek along with Jindřiška Žemličková had the crowd behind them as they willed the big Mercedes through the many turns and jumps of this fun packed, and only slightly muddy, circuit.

The second Regularity, in the woods around Vladyčín, was a much calmer affair, but it still managed to cause something of a kerfuffle in the middle of the pack, when a logging vehicle resumed work after its morning break. These are narrow roads and Alison Lewin's frustration was palpable - and shared by a few others - when she opined that she "didn't mind the fact that he's depositing the logs



Daniel and Barbara Wiedemann, 1970 Mercedes-Benz 280 SL



Renate Hanselmann and Lukas Ospelt, 1939 Ford Model 91A

but, when he started rearranging them... well that was a different matter!"

The Time Control and lunch in the Zájezdni Hostinec in Kbelnice gave everyone a chance to reset and, over plates of delicious, home cooked food, any timber travails were quickly forgotten. Once his guests had been satisfied and coffee was served, the behatted chef, who'd done such a fine job for us, strode from the kitchen to the car park to take in a quick tour of the cars before they pulled out to enjoy the rest of the days sport.

There were another three Regularities, Tukleky, Bušanovice and Skařez to negotiate and we were pleased to see that this part of the day was every bit as good as the morning. Seemingly endless, empty roads rolled us through the old Kingdom of Bohemia towards the night halt in the Hotel Budweis in České Budějovice. The town, at the southern end of the Vltava River, is perhaps best known for its Budweiser Budvar Brewery, so no-one went to bed thirsty.



Jean Vincent and Marcel Peumans, 1934 Bentley Speed Six



Local Otakar Chládek and Jindřiška Žemličková, Mercedes-Benz 350 SL



Barry Nash and Malcolm Lister, 1969 Rover P5B



Keith and Norah Ashworth, 1927 Bentley 4½ Le Mans