



27 January to
23 February 2024

ROAD TO HANOI MARATHON THE DAILY DISPATCH



Rally the Globe
VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

Pre start & scrutineering Hồ Chí Minh

27 January 2024



In the steamy flatlands of Southern Vietnam, the Mekong Delta slowly empties itself into the South China Sea. A little to the east of this vast and lazy debauchment, *Rally the Globe* and 26 crews have set up camp in the ancient City of Saigon, now Hồ Chí Minh, for the first event of a busy 2024.

The *Road to Hanoi Marathon*, the second long-distance rally in a row, will, over the next month make its way through Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand towards the finish line in Hà Nội. The crews on the start list can look forward to 6,866km of jungle, mountain and coastal roads, peppered with 15 Tests and 40 Regularities to give the timekeepers something to work on.

From a pre-war Bentley to a 1974 Porsche 911, all manner of cars assembled in the car park of the Mai House Hotel. Amongst them were some old favourites and one or two surprises. Winners of the Classic Category of the last *Marathon* event, Ean and Alison Lewin, have brought the very same car which took them to the top step of the podium in Cabo. Once their heads had cleared the effects of the prizegiving dinner, the crew set to in the car park to ensure their RS 1600 was race-ready for its next adventure on the other side of the world. There were still a few outstanding jobs, so for most of the day Ean found himself a cosy nook in the basement to spread out his tools.



Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk

Another three Fords are with us. Tim Eades and Jim McLaren have brought another Escort, whilst Tony Rowe and Mark Delling are back in their 1939 V8 Coupe. Clive Hopkins and Charles Gooch's 1965 Mustang Convertible is new to *RtG*, and this big open-top cruiser rounds out team blue oval.

Manuel and Irene Dubs, winners of the *Alaska to Mexico Marathon* vintage category, have left their Ford Coupe at home and brought their distinctive 1932 Rockne Six 75. Graham and Marina Goodwin have eschewed their usual Cricklewood carriages - and thrown the media crew's keywording protocol into disarray - by bringing a Porsche 911 to the party - complete with a Targa top and a roll cage. Usually seen roaring around the world topless, how the Goodwins will fare being cooped up indoors - albeit under a Targa canopy - for the next month remains to be seen.

Stewing in the 34°C heat, with 48% humidity, the sweep crews of Andy Inskip, Charlie Neale, Jamie Turner and Russ Smith took charge of scrutineering, checking cars for compliance and safety. Gill Cotton and Sarah Ormerod meanwhile dealt with the necessary documentation in the cooler and slightly calmer surroundings of the opulent Mai House where John Cotton had teamed up with Dr John Llewellyn in the dispensary handing out the stickers and rally plates.

The *RtG* team has been bolstered for this event by Kim Bannister who, as route coordinator, has laboured



From 1972: Tim Eades and Jim McLaren's Ford Escort and Jeff Urbina and Chris Pike's Porsche 911

for two years putting these roads together and, with a pedigree, stretching way back into the annals of Endurance Rallying, we're expecting this marathon to be a real humdinger.

An early afternoon briefing gave Rally Director, Fred Gallagher, Clerk of the Course, Mark Appleton, Loren Price and Kim the chance to welcome the crews and highlight some salient points to make their lives a little easier over the next few weeks on the road. The rest of the afternoon was then free for a little sightseeing.

Saigon is a fascinating place and lies along the meandering Sông Sài Gòn river, named after the late Prime Minister and President Hồ Chí Minh. It's famous for its motor scooters

and vibrant cultural life. A fascinating history, dating back to the 4th Century, has had many twists and turns, including a period of colonisation under the French and a pivotal role in a much-storied war, which swept through the entire region during the 1960s and 1970s. Having come this far, nobody wanted to miss Saigon.

As the sun dipped, drinks and dinner rounded off a very busy day and over a convivial meal, the excitement built for tomorrow's early start.

All this was but a distant memory to the advance car crew of Dick Appleton and Chris Mills as they'd pulled out of town some 48 hours earlier with notebooks and pencils at the ready looking for anything untoward.



Michael and Firdy Naqvi Merkle's 1971 Mercedes-Benz 350 SL



The 1934 Aston Martin Mark II of Nigel Dowding and Mary Antcliff



Daniel Sauter and Martin Ruebel's 1938 Chevrolet Fangio



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Day 1 Hồ Chí Minh to Dalat (361.4km)

28 January 2024



Car no. 1 for the event, the Chrysler 75 Roadster of David and Jo Roberts

Whilst we'd all thoroughly enjoyed our time in Ho Chi Minh City, there was a feeling abroad that it was time to get moving. So in the gloom of another steamy Saigon morning, we hit the road.

Plan A was a ceremonial start at the Reunification Palace but, due to extensive preparatory works for the upcoming Vietnamese New Year celebrations, the risk of being snarled up in some heavy traffic proved too great, so the Organisers went straight to plan B. This was also a ceremonial start, but a little further out of town at the Dai Nam Raceway, followed by the first Test of the event. It proved to be a masterstroke. We enjoyed a cool and stress-free journey to an alfresco breakfast under the watchful gaze of a big Buddha and the chance to mix with the enthusiastic members of the Saigon Classic Car Club who, along with their vehicles, had turned out in force to see us off.

There were some niggling issues to deal with before the flag was waved. Andy Inskip attended to a slight fuel leak from Philip and Trish Monks' Jaguar, whilst Charlie Neale and Ean Lewin tried to work out why the Escort was so reluctant to start.

Once these creases had been ironed out and the cars had made their way to the start, it fell to Loren Price to step forward and wave her Quốc kỳ nước Cộng hoà xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam whilst Fred Gallagher looked after the timing.

David and Jo Roberts were all smiles as they enjoyed their first-ever outing as car number 1. Leaving the arch they stole carefully through the crowds of well-wishers towards the start of the first Test a few metres along the road. Two laps of a small, but perfectly formed, motor racing circuit got the ball rolling and blew away any first-day rally nerves.



Photos: geraldbrown.co.uk

Keeping up the dust are Hans Ulrich Wartenweiler and Reinhard Siegfried with their 1973 Volvo 144



Melvin Andrews and Barry Douglass, 1936 Bentley DHC, before breaking and temporarily fixing a manifold



Keith and Norah Ashworth enjoying the breeze in the Bentley 4 1/2 Le Mans



Mick and Grace de Haas, 1966 Mercedes 230 SL

From the track there was then an easy run towards the hills and two successive Time Controls. The first in the Panorama Cafe set amidst a working rubber plantation. Coffee was served overlooking Trj An Lake and then, some 70km further down the road, the rally enjoyed a traditional lunch at Suối Hồng.

The postprandial Regularity, the Tram Dúng, was perhaps the days highlight running through a red earth maze of banana and coffee plants. We were climbing all the time and, on rejoining the tarmac to the night halt, we were hovering at around 1300m. The road rose and fell through the forests of southern Vietnam's Central Highlands and, just as the sun was setting, we slipped into the car park of the magnificent Dalat Palace Heritage Hotel. This French colonial throwback had maintained its charming ambience sat high on the Lang Bian plateau. The rooms were declared to be superb, the wine list was more than adequate and



Clive Hopkins and Charles Gooch, 1965 Ford Mustang Convertible

the dinner of asparagus, steak and artichoke proved an exquisite way to end a very satisfying day.

Manuel and Irene Dubs sadly missed this old-world splendour. Their Rockne suffered gearbox failure shortly after the morning Test. It's now back in Ho Chi Minh City looking to repair and rejoin at the soonest opportunity. There were mechanical dramas for another two crews today. Richard Everingham and Judy Becker's Bentley got jammed in reverse after backing up to let a local truck get past during the Regularity. Jamie Turner and Russ Smith removed both the top and bottom of the box and, like a pair of automotive osteopaths, skilfully manipulated the delicate internals back to working order. Melvin Andrews and Barry Douglass's Bentley broke its manifold thanks to a rougher section of Regularity. Andy Inskip and Charlie Neale set about effecting a running repair whilst Melvin wasted no time arranging to have replacement parts shipped out.

Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk



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ROAD TO HANOI MARATHON THE DAILY DISPATCH



Rally & Globe
VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

Day 2 Dalat to Quy Nhon (428.8km)

29 January 2024



Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk



Bob Harrod & Dana Hradecká, 1974 Porsche 911



Dirk Van Lerberghe & Hilde Vanhove,
1947 Bentley Speed 8



Phillip & Patricia Monks, 1961 Jaguar Mk 2

Day two of the *Road to Hanoi* was set to be a busy one and from the best seats in the house we saw many different faces of Vietnam from the old and traditional through to the new and modern.

After the heat of yesterday it was a shock to wake up at 1500m to a chilly 13°C in the car park and a heavy dew settled on the cars. Once we'd cleared the windscreens, and fired up our engines, the world was a brighter place and we began the fight through the chaos of the scooter-borne school run. Then on towards the heavily terraced countryside around Dalat filled with glass houses, orchards and fields of fresh produce.

The first Regularity at Đèo Ngoan Mục continued rolling us along a balcony road into the rising sun through the pines and bamboo down towards the Time Control at the Chapi Coffee cafe at the end of the section. This gave the crews a chance to compare notes and sample some of the rich local brew, the source of which we'd no doubt just driven through.



Tony Rowe and Delling, 1939 Ford Coupe V8



Martin and Gary Brauns, 1972 Mercedes-Benz 450 SLC

Another two Regularities followed this mid-morning break, firstly at Thác Sa Vin, which rose almost from the door of the cafe and ran alongside the Song Cai Phan Rang, into the Phước Bình National Park. We were well and truly off-piste here. As we drove through village after village we took in the very best of rural Vietnam on the way into the Stephanie's Garden Regularity, the last competitive section of the day. This took the crews to lunch at Thanh Thảo and, despite the chilly start, the downhill nature of the route meant that by the time the rally sat down to eat it was once again broiling nicely at a sultry 30°C amidst lily ponds and watery walkways.

After this interlude a couple of Time Controls and a Passage Control were all that lay between the crews and their night halt on the beach. As we pushed northwards tantalising signs for Hanoi began to appear for anyone who fancied a shortcut. However, we still had a lot of rallying

to do and, after joining the coastal highway, we passed through fishing villages and enjoyed impressive sea views not least of which was that from the balconies of the Avani Hotel rooms in which we found ourselves billeted.

Sadly Enrico Paggi and Federica Mascetti missed the *Rally the Globe* Dolce Vita this evening. Their faithful Fiat blew a head gasket just before the Time Control at the aptly named Sea View cafe and they have been forced to trailer the car straight to Da Nang to get the repairs started. If all goes well they'll be rejoining us after the rest day, along with Manuel and Irene Dubs who are optimistic that they and their Rockne will be back with us.

The rest of us enjoyed another amazing evening with a fine dinner comprising fish, various shellfish, rice and traditional vegetables. There was a rumour of karaoke once the plates had been cleared.



Out for now: Enrico Paggi and Federica Mascetti, 1971 Fiat 124 Spider





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Rally Æ Globe
VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

Day 3 Quy Nhon to Đà Nẵng (358.9km)

30 January 2024

Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk



Richard Everingham and Judy Becker, 1953 Bentley R Type

Waking to the sound of crashing waves set the tone for the entire route today as we hugged the soft sandy coast and pressed on towards Đà Nẵng and our first rest day.

There were two Regularities and two Time Controls scheduled to put some scores on the doors. To give the rally some well-earned rest and recovery, after rolling through the river of scooters in downtown Quy Nhon, we emerged into a flat sandy landscape with dozens of fish farms to the right of us and some massive solar farms to the left. After around 80km, and against a backdrop of some truly impressive Bonsai trees, the Time Control in the cafe at Chanh Giào served up some extra forte Vietnamese coffee that we've been getting used to. After which the crews were more than awake to take on the challenge of the Regularity from Phú Thủy which rose and fell through a deep airless cutting a few hundred metres from the beach.

The second Regularity followed soon afterwards from Dinh Khai and, via a network of rural roads and countless bridges spanning shallow rivers, it brought the crews back to civilisation and their lunch at the Time Control in Tân Lộc. With all timing finished for the day, from here the mission was simply to get to the night halt via the MTC in

the ancient trading port of Hôi An, a World Heritage Site on the mouth of the Thu Bon River perhaps more used to backpackers and coach-borne tourists.

Da Nang was another 40km away but, with plenty of time to get there, the crews were free to enjoy the sights and sounds of the coastal strip with its multitude of high-rise beachfront hotels and restaurants before pulling up the driveway of the 'Monkey Mountain' and into the incomparable Đà Nẵng Intercontinental Hotel where we dined alfresco at the confluence of the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea.

Thankfully there were but a few minor mechanical issues today with two cars needing their exhausts repaired. Melvin Andrews and Barry Douglass's Bentley needed its tailpipe securing again, as did Ean and Alison Lewin's Escort. Meanwhile, David and Jo Robert's Chrysler had developed some play in the pivots between the brake and clutch pedals. Andy Inskip and Charlie Neale sorted this quickly at the MTC and the crew were only a few minutes behind the rest of the rally.

After the disappointment of ending yesterday on a tow truck, Enrico Paggi and Federica Mascetti set to work this morning and swapped their Fiat's head gasket and were waiting for us at the hotel as we arrived. Tomorrow we should hear news of Manuel and Irene Dubs and their Rockne who left us on day one with a broken gearbox.



Three Mercedes Benz: Martin and Gary Brauns, 450 SLC, 1972 model



Hans-Martin and Mahnaz Schneeberger, 350 SL, 1974 model



Otakar Chládek and Jindřiška Žemličková, 350 SL, 1971 model



Ean and Alison Lewin, 1973 Ford Escort RS1600





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Rally & Globe
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Day 4 Đà Nẵng Rest Day

31 January 2024

Ensnared as we were in the lap of luxury, our first rest day proved very popular. From the vastness of the buffet breakfast, through to the paradisiacal views of the Lang Co Bay - framed by rainforest - and the ever-attentive hotel staff; the crews felt, for today at least, they were on vacation rather than a marathon rally.



Photos: geraldwin.co.uk

Peter and Louise Morton's 1972 Rover P6

There was ample opportunity to get some laundry done, take in a couple of offerings from the spa, have a good lunch and maybe a stroll along the beach to round things off.

Naturally, the cars came first and from 9am, in the palm-fringed car park, the sweep crews threw open their toolboxes and loaned their considerable expertise to anyone who needed it. Keith Ashworth was struggling to make his secondary fuel pump work reliably. Along with Charlie Neale he had his head buried deep in the depths of his Bentley sucking and blowing for all he was worth. A blockage was initially ruled out, which left an electrical malfunction as a possible cause but, after a couple of hours of trial and error, it turned out to be nothing more serious than a bit of muck in the pickup.

Bob Harrod and Dana Hradecká's Porsche had been getting a bit hot under the bonnet for the last few days so they improvised an air scoop from an old bucket and a few zip ties. This took Gill Cotton right back to her African rally days and gave Ean Lewin - a one-time maritime engineer - the opportunity to explain to us Bernoulli's principle and the particular way that air flows over a Porsche engine.

As well as a head full of fluid dynamics, Ean had his hands full with his regular spanner checks and was once again working on the brakes of his Ford Escort alongside

Russ Smith. Tim Eades and Jim McLaren's Escort was also jacked up for some precautionary checks alongside its Bodacious Racing teammate, the Porsche of Jeff Urbina and Chris Pike which needed its alternator replacing.

Graham Goodwin's Porsche seems to have developed a sticky gear linkage over the last few days so, along with Jamie Turner, he'd pulled back the trim between the seats to get a better look at the problem.

Sadly, Enrico Paggi and Federica Mascetti's Fiat blew another head gasket today. Whilst the crew have replaced this second one, there are fears that the problem may be something more serious. Manuel and Irene Dubs however have made it all the way here under their own power and have reported no issues.

Pretty much all of the action in the car park was over by midday leaving the rest of the day free for whatever tours and trips had been pre-booked. There was certainly a lot on offer and, after a quick shower, the sweep crews were wondering whether it was worth signing up for some of the watersports. Certainly the gentle breakers hitting the golden beach looked very inviting but, after some discussion, Andy, Jamie and Russ decided to show some solidarity and just go for a drink instead. The problem was simply that "Charlie don't surf"!



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Day 5 Đà Nẵng to Măng Đen (343.3km)

1 February 2024

We'd had a great few days along the coast but this morning it was time to leave the seaside behind us and strike into the hills on a path which was much less trodden.

It was going to be a long day and, thanks to the early start, a mist still hung in the trees and over the high-rise hotels of the Da Nang strip as we once again threw ourselves headlong into another Vietnamese rush hour and over the River Han on the famous Dragon Bridge. A Time Control and two Regularities had to be tackled along the way, but it was perhaps the wild landscapes of the old Ho Chi Minh Trail which really grabbed everyone's attention.

After 60km we'd left the city behind and, from our sea-level breakfast, we followed the Song Vu Gia river and began climbing towards our lunch at 813m via some rugged mountain passes and reached almost 1200m. By mid-morning the sun had burned away the clouds and, in the corrugated iron shade of a well-appointed truck-stop, a hot rally sat down to a picnic just outside the town of Đắk Glei.

The temperature was hovering around 30°C as we cleared away the sandwich bags and climbed aboard for the rural run to two timed sections which passed through

miles of bright green paddy fields, leafy coffee and rubber plantations and villages packed with sacks of produce.

The First Regularity from Đắk Krong was a long one and took in just about every surface from a steel Bailey bridge, loose gravel, broken concrete and good quality tarmac. With barely an inch of straight or level road for almost 15km, this choppy and wooded section boasted multiple timing points and several speed changes to keep both crew members fully engaged.

The second Regularity from Kon Rẫy, some 20km along the road, was short and sweet. It also had the advantage of delivering the crews almost to the door of the Golden Boutique Hotel in the sleepy little town of Măng Đen where we were to bed down for the night.

Most of the rally enjoyed a trouble-free run through both of these sections, but Richard Everingham and Judy Becker's Bentley found it all just a bit too hot and ground to a halt with fuel vaporisation problems mid-way through the first of them. Once the old lump had cooled a little



Mid-1970s Porsche 911's of Graham and Marina Goodwin...



...and Bob Harrod and Dana Hradecká

Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk

Day 5: Đà Nẵng to Măng Đen, 1 February 2024



Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk

Nigel Dowding and Mary Antcliff, 1934 Aston Martin Mark II



Nigel and Sally Woof, 1961 Volvo PV544

it proved more than willing to carry on and delivered the crew safely to their destination.

Phillip Monks and Andy Inskip share a birthday today and as befits such an auspicious occasion, an impromptu gin and tonic on the bonnet party was laid on in the car park next to Fred Gallagher's MTC. We then enjoyed a fine dinner complete with grilled chicken and braised frog.

With Manuel and Irene Dubs running with the rally once again, and Enrico Paggi and Federica Mascetti having sorted their head gasket woes, tonight was the first time we'd all sat down together since Saigon. As it's our last night in Vietnam for a while, we also bid adieu to the 4UTours team who have been so very useful so far. Tomorrow we head to Cambodia for the second chapter of this epic trip. Before we retired to the bar Kim Bannister outlined a few of the finer points of the border crossing procedure.



Back with us today, Manuel and Irene Dubs and the Rockne Six 75





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Rally & Globe
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Day 6 Măng Đen to Krong Ban Lung (233.3km)

2 February 2024



Michael Merkle and Firdy Naqvi Merkle, 1971 Mercedes-Benz 350 SL

Today we saw our first border crossing of the *Road to Hanoi* as we rolled out of Vietnam and into the ancient kingdom of Cambodia.

Once we'd left the sanctuary of a very cool Măng Đen, sitting at 1,200m in the northern part of the Central Highlands, there were two Regularities to deal with before we reached the hot and dusty Lê Thanh frontier. This is coffee growing country and, as well as the sight of vast rubber plantations, we enjoyed the sweet jasmine scent of acres of coffee trees in full blossom getting ready to deliver their cherries and precious beans.

The first Regularity was run down the hill from Măng Đen, whilst the second took in a long section of forest, aptly called Coffee Trees, before we arrived at the day's only Time Control in the Windows Cafe. This gave the crews a chance to taste some of the local brew (hot or cold) and enjoy a scoop of ice cream.

Sometimes border crossings can be lengthy and irksome affairs but, with the right planning and foresight, most obstacles can be overcome. So it was today, 4UTours, our excellent Vietnamese agents, left us on one side of the fence and an equally efficient team from Inspiration Cambodia



Keith and Norah Ashworth, 1927 Bentley 4½ Le Mans

met us on the other. Visa forms, vehicle documents and customs clearance had all been pre-arranged, leaving the crews with nothing else than pay the required \$40, point to the numbers on their doors, and let the border guards know that they were on the rally! There were even boxes of chilled water and cold towels on hand to make the short wait in the 34°C heat a touch more bearable. We were then let loose for the ever-so-easy 75km drive to the night halt in Krong Ban Lung, where each car was given the honour of a blessing from a *brethren* of saffron-clad monks.

The day had been a good one for most but, for Tim Eades and Jim McLaren their arrival in the car park of the Ratanakiri Boutique Hotel didn't mean kicking back and relaxing. Their Escort needed a miracle - \not just a blessing. Its gearbox had leaked oil onto the clutch giving its crew - along with Andy Inskip, Charlie Neale and Jamie Turner - a few hours of hot dirty work before dinner.

Whilst this transmission repair was going on in one corner of the car park, in another Russ Smith was deep into a fuelling problem with Hans-Martin and Mahnaz Schneeberger's Mercedes. After some investigative work, the crew gratefully accepted a replacement distributor from Michael and Firdy Navqi Merkel, in the hope it would solve the problem.

Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk



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Rally & Globe
VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

Day 7 Krong Ban Lung to Krong Siem Reap (494.6km) 3 February 2024



Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk

Daniel Sauter and Martin Ruebel, 1938 Chevrolet Fangio

Today proved to be a long, hot day on the road but the promise of another rest day, in one of the undoubted wonders of the world, kept everyone's eyes fixed on the prize.

There was only time to squeeze in one Regularity this morning on our cross-country jaunt. The dusty red surface had us harking back to Kenya and our 2019 Southern Cross Safari. Cambodia Dirt as it was called, was a twisting section bookended by a couple of villages. The inhabitants had downed tools to come and cheer us on and grab a quick selfie as the cars pulled up to the timing point where Fred Gallagher and Sarah Ormerod were in charge of the clocks.

After rejoining the blacktop the next stop was an early lunch on the banks of the lesser-known Sekong River in the Mekong Bird Resort. A couple of local musicians provided a soothing backdrop for the plates of fresh produce the crews enjoyed from a lofty perch on stilts high above the water.

Running almost 3,000 miles from the Tibetan plateau to the South China Sea, the much more well-known Mekong River is a formidable obstacle to anyone who wants to cross Cambodia. However, as soon as we'd finished lunch, we made it look easy thanks to the 1,731m Cambodia - China Friendship Bridge.

By now word had got around that we were on our way and through almost every town we found policemen holding back locals and giving us a strong hint as to which way the route went. Luckily for us we were heading for another Time Control in Preah Vihear where all manner of iced drinks were laid on by the Organisers as the mercury slid to 36°C and the sun positioned itself directly overhead.

Taking the full force of this solar assault was Ean and Alison Lewin's Ford Escort with Ean himself lying underneath trying to secure the remains of the exhaust pipe which had been accidentally damaged in a car park shunt a few days ago. The term throaty roar doesn't even begin to describe the sound coming from the rear end but luckily the crew are equipped with noise cancellation headphones.

We'd covered a lot of ground, but there were still a few miles to go and a Passage Control at the Beng Melea Ticket Office to collect the necessary paperwork for tomorrow's Angkor Wat Temple visits. Soon afterwards a guard of honour was formed by hundreds of immaculately turned-out school children as we entered Siem Reap. We were flagged under the arch by his Excellence Mr Pannhasa Kuch, the Secretary of State for Tourism, after which a troupe of dancers showed us the way to the Sofitel Reception and, via a well-stocked and agreeably air-conditioned bar, dinner by the pool rounded off our day.



Enrico Paggi and Federica Mascetti, 1971 Fiat 124 Spider BS1



Dieter and Hildegard Baumhaeckel, 1961 Volvo PV544



Louder than normal, Ean and Alison Lewin's 1973 Ford Escort RS1600



Nigel Dowding and Mary Antcliff, 1934 Aston Martin Mark II

