



27 January to  
23 February 2024

# ROAD TO HANOI MARATHON THE DAILY DISPATCH



Rally  Globe  
VINTAGE AND CLASSIC CAR CLUB

## Day 9 Krong Siem Reap to Nakhon Ratchasima (415 km) 5 February 2024

It's been a long time coming, but today brought us round two of the *Road to Hanoi* "run what you bring championship" which was staged this afternoon at the impressive Chang International Circuit, the self-styled Destination of Speed.

We also said goodbye to Cambodia and sawadika - or sawadikrap - to Thailand, the *land of smiles*. But first we had to prise ourselves away from the charms of the Siem Reap Sofitel and saddle-up for another day of endurance rallying. Once we'd steeled ourselves, and got back on the road, the route to the border proved to be an easy one. In 170 traffic-free kilometres we passed through many small towns and several mango orchards heavy with fruit.



Photos: gerardbrown.co.uk



Peter and Louise Morton, 1972 Rover P6, sail off-course for a moment



Our Thai travel agents, CDM, were on hand to guide us through the immigration process and our passports were stamped with impressive speed and efficiency. For some of the back markers the queue for customs became a little uncomfortable in the heat. Dana Hradecká and Louise Morton sought to bring the temperature down a little, arranging for cool towels and ice cream to be passed down the line to anyone who wanted them. Finally, and with a flourish of the douaniers pen, we were free to enjoy the third country of the rally and, as well as loading a new SIM card into our phones, we had to remember to drive on the left.

The 48-hour car of Dick Appleton and Chris Mills had already passed this way, smoothing our path through the border and, at the first military checkpoint, the guards were enjoying a drink from a mug emblazoned with a Hanoi rally plate as they waved us through. Russ Smith and Jamie Turner were posted a little further down the road to make sure that sweep cover was available on both sides of the frontier.

For the rest of the rally the 116km to the lunch Time Control slid effortlessly by on some top quality Thai tarmac, after which the air-conditioned restaurant at the Chang Arena served up a superb buffet. There were two back-to-back Tests after lunch on the nearby Chang International Drift Circuit and, as its name implies, there was some significant slipping and sliding over four fast and furious laps. Sarah Ormerod and Jim Smith sent the cars into the fray, whilst it fell to Russ and Jamie to stop the clocks and give the anxious crews their time.

With the temperature now sitting a shade under 40°C we arrived trackside with pre-warmed tyres and soon the air was thick with rubbery squeals as the cars pushed against the laws of physics on every turn trying to hold onto as much momentum as possible. Peter and Louise Morton perhaps tried a bit too hard and fell victim to a “Chinese gybe on the downwind leg” and the big Rover P6 clipped a couple of buoys through a fast off-camber, left-hander. Luckily it didn’t broach and, after pulling in the spinnaker, the crew resumed their original course.

In the Classics category Graham and Marina Goodwin did well. They have obviously mastered the art of rear-engined motoring and this afternoon they and their Porsche posted the fastest time, beating the Lewin’s Escort and the de Haas Mercedes by ten seconds. In the pre-war category Daniel Sauter and Martin Ruebel’s Chevrolet pushed hard and wasn’t much slower than the younger cars taking six seconds from Nigel Dowding and Mary Antcliff’s Aston Martin and nine seconds from the Ashworth’s Bentley and Tony Rowe and Mark Delling’s Ford.

The night halt, some 128km away, was in the Imperial Hotel in the busy town of Nakhon Ratchasima and, thanks again to the excellent Thai road network, we arrived in good time for drinks before dinner.



Keeping on track: Clive Hopkins and Charles Gooch, 1965 Ford Mustang...



Dirk Van Lerberghe and Hilde Vanhove, 1947 Bentley Speed 8...



...and Phillip and Patricia Monks 1961, Jaguar Mk 2