



27 August to
26 September 2023

ALASKA TO MEXICO MARATHON THE DAILY DISPATCH



Rally & Globe
VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

Day 8 Dawson Creek to Prince George (532km)

4 September 2023



Nick and Serita Sleep, 1964 Mercedes-Benz 230 SL

Despite heavy overnight rain damping down the wildfires, there was still a lot of smog hanging around as we rolled out of the car park under a blue (ish) sky, with the mercury sat at a chilly 4°C.

It was also one of the first days we'd had occasion to thank the 48-hour car comprising Dick Appleton and Paul Heal. In their Sisyphean battle with the flames, the authorities had deemed the long Time Control section today out-of-bounds, so our two scouts put together something else to keep us amused and it didn't disappoint.

Before we pulled away from the Pomeroy though, we heard Andrew McAlpine's Range Rover obstinately refusing to start again. He's waiting for a new rotor arm and is resigned to having "trouble getting the old girl going" until it arrives.

There was thick, almost freezing, fog along the highway for more than 50km - a real peasouper. The first regularity, Peace River, ran along the Sanataa Road where, almost miraculously, the fog lifted allowing us to enjoy the dust free gravel, lined by spectacular autumnal trees. Unfortunately a traffic accident involving a local bus meant the main road out of the Regularity was blocked giving us a short delay before we made our way to the Time Control at the Riverside Restaurant in Chetwynd for a quick coffee.

Then it was another run down the highway to the lunch Time Control at Tse'Khene Food and Fuel. The second regularity at Top Price rolled round before we neatly dropped into Prince George and the night halt.



Richard Turner and Nigel Lee, 1938 Ford Model 62 V8



The reluctant starter gets on track: 1982 Land Rover Range Rover of Andrew and Henry McAlpine

Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk



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VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

Day 9 Prince George to Kamloops (576km)

5 September 2023

Prince George was a sleepy town at 7.30am as we crept through the deserted streets and onto the pages of today's road book. By the time we got to the last page it had proved to be another classic day of endurance rallying.

After a short run down the tarmac highway we turned onto an incredible 100km of well-maintained gravel road. The Cleswuncut Lake Regularity was set in the middle of it. It was cool and damp and dust definitely wasn't a problem. An ideal way to get the crews warmed up, although they had to keep an eye out for the odd jaywalking elk.

Next we turned our attentions to the Passage Control in Quesnel where Ron, the Mayor, and a couple of Mounties clad in their signature Red Serge joined us in front of the world's biggest gold pan, a nod to the history of this important town set between the Fraser and Quesnel rivers. Whilst panning for gold with a shovel is still legal in British Columbia - we were on the official Gold Rush Trail - there was no time to stake a claim. Instead we headed to the Cariboo Raceway Park, which hosted a couple of 'three dimensional' Tests for us. Tobias and Silvia Koenig certainly got the best out of their Porsche through the turns, whilst Andreas Honegger and Peter Kruse's Mercedes was happy to plough its own furrow.

The post track coffee and cakes were as welcome as the rolling circuit was impressive and nobody left without a grin on their face, and probably a better understanding of vehicle dynamics. Then it was back to the highway and off to the Time Control at the Fox Mountain Brewing Co in Williams Lake where a very satisfactory lunch was provided with complimentary views over the valley.

The Edmund Lake Regularity arrived soon afterwards and was perhaps the highlight of the day. It lead us through almost 20km of dense woodland along a variously broken, dry, dusty, muddy track. Unlike this morning's Regularity, which had few options for the navigators to get things wrong, this one featured a full set of blind alleys, dead ends and wrong turns. Add to this the pressure on the driver to maintain the average speed, and a fun-filled afternoon was guaranteed for all.

The calm of the Cariboo Lake Passage Control was thankfully close at hand. Over a reviving cup of coffee and a slice of cake, crews engaged in some constructive post-match analysis. Meanwhile Jim Gately and Tony Brooks were refilling a leaky radiator.

The night halt in Kamloops was an easy run down the Cariboo highway, through the Desert Hills, appropriately likened to a Mexican landscape. The Sandman Signature Hotel offered us a night of pampered luxury and fine dining.



Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk

Getting the best out of the Porsche 911 at the Raceway today, Tobias and Silvia Koenig



Manuel and Irene Dubs, 1940 Ford Coupe



Killian Kozka and Gian Paolo Scorzo, 1973 Mercedes 350 SLC



Doing some unintended grass-tracking are Andreas Honegger and Peter Krusein with their 1973 Mercedes-Benz 280 CE



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Day 10 Kamloops to Osoyoos (367km)

6 September 2023



Photos: Gerard Brown.co.uk

Steven and Midori Hitchins, 1968 Ford Mustang Shelby GT 350

After a week of seemingly linear, north - south driving, today we enjoyed something of a meander as we made our way from the metropolitan centre of Kamloops to the holiday resort of Osoyoos. It was a relatively short day, but there was plenty packed in, with a hilly Regularity and two circuit based Tests along with a very civilised lunch halt to enjoy.

It was beautiful morning as we pulled out of Kamloops, with wall-to-wall blue sky and some great scenery for us to take in as we ran towards the First Regularity around Pinaus Lake. Just before Russ Smith and Jamie Turner's timing point the crews found the road blocked by a herd of cows, a disgruntled farmer and a trailer full of livestock.

A swift U-turn saw the rally rejoin the 97 Highway and a more direct route towards the Todd's Motorplex Test. Set in and around a banked oval, this was a gritty urban section where sheer horsepower, speed away from the line and a



William Shields and Alex Schoenauer, 1967 Chevrolet Camaro



Nick and Serita Sleep, 1964 Mercedes-Benz 230 SL

set of good brakes were more important than precision cornering or slick shifting. It made for great viewing, with many of the crews in no hurry to leave the pit lane after their run.

However, lunch beckoned and we had a rather special table booked for us at the 50th Parallel Winery. High above Okanagan Lake with views over to the mountains, we sat down to a cold buffet in a lofty packing shed with some of the estate's finest tasting produce. The Time Control at the Pinot Peoples Place was a great location to break the day and once we were fully refreshed, we grudgingly took our leave and headed to the second Test through roads lined with miles more vineyards and fruit orchards.

The Thunder Mountain Raceway is a good old fashioned

drag strip which was cleverly modified to give us a complete circuit comprising the ¼ mile drag, a hard left turn and then a run for the finish via the service road. There was a good layer of rubber laid down already on the start line and, by the time we'd left there was a little bit more. Whilst possibly no records fell today, this Test was quite literally a blast. Jim Smith and Dr John Llewellyn took charge of launching our top fuelers, with Chris Mills and Ian Tullie kept an eagle eye on the cones and the stopwatch at the other end.

After another scenic run through the hills to the East of the Okanagan Valley, we arrived at the night halt, the Watermark Beach Resort on Osoyoos Lake which straddles the USA / Canadian border. So, tomorrow, we say goodbye to Canada and hello once again to good old Uncle Sam.



John and Daisy Pyle, 1939 Chevy Coupe



Thomas Stern and Frank Bertram, 1972 Porsche 924



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Day 11 Osoyoos to Leavenworth (317km)

7 September 2023



Mike and Lorna Harrison, 1959 Volvo PV544

If you get your paperwork in order, check all the numbers match up with the official's system, then crossing the USA border is a pretty simple affair. Today the rally was through the gates and rolling down the road within an hour. Within another twenty kilometres the crews set off on the first Regularity up and through the Okanogan Forest.

This passed without incident for most crews, save for Stephen Hardwick and Ashley Bennett's Datsun which needed pulling from a ditch by Andy Inskip and Charlie Neale. Fortunately, the only thing that was hurt was Stephen's pride. Quickly dusting themselves down they joined the rest of us at the Time Control at Detro's Western Store in the Town of Riverside.

After light snacks and cold drinks it was off for the second hot and dusty Regularity along Corkscrew Road. This was another long gravel section climbing into an open, mountainous landscape featuring dry grasslands and immense vistas. Dust devils whipped up along the 30km section through fields littered with geological erratics. The best view, however, was the sight of Fred Gallagher at the final Timing Point, resplendent in a stars and stripes shirt.

Lunch soon followed, at the Lone Point Cellars Time Control. This was another vineyard with an impressive view over the valley and an equally impressive buffet. The Ardenvoir Passage Control funnelled the cars into the next Regularity, called Chumstick, which rose into the mountains along another narrow gravel track with some thought provoking drops alongside.

Leavenworth and the night halt followed shortly afterwards, where we met with Stephen Partridge and Corgi Le Grouw who had opted out of bringing their Ford Galaxie through the wilderness of the Yukon. Nestling in the Cascade Mountains, and perhaps with a nod to our upcoming *Carrera Bavaria*, this is the most German of all American towns. As well as all manner of Teutonic paraphernalia scattered throughout the village, the Enzian Inn offers a daily Alpenhorn serenade giving those working on their cars something to hum along to.

Nick Sleep was working on repairs to his radiator fan, whilst Andrew McAlpine was on the lookout for an errant tappet. Naturally there was the usual post-gravel adjustments to make to headlamps and trim. Bill Shields and Alex Schoenauer's Chevrolet had a long-standing appointment with a new clutch and the crew whisked the big white beast away to a local garage. Dust had permeated everything over the course of today and it's a safe bet that on the next rest day the local valeting companies will do a roaring trade.

After a short, but very satisfying day, dinner was served in the nearby Viscontis restaurant, an Italian establishment with shades of the Tirol.



Photos: Marcus Rowe - gearatdown.co.uk

Keith and Norah Ashworth, 1927 Bentley 4 1/2 Le Mans



John Henderson and Jeff West, 1968 MG BGT



Photos: Marcus Rowe - gerardbrown.co.uk



James Grayson and Simon Spinks, 1969 Ford Escort Mexico Works



Stephen and Ruth Lambert, 1935 Ford Fordor 48 Sedan



Jim Gately and Tony Brooks, 1937 Cadillac 60 Series



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Day 12 Leavenworth to Walla Walla (397.6km)

8 September 2023



Photos: Marcus Rowe - gaurahrowe.co.uk

Gerd Buehler and Janine Franssen, 1979 Mercedes-Benz 450 SLC

Whilst Stephen Partridge and Corgi La Grouw are looking forward to their first day, spare a thought for Neil and Thomas Smith who, after an engine rebuild in Anchorage, are still gamely chasing to catch up. They made excellent progress to Dawson Creek when sadly they had to book their 'sickly Tiger' into another garage for further attention.

For the rest of us it was business as usual with a Test and three Regularities more magnificent scenery and, as a bonus, we crossed the famous Lewis and Clark "Go West" pioneer route. A trail which, incredibly, led the early settlers from Pennsylvania to the West Coast. The first Regularity was a special one. Danny's Day Begins was named in honour of the driver of the Pontiac Trans-Am, who was so helpful in getting this particular show on the road. Naturally we climbed into the hills above Leavenworth on another narrow dirt road. Then we tracked the mighty Columbia River through miles of orchards to a Time Control at the Sagecliffe Resort where we enjoyed a few cool drinks with views through the well-tended vines down to the canyon.

Keith Ashworth's Bentley, suffering with a dicky alternator, also enjoyed the attentions of Russ Smith

and Jamie Turner in this oenophilic oasis before it could continue to the Test.

"A Planned Diversion" was run along the side of a wide dry valley surrounded by tinder dry, low lying scrub. Near the end, an oblique left turn into a rough downhill had several cars overshooting, leading to some frantic braking, grinding of gears and whirling of steering wheels to reach the final Timing Point.

Another Regularity over a Primitive Road through Smith Canyon was all that stood in the way of the Country Mercantile Time Control - a roadside chocolate factory selling all manner of truffles, candy apples, sweets and ice creams. The latter being especially useful today as the mercury climbs higher.

Nine Mitre Canyon was the final Regularity today. It was suitably short but sweet, at a shade under 3km. What it lacked in distance, it made up for in diversity, rolling through open farmland and, as each hill was crested, the night halt inched into view.

Tonight we're in Walla Walla - a town so nice they named it twice - with the rolling Palouse hills and the Blue Mountains to the east and the rain shadow of the Cascade Mountains to the west. It's a rest day tomorrow and there will be a few crew changes to look out for on the restart.



Graham and Marina Goodwin, 1927 Bentley 4½ Le Mans



Brian and Catherine Scowcroft, 1936 Chevrolet Fangio Coupe



Tony Rowe and Mark Delling, 1939 Ford DeLuxe V8 91A Coupe



Claudine Bloom and Andrew Twort, 1965 Volvo Amazon 120



Stephen John Partridge and Corgi La Grouw, 1961 Ford Galaxie



Michael and Anne Wilkinson, 1968 Holden HK



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Day 13 Walla Walla Rest Day

9 September 2023

Rest day number two and Walla Walla is an eminently suitable place to spend some quality time. There are plenty of “distractions” to keep the crews amused when away from their cars.

Additionally, and through no fault of our Canadian hosts, we could all breathe a little easier than in Dawson Creek, as today the sun shone from a clear blue sky. Whilst the vibe was relaxed, it was obvious that this wasn't a holiday and, almost at the halfway point of this Marathon, there was some furious fettling going on in, and around, the car park.

Over the last few days Ivan Pusnik and Boris Gruzman noticed that their Saab wasn't hitting full throttle. After looking at it themselves they called in an expert and, after few minutes under the 'hood', Jamie Turner reckoned we will see them rocketing up the results table. As pre-arranged, Christopher and Kathleen Grace's Fangio has a new manifold and the crew are looking forward to the rest of the Rally with renewed enthusiasm. Andrew McAlpine

was looking for new hydraulic valve lifters for his Range Rover, whilst others made their way to local garages for an oil change and brake check.

We're delighted that Tim Eades is back with us. His Escort broke down in Yukon and, after recovery to Whitehorse, the Lone Ranger has returned to do the rest of the event in a Ford Bronco he bought new in the '70s. First he spent two days sorting it out and then drove 2,000 miles here. Tim says that whilst “it's not very quick... it's ideal for the kind of roads we're using”. The good news was tempered when word reached us that Neil and Thomas Smith won't be rejoining. Their “sickly Tiger” has been officially retired and the crew have given up hope of getting back on schedule.

Walla Walla closed its Main Street today for a classic car show. Despite all manner of highly polished American automobilia, arguably the hotel car park was a better place to see real cars used for real adventures. Finally, we'd like to wish Stan Gold a happy birthday. This evening the good folk of Walla Walla lit up the sky with a Bat Symbol which seemed to us a suitable way to mark the occasion.



Photos: Marcus Rowe - gearheadon.co.uk



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Day 14 Walla Walla to Boise (499km)

10 September 2023

By their nature marathon, endurance rallies span huge distances. It's a fact known primarily to navigators, that they also span a lot of paperwork and the story of a 30-day rally is too big for one book. So today, we reached the not insignificant milestone, of opening a new road book and moved into act two of three of the *Alaska to Mexico Marathon*.



Photo: Marcus Rowe - gearthru.com

John and Nicole Whitelock, 1968 Mercedes-Benz 280 SL

We also have three Regularities to deal with today and transitioned into the Mountain Time Zone on our way through Oregon and into Idaho. Added to the new road book are some new faces. Rob Dance takes the helm of the 1937 Cadillac from Jim Gately for a couple of weeks, to give the Lake Tahoe legend some time to deal with pressing business matters back at the ranch. Archie McAlpine has replaced his twin brother Henry in the navigator's seat of the family Range Rover, whilst Steve Krippaehne joins

Richard Lee Harman as the map man in the Ford Model A, as Winston Conyers waves farewell to his maiden event.

24km from the charms of the Marcus Whitman Hotel, the Lincoln Mountain Road set the scene for the first Regularity. A couple of cars struggled with the steep gradient and narrow track, but these troubles faded away by the time the crews reached the Time Control at the Blue Banana Café in Lostine. This eclectic shack, with an aeroplane tail sticking out of the roof, served extremely good coffee.



Anthony and Sonja Verloop, 1968 Mercedes-Benz 280 SE



Stanley Gold and Brant Parsons, 1965 Porsche 911



The route to Hell's Kitchen Passage Control followed the Snake River as it wound through the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. At Hell's Canyon Overlook Passage Control, Fred Gallagher and Sarah Ormerod were dispensing cookies before the crews were given some time to peek down into the 2,436m abyss - the deepest such chasm in the USA.

Sticking firmly to the higher ground, the road to lunch followed. After crossing the state line we halted at the Time Control of the Gateway Store & Café, where the crews tucked into a hearty meal of pulled pork and a side of some of Idaho's famous potatoes.

There were another two Regularities in the afternoon, the Big Farms and the Big Willow Creek, along a combined 80km of the area's finest dirt roads. The Boise Riverside Hotel was our evening destination and, as another day's rallying drew to a close, the crews wished a very happy birthday to Marina Goodwin, a *RtG* founder and Bentley copilot extraordinaire.



Michael and Christopher Mallett, 1981 Land Rover Range Rover



Andrew and Ann Boland, 1936 Ford V8 Convertible