

## Day 8 České Budějovice to Krems an der Donau (288.8 km) 21 June 2022

Today we saw the fourth country in our eight country odyssey, taking our leave of the Czech Republic and heading into the delights of Austria. On the way we had two Tests and six Regularities to enjoy on this, the summer solstice. The longest day of the year laid on dawn to dusk sunshine especially for the rally.



Attention state border: Tony Rowe and Mark Delling, 1939 Ford DeLuxe V8 91A

"Ihre Papiere, bitte" - Phillip and Lynda Blunden, 1974 MGB GT

The first Test was a short drive from the hotel at a driving school in the shadow of the town's famous brewery. The autoškola gave the crews the chance to prove their competence, or otherwise, in front of a stern set of examiners comprising; Jim Smith, Sarah Ormerod, Russ Smith and Owen Turner. This tight and twisty training circuit tested both the crews handling skills and their powers of observation. For two fast and furious laps the engines revved, the tyres squealed, and the air was filled with the heady scent of hops, burning clutches and petrol. If only you could bottle it!

Everyone passed scrutiny and, with their licences safely stowed, the rally headed for the second Test at Svätý Jan, a closed road hill climb with dozens of local motor club marshals on hand. Dr John Lewellyn and Andrew Kellitt sent the cars on their way towards John and Gill Cotton's final timing point. In between were cones to negotiate and some buildings to avoid. It was a high octane experience favouring crews with a faster car or heavier right foot.

The next section, the Regularity from Spolí, involved a change of pace, going some way to redress the balance,

with the emphasis firmly on pinpoint navigation and accuracy over time and distance. Although challenging, the roads provided some great driving and, after we crossed our old friend the Vltava river again, we found ourselves at the second Regularity from Herbertov. The crews were given a break and a delicious serving of coffee and cake at the Time Control in Restaurace A Kaverna Pod Vezi in the town of Kaplice.

We were deep into the Gratz Mountains now, the wild country of the Bohemian Massif. Another two tree lined Regularities from Soběnov and Leopoldov led the rally straight to the Passage Control at the Czech border post, which came as something of a surprise.

A few kilometres after the final timing point, a suspiciously narrow track led the crews into a scene straight from the pages of a John le Carré novel. Armed guards stepped forward demanding 'papers and identification' and a crack team of ersatz border officials quickly processed the bewildered crews before drawing back the iron curtain and sending them on their way into neutral Österreich. With a collective sigh of decadent western relief, the rally was free



to enjoy the rest of the rally - and a great lunch of soup and a schnitzel at the Time Control in Unterweißenbach.

The afternoon was a little less intense with only two Regularities through the stunning, and very well surfaced, Weinsberger Wald. The first from Pitzeichen and the second over the Grosser Berg giving the crews some fine views and a set of testing hairpins. A downhill run plunged the rally towards the Danube and the night halt in the Steigenberger Hotel in Krems an der Donau where they proudly produce Marillenschnaps, an apricot brandy.

It's been a day to remember and, as well as all of the Czech marshals, special thanks must go to Pavel Kacerovsky for facilitating the border crossing formalities.



Ean and Alison Lewin, 1973 Ford Escort Mexico



Graham and Marina Goodwin, 1929 Bentley 4½



Steve and Jenny Verrall, 1965 Porsche 911



John Whitelock and Nicole Whitelock, 1968 Mercedes-Benz 280 SL